Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2025** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 14)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 October 2025 and 21 October 2025.

Contact Officer: Democratic Services - (01480) 388169

2. **MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

Contact Officer: Democratic Services - (01480) 388169

3. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE** (Pages 15 - 64)

To receive a report seeking Cabinet approval to adopt the Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction TAN, providing practical guidance to support the implementation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (and emerging Local Plan) and the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy.

Executive Councillor: T Sanderson

Contact Officer: M Paul (01480) 388426
A Wood (01480) 388476

4. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2026/27** (Pages 65 - 72)

To receive a report providing an update on the operation of the CTS scheme since the Council made amendments for 2024-25, alongside recommendations for 2026/27.

Executive Councillor: S Ferguson

Contact Officer: K Kelly (01480) 388151

5. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT 6 MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW** (Pages 73 - 110)

To receive a report updating Members on the Council's treasury management activity for the first 6 months of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

Executive Councillor: B Mickelburgh

Contact Officer: O Colbert (01480) 388067

6. **2025/26 FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT - FORECAST AT QUARTER 2** (Pages 111 - 136)

To receive a report presenting details of the Council's financial performance for 2025/2026 as at quarter 2.

Executive Councillor: B Mickelburgh

Contact Officer: L Morrison (01480) 388178

7. **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26 (QUARTER 2)** (Pages 137 - 286)

To receive a report presenting the Council's progress against the Corporate Plan Actions and Corporate Performance Indicators during Quarter 2 (July to September.

Executive Councillors: S Ferguson / L Davenport-Ray

Contact Officer: G Moore (01480) 388860
S Gosling (01480) 388643

8. **A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR PLAY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE** (Pages 287 - 452)

To receive a report presenting a strategic framework for the sustainable delivery of outdoor play across Huntingdonshire, ensuring inclusive, high-quality provision that meets the needs of current and future generations.

Executive Councillor: J Kerr

Contact Officer: G Holland (01480) 388157

9. **TRANSFORMATION PLAN** (TO FOLLOW)

To receive a report presenting the Council's approach to transformation with the framework, the key drivers and the Annual Transformation Delivery Programme for

2025/26 which sets out the six Programmes, 31 Major Projects and 30 Operational Projects.

Executive Councillor: L Davenport-Ray

Contact Officer: L Aston (01480) 388604

10 day of November 2025

Michelle Sacks

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.

Further information on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution

Filming, Photography and Recording (including Live Streaming) at Council Meetings

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The District Council also permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council.

Please contact Democratic Services, Tel No: (01480) 388169 / e-mail: Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 14 October 2025

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson, J E Harvey, J E Kerr, B A Mickelburgh, T D Sanderson and S Wakeford.

APOLOGY: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S A Howell.

38 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2025 were approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Sanderson being in attendance and an amendment to Minute Number 32 – Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Extension of Leases – to reflect the correct spelling of the Parks & Countryside Development Coordinator - Kirstien Drew. The amended minutes were signed by the Chair.

39 Members Interests

Councillor Conboy declared an interest under Minute No. 25/40, regarding proposal 4.6 as she was a member of the English Civil War Society. This was not a pecuniary interest, but as the public may perceive there to be an interest, she left the room during the discussion and vote on recommendation G and handed over the Chair to Councillor Ferguson for the item.

Councillor Kerr declared an interest under Minute No. 25/40, regarding proposal 4.3 as she was a Member of St Ives Town Council and left the room during the discussion and vote on recommendation D.

Councillor Sanderson declared an interest under Minute No. 25/40, regarding proposal 4.7 as he was a Member of Huntingdon Town Council, who owned the land, and left the room during the discussion and vote on recommendation H.

Councillor Harvey declared an interest under Minute No. 25/40, regarding proposal 4.7 as she was Vice-Chair of Huntingdon & District Cricket Club and involved in some of the negotiations, and she left the room during the discussion and vote on recommendation H.

Councillor Harvey declared an interest declared an interest under Minute No. 25/42 as she was Vice-Chair of Huntingdon & District Cricket Club, however she had not been involved in any discussion regarding this item.

Councillor Wakeford declared an interest declared an interest under Minute No. 25/42 as a Ward Councillor covering Huntingdon, however he had not been involved in any discussion regarding this item.

40 Community Infrastructure Levy Funding

Councillor Ferguson took the Chair.

A report by the Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which invited the Cabinet to consider recommendations relating to infrastructure projects seeking funding in whole or in part from an amount of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies received to date.

The Executive Councillor for Planning – Councillor Sanderson, set out the report and thanked officers for their hard work in assessing all of the necessary detail. It was noted that some of the changes the Cabinet had approved that had now taken place had led to a far smoother application process.

In response to questions from the Cabinet, the Executive Councillor for Planning – Councillor Sanderson, advised that as part of the Local Plan update, a new infrastructure delivery plan was being developed by working with all of the Council's infrastructure partners and they would continue to have sight of allocations as the Local Plan progressed. There was regular conversation with the IDB, County Councils and Highways England. There was also an infrastructure delivery studied baseline assessment which had been published, and which would be going to a stage 2 assessment to be completed by Spring 2026, as one of the key elements of evidence to support the Local Plan.

To allow for Cabinet Members to vacate the room during the discussion of the applications which they had declared an interest on, the debate and vote on each recommendation was taken in turn.

<u>Recommendations A and B.</u>

The recommendations were noted.

<u>Recommendation C – Huntingdon Campus</u>

The recommendation was approved.

<u>Recommendation D – Warner's Park Pavillion – St Ives</u>

Councillor Kerr vacated her seat and left the room during the consideration of this recommendation.

The Cabinet noted that officers continued to work hard with applicants; it was always disappointing if an applicant got a recommendation to decline, but it was pleasing to see that officers had worked hard with applicants who had previously been declined. It was hoped that the feedback officers had given St Ives would be taken as useful feedback.

The recommendation was approved.

Recommendation E – Kimbolton & Stonely Playgrounds

Councillor Kerr took back her seat at the meeting.

In response to a question from the Cabinet, the Executive Councillor for Planning – Councillor Sanderson, advised that there would be offset funding from the S106 contributions that would be made which would enable some potential other funding if the Parish Council wished to expand the facilities at a future date. The Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing - Councillor Wakeford also advised that there was not a direct relationship between growth having happened and CIL compensating for that, it was around enabling future growth and development.

The recommendation was approved.

Recommendation G – Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon

Councillor Conboy vacated her seat during the consideration of this recommendation.

The Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing - Councillor Wakeford, commented that as Portfolio Holder for the Market Towns project, he had been involved in supporting the museum in previous efforts to be in a position where it could compete for funding from other sources but had not involved in this particular bid.

In response to a question from the Cabinet, the Executive Councillor for Planning – Councillor Sanderson advised that there had been previous funding from the Council in relation to this project but that was in relation to the Phase 1 preparation of concept designs and due diligence in order for the acquisition of a new building. This was Phase 2 and was in relation to supporting the repair and renovation of the building acquired in Phase 1.

The recommendation was approved.

Recommendation H – King George V Pavilion, Huntingdon

Councillor Conboy took back her seat at the meeting.

Councillors Harvey and Sanderson vacated their seats during the consideration of this recommendation.

The recommendation was approved.

Councillors Harvey and Sanderson took back their seats at the meeting.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet

(a) noted the updates on delivery in relation to the projects previously allocated or in receipt of CIL funding commitments (see Appendix 1);

(b) noted any new allocated CIL projects for £100,000.00 or less approved by delegation on 3rd October 2025 (see Appendix 2);

(c) agreed officer recommendations at Paragraph 4.2 to approve funding for Huntingdon Campus Skills training facility;

(d) agreed officer recommendations at Paragraph 4.3 to decline funding for Warner's Park Pavilion, St Ives extension and refurbishment;

(e) agreed officer recommendations at Paragraph 4.4 to approve a lesser amount of funding for Kimbolton and Stonely Playgrounds;

(f) agreed officer recommendations at Paragraph 4.5 to approve funding for HDC One Leisure St Ives for a new 3G Pitch;

(g) agreed officer recommendation at Paragraph 4.6 to approve funding for Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon expansion project; and

(h) agreed officer recommendation at Paragraph 4.7 to approve funding for King George V Pavilion, Huntingdon redevelopment.

Councillor Conboy retook the Chair.

41 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

42 Huntingdon Sport and Health Hub - RIBA Stage 2

An exempt report by the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book).

Following a detailed presentation from the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment the Cabinet received responses to a number of questions which had been raised during the course of their discussions.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet approved the recommendations in the exempt report now submitted.

Chair

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 21 October 2025

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson, J E Harvey, S A Howell, J E Kerr, B A Mickelburgh, T D Sanderson and S Wakeford.

43 Members' Interests

Councillor Ferguson declared an interest under Minute Number 25/44 as he had a friendship with a consultant for the Lodge Farm development in the Local Plan strategic site, but the friendship was not consequential enough to have discussed any of the sites in the Local Plan, and he took part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Howell sought advice regarding Minute Number 25/44 because the business premises which she rented was on a site also owned by the people doing the development in Yaxley. However, following advice from the Chief Executive, from information disclosed by Councillor Howell, it appeared this site was already subject to a planning permission and would not be affected by future site allocation. Therefore, this did not meet the threshold for declaring an interest.

44 Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046 and supporting Sustainability Appraisal

A report by the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing which sought agreement from Cabinet to publish the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046 and its supporting Sustainability Appraisal for public engagement.

The Executive Councillor for Planning – Councillor Sanderson, set out the report and thanked the officers involved for their tireless work, and the Local Plan Advisory Group who had worked hard on very much a cross-party basis.

In response to questions from the Cabinet, the Planning Policy Team Leader – Clare Bond, advised that the consultation plan had been brought to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) in July which set out the main elements of engagement. There would be 8 exhibitions around the District focused in the areas most likely to be subject to growth. There was a consultation portal which would be simple for people to use, video guides for people to register who were not yet on the portal including how to register and make comments. There would be leaflets and posters and the comms team had done some social media work. Furthermore, there would be banners in the park again which had been successful previously, receiving 600 hits on the QR code.

The Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection – Clara Kerr, also advised that during the last round of consultation, they had received the highest number of responses they had ever received, so clearly the methodology was working. She thanked Parishes and those who had worked with them to promote the Local Plan as it had gone on and encouraged Members to promote it in their community/Parish. The timetable of events was clear, and it would be appreciated if through their platforms Members could highlight the importance of coming along to these events. Finally, she thanked everyone who had promoted the Local Plan during the last round and looked forward to working positively through this round.

The Cabinet were pleased to see the Local Plan put in front of them, making specific reference to the critical work of the Local Plan Advisory Group; it was valuable that sort of body existed on a cross-party basis and had worked so constructively and tirelessly. Furthermore, the Cabinet were proud that in the draft vision they would be working with nature to help achieve carbon net zero, boosting flood defences, supporting rivers/flood meadows and enhancing biodiversity. One of the draft strategic objectives was specifically about renewable energy regeneration being embedded through new developments. It was not just about the allocation of sites, it was about affordable housing, a mix of social housing with commercial, renewable energy, water efficiency and trying to minimise embodied carbons in buildings the Council would build, and also about its historic buildings.

The Cabinet were looking forward to developers and interested parties having their say through this document. When looking at planning decisions, the Local Plan shaped that thinking so it was important that it be forward looking and fit for purpose over the coming years. All feedback received informed thinking and was critical. Furthermore, the Cabinet thanked officers involved for their work; it had been a fabulous achievement to get it this far and would be an important legacy as a District Council. It was important to continue the work because it would set the right pattern for the Huntingdonshire area when moving through LGR. It was a real priority for residents and stood our communities in good stead.

The Leader – Councillor Conboy and the Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director (Place) advised the Cabinet that given the timing of the plan, there was also the challenge of ensuring the documentation aligned across the Tiers of Government, and it was noted that the Local Growth Plan was on the agenda for the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority's meeting the following day. The Local Growth Plan was referenced in the proposed Preferred Issues & Options, but Councillor Conboy wished to ensure that the two documents remained in alignment following the CPCA meeting. It was important to ensure the right delegations were in place to allow officers to make any necessary amendments following their meeting to ensure documentation aligned.

This was confirmed as being the case, with any necessary amendments being able to be picked up prior to publication of the plan.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet

(1) approved the contents of the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046 for public engagement;

(2) approved the contents of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046 for public engagement; and

(3) granted delegated authority to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection to make any necessary typographical or other minor changes to the documents prior to their publication.

Chair

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Public
Key Decision – No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction Technical Advice Note (TAN)
Meeting/Date:	Cabinet – 18th November 2025
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning
Report by:	Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:
The Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction Technical Advice Note (TAN), attached as Appendix 1, provides updated guidance to support the implementation of current and emerging Local Plan policies on climate resilience, sustainable construction, and design quality. It builds upon the Council's adopted Design Guide SPD (2017) and responds to new requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Building Regulations and the Council's Climate Strategy (2023).

The TAN consolidates expectations on a range of matters including energy efficiency, low-carbon heat, water management, air quality, biodiversity net gain, sustainable materials, and active travel. Adoption of the TAN will:

1. Support delivery of corporate priorities on climate action, net zero, health, and nature recovery
2. Provide clarity for applicants, agents and decision-makers, improving scheme quality and consistency.
3. Reduce delays by setting clear expectations at pre-application and validation stages.

Cabinet is asked to approve the TAN as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications across the district.

Recommendation(s):
Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED**:

1. To adopt the Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction TAN (Appendix 1) as non-statutory guidance.
2. To delegate authority to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, to make any necessary typographical, visual or other minor changes to the Document prior to its publication.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to adopt the Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction TAN, providing practical guidance to support the implementation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (and emerging Local Plan) and the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and adopted a Climate Strategy (2023) committing to net zero for its own operations by 2040. The Huntingdonshire Place Strategy 2050 also establishes "Journey 4: Environmental Innovation" as a key priority, seeking zero-carbon development, local energy generation, and accelerated climate action. While the TAN does not form part of the statutory Development Plan and is not an adopted supplementary planning document, it does provide additional helpful guidance on how to incorporate an environmentally sustainable approach to delivering high quality new developments across the district. It aligns the government's ambition, with the Council's aspirations for more efficient, low carbon development.

2.2 The TAN:

- Interprets Local Plan policies (including LP10 The Countryside, LP11 Design Context, LP12 Design Implementation, LP14 Amenity, LP17 Parking Provision and Vehicular Movement and LP25 Housing Mix) in light of updated national guidance (NPPF 2024, Building Regulations Part F (Ventilation), L (Conservation of fuel and power), O (Overheating) and S (Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles), and the forthcoming Future Homes Standard 2025).
- Supports Draft Policies LP24 – Minimising Operational Energy Consumption and LP25 – Making Existing Buildings More Energy Efficient of the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046.
- Provides detailed design and construction guidance on:
    - The Energy Hierarchy
    - Passive Design
    - Building Insulation and Airtightness
    - Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recover
    - Decentralised energy systems
    - PV and solar Thermal Panels
    - Heat Pumps
    - Construction materials
    - Modern Methods of Construction
    - Waste
    - Water & Air Quality,
    - Nature conservation and biodiversity
    - EV Charging
    - Retrofitting
    - Traditional Buildings
    - Home Efficiency Grants

- Complements the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017) and site-specific Design Codes.

2.3 The TAN has been prepared by the HDC Urban Design Team in collaboration with HDC Conservation, Trees, Ecology, Landscape and Policy colleagues as well as the Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- Option A – Adopt the TAN (Recommended): Provides clarity, advice and guidance to applicants and developers, supporting corporate priorities.
- Option B – Publish TAN for further consultation prior to adoption: Allows wider stakeholder input but may delay adoption.
- Option C – Do nothing: Risks missed opportunities for sustainable development.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

4.1 Without adoption, there is a risk that applicants will lack clarity, resulting in missed opportunities for sustainable development within the District.

4.2 With adoption, the TAN provides clarity, strengthens the Council's ability to promote environmentally sustainable design and will help to deliver the draft vision to net zero set out in the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046.

5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Cabinet adoption: 18th November 2025.

5.2 Publication of TAN and adoption statement on HDC website: within 2 weeks of Cabinet decision.

5.3 Briefing sessions for Development Management officers and Agents' Forum: within 8 weeks of adoption.

6. LINK TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES, THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

6.1 The TAN supports the Corporate Plan (2023–2028):

- Priority 2 – Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations (climate action, health, housing).
- Priority 3 – Doing our core work well (efficient, effective service delivery).

6.2 It also supports Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy 2050, aligning with Local Plan policies and national legislation.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The draft TAN was circulated internally in June 2025, with feedback incorporated from service areas across the Council. Early engagement has also taken place with Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce.

7.2 Key changes included:

- Stronger alignment with the Corporate Plan priorities (2023–2028).
- Expanded sections on biodiversity net gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and tree canopy cover.
- Updated references to Building Regulations and Future Homes Standard.
- Clarifications on energy hierarchy, passive design, water management, waste hierarchy and retrofit measures.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Adoption of the TAN as non-statutory guidance is within the Council's powers. Once adopted, it will be used as guidance for applicants and developers.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment of the TAN, which is attached as Appendix 2 has been completed. The assessment shows that the guidance document will have a neutral and / or positive impact on equality and diversity.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The TAN has been prepared in-house using existing resources. No additional staff or budget is required. Publication and training costs are minimal and covered within existing budgets.

11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The TAN is expected to have positive impacts on health and wellbeing through improved thermal comfort, air quality, and opportunities for active travel and access to nature.

12. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The TAN will have strong positive environmental and climate impacts, promoting carbon reduction, climate resilience, water efficiency, biodiversity net gain and sustainable construction.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

13.1 Adopting the TAN will:

- Deliver updated guidance in line with the Corporate Plan and Climate Strategy.
- Support the Council's statutory planning role and climate emergency commitments.
- Improve efficiency at pre-application and validation stages.

14. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Environmentally Sustainable Design and Construction Technical Advice Note

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017)
- Climate Strategy and Action Plan (2023)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
- Building Regulations (Parts F, L, O, S)
- Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046

CONTACT OFFICERS

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Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction

Technical Advice Note

DRAFT

November 2025

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Introduction

Huntingdonshire District Council have recognised a Climate Crisis and Ecological emergency in the District and have adopted a Climate Strategy (22nd February 2023) that sets out the priorities to achieve the commitment of being a net zero carbon Council for its own operations by 2040 in response to a global issue. In addition, the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028, recognises the importance of the climate agenda in creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations (see below).

The Huntingdonshire Place Strategy 2050 articulates Huntingdonshire's aspirations and ambitions and maps out plans for place, people, economy, and the environment. Journey 4 Environmental Innovation, seeks to transition towards zero carbon development, utilising natural assets, being self-sufficient with our energy production and accelerate climate action.

The UK is committed to achieving 'net zero' by 2050, which is enshrined in law through the Climate Change Act (2008) making the UK the first major economy to legally bind itself to a net zero target.

Improving housing

We want everyone to live in a safe, high-quality home regardless of health, stage of life, family structure, income and tenure type. Homes should be energy efficient and allow people to live healthy and prosperous lives. New homes should be zero carbon ready and encourage sustainable travel.

Forward-thinking economic growth

We want our local economy to attract businesses that prioritise reducing their carbon footprint. A place where businesses choose to start-up, grow and invest in high-value jobs so they and our residents and high streets, can flourish and thrive. Local people should be able to develop their skills to take advantage of these opportunities, with businesses and education providers working more closely together to deliver an inclusive economy.

Lowering carbon emissions

We will take positive action to reduce carbon emissions and become a net zero carbon Council by 2040. We will enable and encourage local people and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity across Huntingdonshire.

Huntingdonshire Corporate Plan 2023-2028 - Priority 2: Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations

Purpose

Huntingdonshire District Council recognises the urgency of addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. Environmentally sustainable planning not only mitigates negative impacts but actively contributes to climate resilience and the enhancement of the natural environment. As a local planning authority, the Council is committed to using its influence to drive design and construction practices that are fit for the future.

This Technical Advice Note (TAN) has been prepared to support and complement the implementation of the Council's Climate Strategy, guiding individuals, developers, businesses and communities on the pathway to Net Zero. It provides practical guidance for all scales of development on site-specific design and sustainable construction, and is intended to complement the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017), which sets out principles for good urban design and includes approaches to achieving more sustainable development.

Recent updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) have broadened the environmental objectives for planning, shifting the goal from simply achieving a "low carbon future" to enabling a "net-zero future". This places new emphasis on a wider range of climate impacts, including overheating, water scarcity, nature recovery, flood and drought resilience, and protection against extreme weather. Environmentally sustainable development must therefore go beyond energy efficiency and carbon reduction to respond holistically to environmental challenges.

Buildings contribute around 25% of the UK's total carbon emissions, according to the UK Green Building Council. In Huntingdonshire, carbon emissions stand at 5.3 tonnes per person per year, marginally above the UK average of 5.2. Overall, the district's emissions are 88% higher than the national average, primarily due to the scale of road traffic (Source: Huntingdonshire BEIS Emission Data 2020, Huntingdonshire District Council Climate Strategy).

Development proposals in the district must play an active role in tackling the Climate Crisis, contributing to the transition to a low carbon future and reducing emissions wherever possible.

The starting point is to maximise energy efficiency - both in new development and through the retrofitting of existing buildings. This reduces energy use, supports affordability by lowering running costs, and helps to address fuel poverty. However, preparing Huntingdonshire for a changing climate requires a broader shift in how we design and construct buildings. Everyone, including the construction industry, must use less energy, fewer materials, and fewer natural resources.

Exemplary development will take an integrated approach, embedding multifunctional solutions that support both people and planet. For example, it might use repurposed materials to deliver thermal efficiency, or deliver biodiversity enhancements alongside natural flood management and surface water filtration.

Truly environmentally sustainable design reflects not only our duty to future generations, but also the Council's Corporate Plan priority to keep residents out of crisis. While the scale and pace of change required may be daunting, it also presents many local benefits:

- New opportunities for skills and employment in low-carbon and green construction industries;
- Healthier homes, better able to protect residents from overheating in summer and cold conditions in winter - especially for vulnerable people;
- Lower energy bills, supporting financial resilience and reducing household running costs;
- Cleaner air, with benefits for public health and wellbeing;
- Support for nature recovery, helping to stem the loss of local species and habitats.

This guidance is intended to be read as a whole document so that the interrelationship of all aspects of environmentally sustainable design and construction can be understood to enable a whole building approach to be taken.

Using this document, alongside adopted planning policies, applicants and developers can take responsibility for delivering climate-conscious, future-proof development. Together, we can create sustainable places for the people of Huntingdonshire - now and for generations to come.

Energy Efficiency Measures

This document sets out the recommended energy efficiency measures and practical guidance to be considered in the design of new development proposals. It includes the following:

- Planning and Building Regulations
- The Energy Hierarchy
- Passive Design
- Building Insulation and Airtightness
- Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery
- Decentralised Energy Systems including district heating
- Photovoltaic (PV) / Solar Thermal Panels
- Heat pumps

Further considerations:

- Construction Materials
- Modern Methods of Construction
- Waste
- Water Management and Air Quality
- Nature Conservation and Biodiversity
- EV Charging
- Retrofitting and Home Efficiency Grants
- Traditional and Historic Buildings






Planning and Building Regulations

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced, with section 14 of the Framework giving consideration to the role of planning in responding to our changing climate.

This sets out a clear role for planning in supporting ***'…the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure'*** (NPPF 2024, Paragraph 161).

The NPPF retains the key link between planning policy and the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008 and means Local Plans will have a duty to reduce the carbon emissions associated with new development, contributing to the UK's commitment to achieving net zero by 2050.

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (adopted 2019) sets out the Council's approach to securing sustainable development from 2011 to 2036 in order to meet identified needs. Policy LP 12 – Design Implementation, encourages sustainable design and construction methods amongst other considerations to ensure that proposals makes efficient use of energy, water and other resources. The optional standards as set out in Building Regulations Part G (Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency) are required for to all new residential development in Huntingdonshire.

The Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standards are widely accepted as the best way to improve standards for non-residential buildings moving towards a zero carbon target. LP12 part j requires all new non-residential development to meet the BREEAM 'Good' standard, which is considered to be an achievable standard. The Council would support proposals that seek to achieve the higher 'Excellent' standard.

In addition to promoting environmental efficiency measures LP12 requires that new developments should be designed and built such that they will be durable and facilitate flexible usage for their anticipated lifetime. Design should reflect the desirability of minimising maintenance costs both of buildings and landscaping.

On 24 January 2023 Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet agreed to the preparation of a full update to the adopted Local Plan which will set out a plan for how the district will grow over future decades. This provides the opportunity for future polices in relation to sustainable design and renewable technologies in supporting the UK's 2050 Net Zero target.

Building Regulations

Building Regulations play a crucial role in reducing carbon emissions from new and existing buildings, helping the UK meet its net-zero target by 2050. They set minimum energy efficiency standards for homes and commercial buildings, ensuring that developments are more sustainable.

Building regulations parts F, L, O and S seek to improve the energy efficiency of buildings to help the country move towards its targets for Net Zero by 2050.

- Part F – **Ventilation**. This looks at ventilation in buildings to increase ventilation rates to compensate for airtight buildings.
- Part L – **Conservation of fuel and power.** This looks at the energy efficiency of properties and makes it mandatory to cut carbon emissions of fossil fuel heating systems in new homes by 30% and in non-domestic buildings by 27% though better insulation or renewable energy sources.
- Part O - **Overheating**. This looks at design strategies to prevent overheating in buildings.
- Part S – **Infrastructure for charging in electric vehicles**. This includes a mandate for EV charging points for new homes, offices and major renovations.

These reductions are a step towards the Governments anticipated Future Homes and Buildings Standards to be introduced in 2025 which will require all new homes to produce 75-80% less carbon emissions. These introduce further requirements for energy efficiency and heating for homes and non-domestic buildings. Once implemented, no further work will be needed for new buildings to produce zero carbon emissions as the electricity grid decarbonises (source: Future Homes and Building Standards Consultation)

The key Government goal is for all new Homes to be ‘Zero Carbon Ready’ meaning they will be built to such high efficiency standards that they won’t require retrofitting later to meet the UK’s net zero 2050 target.

The Future Homes Standards will phase out fossil fuel heating (such as gas boilers) and prioritises low-carbon systems like Air Source or Ground Source Heat Pumps, Heat Networks (district heating systems) and Hydrogen-ready boilers (if hydrogen infrastructure is developed) and focuses on the fabric efficiency by improving insulation and minimising heat loss by using airtight construction.

All proposals for new buildings should therefore seek to promote energy efficiency by adopting best practice in all aspects of design including but not limited to site layout, building orientation, the layout of rooms and uses within buildings and the use of landscaping for shelter and shade.

Building Regulations acknowledge, energy efficiency improvements will be sought for historic buildings where they do not harm the special architectural and historic interest of those buildings

Such measures can be incorporated through the design process without adding to costs.

Applicants and developers must consider the most up to date building regulations at the time of their development proposals to ensure that they comply.

Further information:

Building Regulations Approved Documents

3C Building Control

The Energy Hierarchy

The Energy Hierarchy offers a framework and a common sense approach to designing and constructing buildings to reduce carbon emissions. It is strongly encouraged that the Energy Hierarchy is considered at the early stages of the design process to enable development proposals to be effective and cost-efficient.

The Energy Hierarchy follows a three-step approach prioritising energy efficiency and sustainability.

What development does it apply to?

The energy hierarchy principles can apply to all types of land uses such as housing, offices, industrial development, retail, community and leisure facilities, including:

- New buildings
- Refurbishment or retrofitting to existing buildings
- Extensions to existing buildings
- Public areas such as landscaped areas around the buildings and new or improved open spaces.

Applications for Large Scale Major Development as defined within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 are encouraged to submit an energy statement showing how this hierarchy has been applied.

Be Lean – Use Less Energy

Before any mechanical systems are considered development should be made as energy efficient as possible by having good standards of insulation and maximising the use of sunlight, thermal mass and site microclimate to provide natural lighting, heating and cooling of buildings. Green roofs and walls and high ceilings and windows heights (for natural light and ventilation) are preferred

Be Clean – Supply Energy Efficiently and Cleanly

If mechanical heating, cooling and ventilation are needed, this needs to be as efficient as possible. The priority is to use local ("decentralised") energy sources.

Be Green – Use Renewable Energy Sources

There may still be demand for energy (for appliances, lighting and machinery). As much as possible this remaining energy demand should be met through zero and low carbon energy sources

Passive Design

Passive design responds to local climate and site conditions to maximise building users' comfort and health whilst minimising energy use, without the use of 'active' mechanical systems. The key elements of passive design focus on minimising energy demand by optimising natural resources like sunlight, shade, ventilation and thermal mass. These are the core elements:

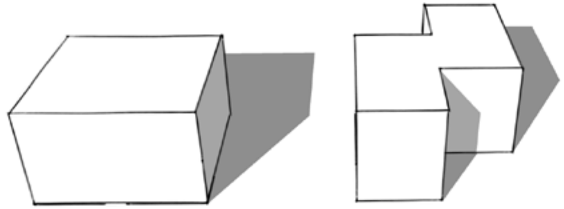
- Building Layout and Form
- Building Orientation and Passive Solar Heating
- Preventing Overheating
- Thermal Mass
- Passive Cooling and Ventilation

Building layout and form

The building form should be as simple and compact as possible as these have a lower surface-to-volume ratio, meaning less exterior surface is exposed to external conditions. This reduces heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer. More complex building forms increase the surface area, leading to more heat exchange with the environment, which can raise energy consumption for heating and cooling.

The form of new buildings are encouraged to reflect the traditional simple 'wide frontage / shallow plan' building forms found in Huntingdonshire (see section 3.7 of the Huntingdonshire Design Guide). This plan type offers distinct advantages for securing more sustainable development, in terms of minimising resource use and producing buildings that are adaptable and long-lasting. This is because:

- It enables good penetration of daylight and sunlight as such buildings are often no more than one room deep, which also permits natural cross-ventilation.
- It is suited to steeper roof pitches, increasing the scope to utilise the roof space for accommodation.
- The width of the plan makes it relatively easy to add extensions at the rear.



Volume: 600m3 — External Wall Area: 240m³

Volume: 600m3 — External Wall Area: 300m³

Increase of 20%, therefore increase in heat loss

Example of building form and impact this can have on the external wall area and increasing heat loss

	Type	Form Factor	Efficiency
	End mid-floor apartment	0.8	Most Efficient
	Mid-terrace house	1.7	
	Semi-detached house	2.1	
	Detached House	2.5	
	Bungalow	3.0	Least Efficient

Above: Efficiency decreases where the surface area increases in relation to its floor area increasing the space heating demand (source: Alconbury Weald KP3 Design Code)

Building Orientation and Passive Solar Heating

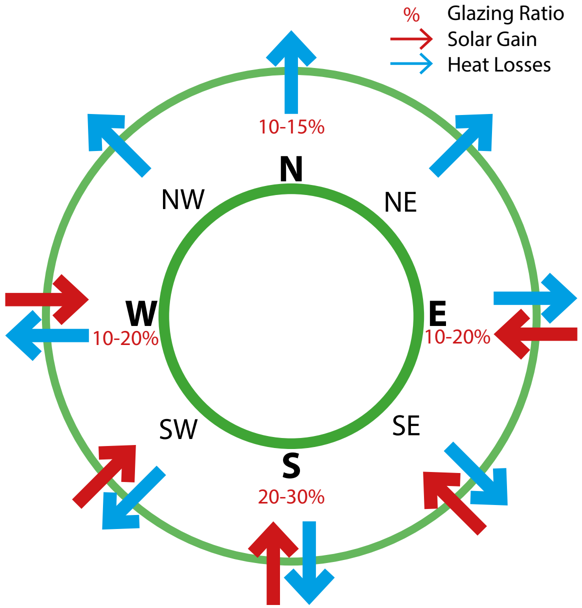
The orientation and massing of the building should be optimised where possible to allow useful solar gains and prevent significant overshadowing in winter. New buildings should ideally be orientated with the longer building elevation within +/- 30 degrees of south and site layouts should seek to maximise the number of buildings with the main habitable spaces that has at least one window on a wall facing 90 degrees of due south.

Ensuring the right glazing-to-wall ratio on each façade is a key feature of energy efficient design. Minimising heat loss to the north (smaller windows) while providing sufficient solar heat gain from the south (larger windows). The glazing ratio illustration below gives an overview of the advised ratio of the window area compared to the overall wall area in a building based on the orientation.

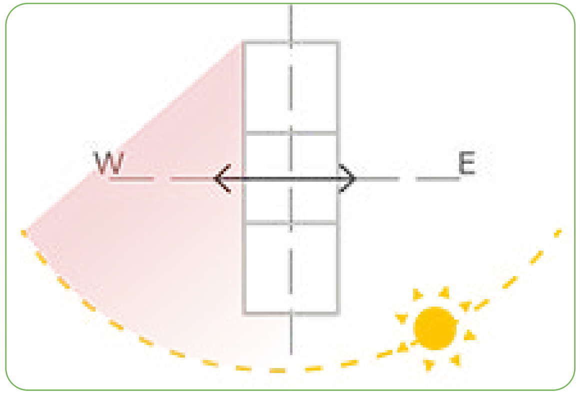
To maximise useful solar gains in winter, rooms that are occupied more frequently should be positioned along the south side of the building ideally:

- Living rooms face south or west
- Kitchen north or east
- Consider north facing home offices to avoid glare
- Bedrooms should be avoided on the west elevations, because these receive solar gains at the end of the day just before they are occupied, so are more prone to overheating.

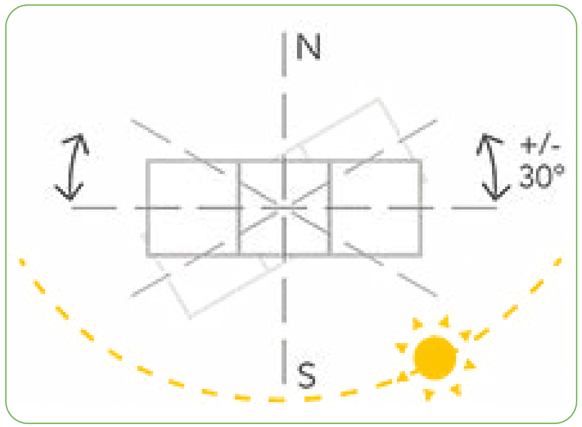
The size and shape of windows can have significant impacts on the levels of daylight and solar gain. Horizontal windows are more efficient than vertical windows in terms of daylight distribution and increasing the amount of openable areas for ventilation. They are typically easier to shade, lowering the risk of overheating. Horizontal windows in bedrooms also provide privacy and space for furniture. Glazing below 800mm of finished floor level provides little benefit to internal daylight levels.



Recommend glazing ratios based on facard orientation



Inefficient Design – Avoid large areas of elevation facing east west as this can mean the building is harder to protect from overheating (the lower sun angles restricts solar shading options) and less of the building will be able to benefit from solar gains (Source: Essex Design Guide)



Optimised Design - Ideally south facing allows for solar winter gain. Elevations facing +/- 30° south will benefit from useful solar gains in the winter (Source: Essex Design Guide)

Preventing overheating

When orientating buildings south there is an elevated risk of overheating in summer. However, this can be counteracted with solar shading, applied to south, east and west elevations.

- This can include horizontal Briese soleil. In summer, when the sun is at a higher angle in the sky, they shade from unwanted solar gain, but in the winter, when sun angles are lower, useful solar gain still enters the space. For the depth of horizontal brise soleil, a useful rule of thumb is half the window height. In practice though, any amount of shading will be beneficial.
- Balconies offer a similar opportunity to shade south facing windows. Stacked balconies rather than staggered balconies provide shade to lower floor levels. Fully inset balconies are encouraged to provide shade and improved privacy, but can create dimly lit rooms depending upon the balcony depth and orientation.
- East and west facades are harder to shade effectively. Horizontal brise soleil are not generally recommended as they can reduce useful solar gain in winter and cannot shade sun early or late in the day, however vertical brise soleil allows light to penetrate.
- Overhangs, pergolas and deciduous trees can also block summer sun while allowing winter sunlight.

South facing facard incorporating horizontal Brise Soleil

East facing facard incorporating vertical Brise Soleil - New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald

Inset balconies at Alconbury Weald provide shade and improved privacy

Stacked balconies at Alconbury Weald provide shading to the balcony below

Thermal Mass

Thermal mass refers to materials that can absorb, store and release heat over time. It helps stabilise indoor temperatures by reducing temperature fluctuations between day and night.

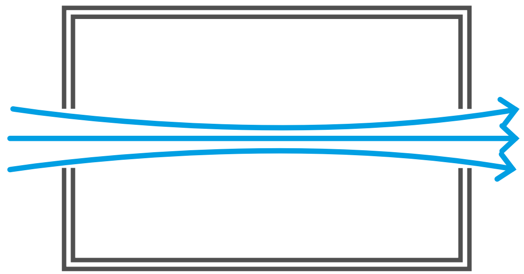
Common high thermal mass materials include dense materials like concrete, brick, tiles and rammed earth. During the day the materials absorb excess heat from sunlight and internal sources. At night, when temperatures drop, it slowly releases stored heat keeping indoor spaces warmer.

Passive Cooling and Ventilation

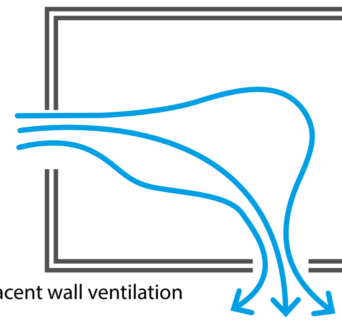
To improve thermal comfort in summer, it is important to maximise natural ventilation. Where possible buildings should be dual aspect, with fully openable windows that are placed strategically to allow for cross ventilation. Adjacent wall ventilation is less effective but better than single aspect buildings.

Stack ventilation (hot air rising and escaping through high vents or clerestory (high level) windows) can also remove heat naturally. This could be achieved through incorporating a chimney style feature on the roof of a building that would allow ventilation of a landing / stairs, and would also provide visual interest to the roof.

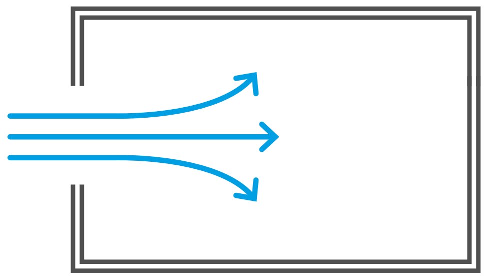
To maximise natural ventilation, room heights of at least 2.5m and preferably 2.7m or more are recommended, provided that the resulting building is of a sympathetic scale and mass to its immediate context. For single sided ventilation the room depth should not exceed 2.5 times the room height. For cross ventilation the room depth should not exceed 5 times the room height.



Cross ventilation



Adjacent wall ventilation

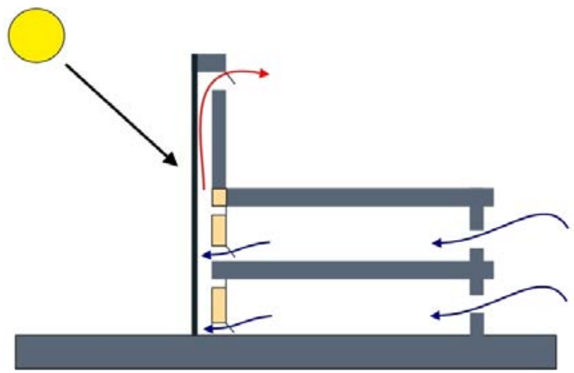


Single aspect buildings reduce opportunities for passive cooling

When designing for ventilation, special consideration should be given to the requirements of Building Regulations Part O, particularly around noise, pollution, security and protection from falling and entrapment.

Where noise, security or pollution reduces the ability to fully open windows, alternative means of ventilation should be considered:

- **Acoustic restrictions** – reduced opening, boosted mechanical ventilation, summer bypass, MVHR air tempering module, mechanical cooling. Mechanical cooling should only be used once all other methods of ventilation have been considered.
- **Security risks** - mesh, bars, louvres, grills, lockable shutters
- **Pollution** – mechanical ventilation and plants/trees



Passive solar chimney (source: www.designingbuildings.co.uk)

Building Insulation and Airtightness

Building insulation is a key energy saving measure. Insulation reduces heat lost and heat gain by slowing the transfer of heat through walls, roofs and floors. It also lowers energy consumption by maintaining a more stable indoor temperature, and reduces the workload on heating, ventilation and air conditioning. This means less energy is consumed in the day to day running of the building which is essential for reducing a buildings carbon footprint.

Building Regulations Part L sets out minimum insulation levels. The type of insulation selected is an important factor in minimising any environmental impact. There are ecological and carbon impacts associated with conventional insulation materials such as foamed glass; glass wool; mineral/rock wool; expanded and extruded polystyrene; Rigid Urethane Foams; Vermiculite; and Woodwool Slabs, from their manufacture through to their disposal.

Natural insulation products are encouraged (e.g. sheep's wool, hemp or wood fibre) because they have a lot less impact on the environment than conventional insulation products; are made from renewable plant or animal sources; produced with low energy use; use only natural additives; are biodegradable; and have an ability to 'breathe' so can absorb airborne moisture.

Glass wool insultation batts being installed in a full-fill cavity wall (source: www.selfbuildanddesign.com)

Baumit wall insulation being applied to a multi-residential building. External wall insulation is well suited to old single-brick buildings, being an effective way of treating condensation when insulation is required on one or two walls (source: www.selfbuildanddesign.com)

Natural Sheeps Wool insulation (source: https://havelockwool.com)

Wood Fibre insulation in timber frame building (source: www.carpenteroak.com)

Compressed thermal insulated hemp fibre panels

Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR)

Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) is a whole house ventilation system that both supplies and extracts air throughout a property. Heat recovery is an option used in domestic dwellings and helps to reduce the heating and cooling demands of buildings. Not only does this unit supply air into living spaces, and extract air from kitchen and bathroom spaces, it does this using very little energy.

Heat recovery systems typically recover about 73–95% of the heat in exhaust air and have significantly improved the energy efficiency of buildings (Source: www.envirovent.com)

MVHR is the ideal choice for:

- A full renovation or building a new house rather than a retrofit.
- A whole house ventilation solution is required.
- Making your home energy efficient.

It is important that the MVHR unit is positioned as close as possible to an external wall to prevent heat loss from the ductwork that connects to the outside. It is important that ducts are accurately fitted with adequate insulation to prevent heat loss, and generally ductwork should avoid having sharp bends which could affect pressure loss and flow. MVHR units include filters that should be changed regularly (usually at least once per year but check the manufacturer's instructions).

There is a myth that 'sealing up' a building means you can no longer open the windows. This is not true. The benefit of an MVHR is that you do not have to open windows in winter for fresh air, letting the heat escape. Occupants can open windows and use the building / dwelling normally.

When using the unit it is important that the user understands how to operate it to maintain optimum performance.

Typical domestic MVHR system fitted in the roof space (source: https://sgs-energy.co.uk).

How does the MVHR system work?

3. Replacement outside air is continuously supplied into the property. It is passed through a filter and the heat exchanger (where it picks up the recovered heat) and is then supplied to living and bedrooms

1. From bathroom, wc's and the kitchen, the MVHR system is extracting air containing moisture, odours and pollutants

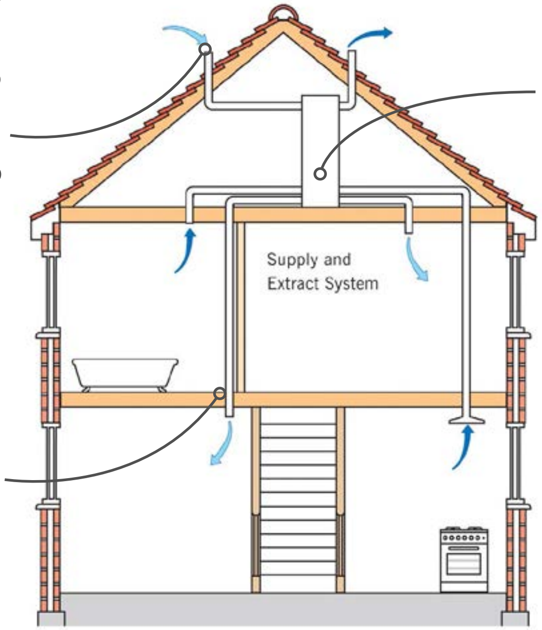


Illustration shows MVHR in house mounted in loft. In apartment unit usually located in cupboard

2. As air is extracted it passes through a heat exchanger recovering up to 95%* of heat inside the heat recovery unit.

*Heat recovery % varies based on brand make and model

4. When outside air temperature increases, the heat recovery mode is switched off to avoid overheating and increasing the internal temperature (temp point is pre-set on the unit) - this is called the Summer By Pass Mode

(Source: www.hvr-group.com)

Decentralised Energy Systems

Decentralised Energy Schemes (also known as distributed energy systems) use a series of local systems generating heat and / or power (for space or water) at or near the point of use and uses local distribution networks to minimises energy that is lost in transmitting energy.

Examples of decentralised energy systems include heat networks, solar panel arrays, community wind farms, battery storage systems (such as a Tesla Powerwall paired with solar) and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging networks that integrate with local renewable energy sources.

Larger developments in Huntingdonshire have the opportunity to use energy more efficiently though Heat Networks (also known as District Heating), Combined Heat and Power (CHP) or Combined Cooling, Heating and Power (CCHP) systems. These systems are more efficient than individual heating systems because it centralises heat and / or energy generation, reducing heat loss and enabling the use of more efficient technologies and renewable energy sources.

The CHP systems require a relatively even and constant demand for energy. Area-wide schemes that cover mixed use development are therefore most likely to be viable.

When considering CHP systems the following order of preferences should be followed:

- Connect to an existing energy network, CHP or CCHP systems, including those on nearby housing estates.
- If the above is not possible, use a site-wide CHP/ CCHP system that connects different uses and / or groups of buildings, preferably powered by renewables.
- Assess the feasibility of extending the system to adjacent sites.
- If the above is not possible, communal heating or cooling systems should be used, preferably powered by renewables.
- If none of the above alternatives are feasible, other efficient systems should be considered, such as heat pumps or heat recovery ventilation. These systems should be powered by low or zero emission fuels.
- It is important that occupants understand how to use the energy features of a building efficiently.

Insulated underground district heating pipes. (source: www.pipefix.co.uk)

Swaffham Prior became the first UK village to retrofit a renewable heating network into an existing community (image source: tp-heatnetworks.org). For more information about the project visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/swaffham-prior-heat-network

Photovoltaic / Solar Thermal Panels

Photovoltaics (PV) convert sunlight directly into electricity. Solar thermal panels, also known as solar thermal collectors, are designed to absorb sunlight and convert it into heat. The following table illustrates the characteristics and differences between the two types of solar panels:

Feature	Solar Thermal	Photovoltaic
What it produces	Hot Water	Electricity
Made from	Metals like Copper and Glass	Silicon, Glass, Metals
Cost to start	Medium	Medium to High
How well it works (Efficiency*)	Very Good (about 80% effective)	Good (about 17-22% effective)

* defined as the amount of sun energy converted in useful energy

Photovoltaic (PV)

Photovoltaics (PV), capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity to use in your development. Installing solar panels lets you use free, renewable, clean electricity to power your appliances. You can sell extra electricity to the grid or store it for later use.

How do solar panels work?

1. When the sun shines on a solar panel, solar energy is absorbed by individual PV cells. These cells are made from layers of semi-conducting material, most commonly silicon.

Solar Thermal Panels

Photovoltaic Panels

2. The PV cells produce an electrical charge as they become energised by the sunlight. The stronger the sunshine, the more electricity generated. But cells don't need direct sunlight to work and can even work on cloudy days.
3. This electrical charge creates a direct current (DC) of electricity.
4. The direct current passes through a solar inverter to turn it into alternating current (AC) electricity. You need AC electricity to run your household appliances.

Where can solar panels be installed?

The ideal place to install solar panels is on a sloping roof, as the panels work best when angled towards the sun. Solar panels may be unsuitable on some roofs, but there are a few other options available to you:

- Flat roof
- Outbuildings
- Garden

What are the benefits of solar panels?

- Cut your electricity bills
- Sunlight is free, so once you've paid for the initial installation, your electricity costs will be reduced.
- Cut your carbon dioxide emissions
- Solar electricity is a clean, renewable energy source. A typical home solar panel system could save around one tonne of carbon per year. That's the equivalent of driving 3,600 miles, or from London to Bristol 30 times.
- Sell extra energy to the grid
- Export the electricity you can't use yourself and get paid for it. The Smart Export Guarantee lets you sell extra electricity to the grid.

Source: The Energy Savings Trust

Solar Thermal Panels

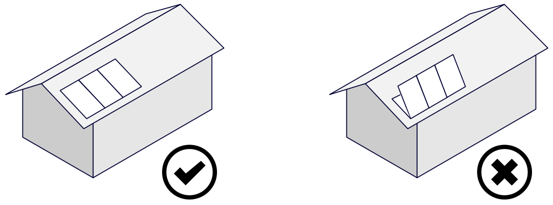
Solar Thermal Panels capture sunlight to generate heat, which is then used for heating water in residential, commercial, or industrial applications. Unlike solar photovoltaic (PV) panels that convert sunlight into electricity, solar thermal panels focus on harnessing solar energy for thermal (heat) purposes. Solar Thermal Panels have a similar design and appearance to PV panels.

Integration of Photovoltaics, solar thermal panels and battery storage

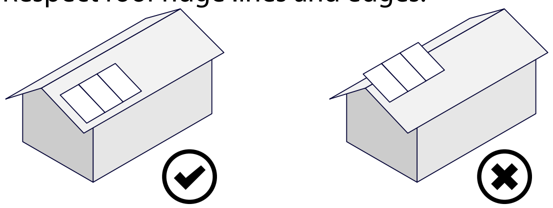
The integration of photovoltaics, solar thermal panels, and battery storage is strongly encouraged as part of sustainable design. Where proposed on buildings or dwellings, where practicable, these technologies should be sensitively designed to complement the visual character of the building and surrounding street scene. In particular, installations are encouraged to:

- Be located to maximise efficiency.
- Be sized, grouped, aligned, positioned in the same way along any terrace or group of buildings and with even distances to the roof margins where possible.
- Be laid in a regular pattern and fitted discretely and safely to roofs, either in line with the tiles or fitted snugly on top.
- Be located where flues, chimneys, skylights and dormers do not prohibit the installation of photovoltaics and solar thermal panels at a later stage, and consider potential overshadowing from these features if retrofitting.
- Be concealed behind a parapet on a flat roof, to reduce the prominence from the public realm (where it does not create shading of the panels, or create any other design or amenity impacts).
- Be installed by certified professionals and include simple, accessible controls with clear user guidance.

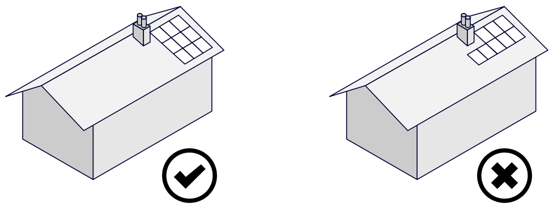
In line with roof slope:



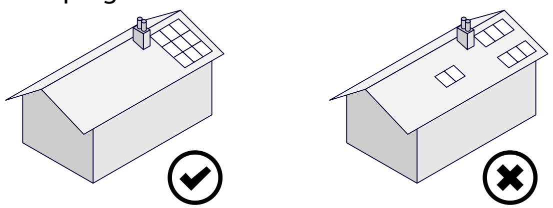
Respect roof ridge lines and edges:



Shape:



Grouping:



Solar Car Barns used at One Leisure St Ives

PV panels fitted flush with the roof tiles, Alconbury Weald

PV panels that have been retrofitted to the dwelling and sit proud of the roof tiles

Battery Storage

A battery storage system is encouraged to be used with photovoltaic (PV) solar panels to store excess electricity generated during daylight hours. Batteries allow developments to use the stored energy when the sun isn't shining (e.g. at night) and therefore maximize the usage of solar power and reduce reliance on the grid, which also helps to reduce electricity bills.

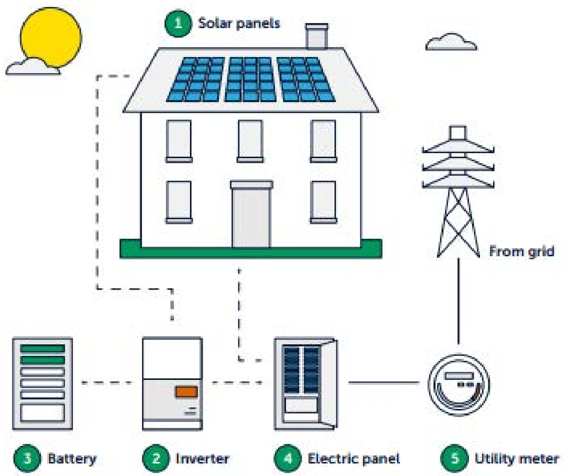
In addition to energy efficiency benefits, battery storage can enhance resilience in the event of a power cut by providing a backup source of electricity to users of the building (this can be particularly important for disabled occupants). Ensuring continuity of power can help maintain safety, comfort, and independence during outages.

Tesla Powerwall battery system (source: www.ecoaffect.org)

The installation of battery storage should not affect the overall appearance of the building or the street scene and should not be detrimental to the host building or any other adjacent buildings.

Any fire risks of proposed solar and (battery) energy storage systems should be considered and appropriately managed to minimise those risks.

How battery storage works with a Solar Array



When photovoltaic panels (1) are exposed to solar radiation, they produce Direct Current (DC) which is subsequently converted into Alternating Current (AC) by the inverter (2). This transformation is needed as most appliances can only use AC. The electricity can also be used to charge the battery (3). Surplus electricity can be exported to the grid.

Source: City Of Westminster: How to Retrofit Solar Panels March 2024

PV panels centred on the roof, The Boulivard, Alconbury Weald

Heat pumps

Although there are different kinds of heat pumps, they all work in the same way.
Heat pumps transfer heat from the outside environment into a building through a four-step process:

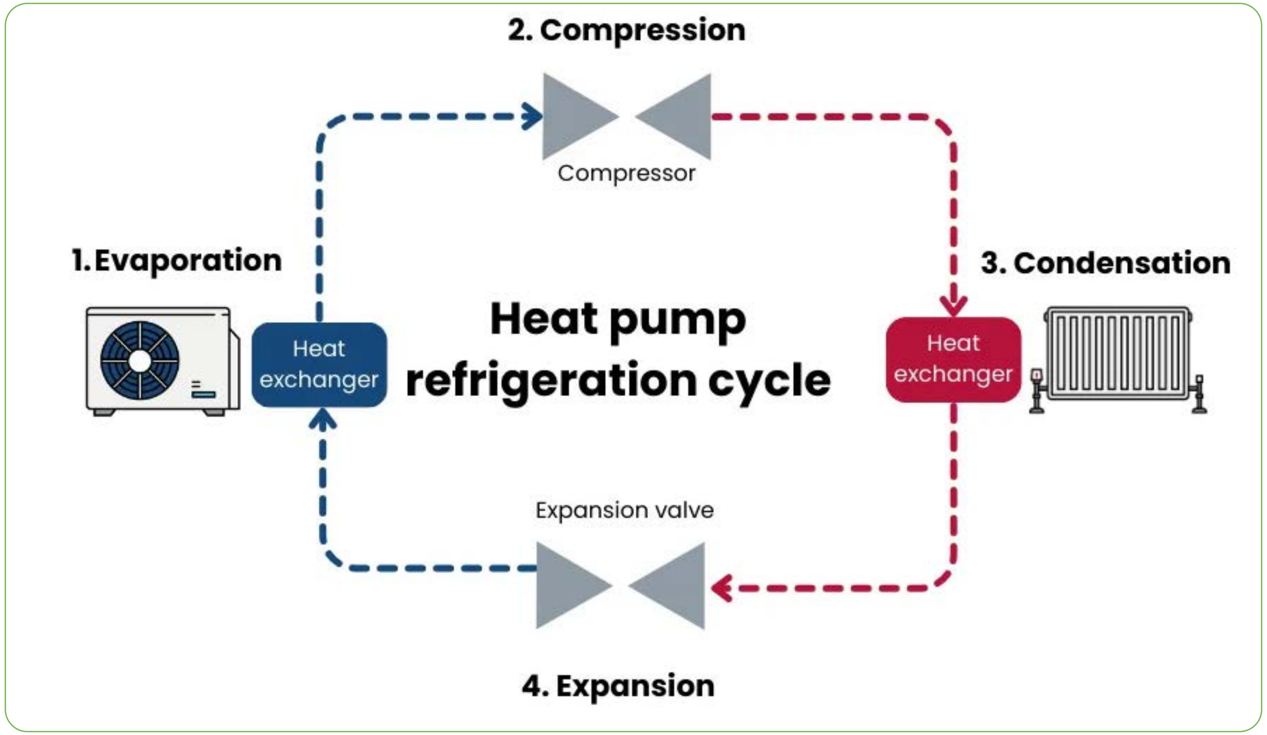
1. Evaporation
2. Compression
3. Condensation
4. Expansion

This is known as a refrigeration cycle. This heat pump diagram illustrates the process:

1. **Evaporation:** Heat pumps take in heat from the air or ground or sometimes water, transferring it to a heat exchanger that contains a liquid refrigerant. This refrigerant absorbs heat from the outside and evaporates, turning it into a low-pressure, low-temperature gas.
2. **Compression:** The gas is transferred to an electrically powered compressor that compresses the refrigerant. This compression increases the pressure of the gas, which raises the gas temperature.
3. **Condensation:** The hot gas reaches the heat exchanger, where it's circulated and transfers its heat to a cold water circuit. This causes the water to heat up as it absorbs heat from the gas. Once the water has reached the desired temperature, usually around 55 degrees, it's sent to radiators and underfloor heating to warm the building. By transferring heat to the water circuit, the refrigerant cools down enough to turn it back into a liquid.
4. **Expansion:** The cooled refrigerant moves through an expansion valve, which lowers the pressure and allows it to absorb more heat energy. From there it's pumped back into the heat exchanger to repeat the cycle.

There are some differences in how heat pumps work, depending on what type of heat pump you have.


Air Source Heat Pump



Four step process showing the function of heat pumps

Air Source Heat Pumps

How do air source heat pumps work?

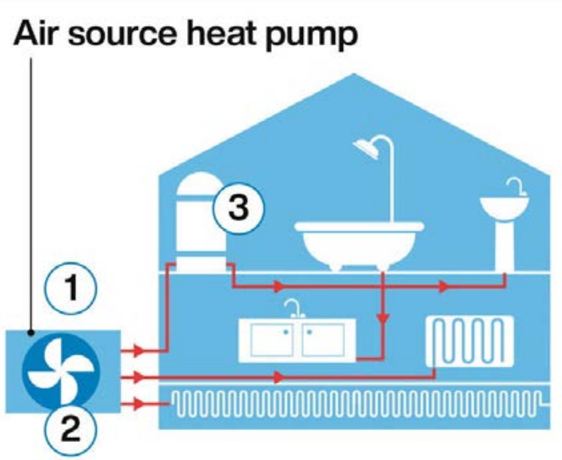
Air source heat pumps are a low-carbon heating technology that extracts warmth from the air outside and uses it to keep things warm inside. They are the most common type of domestic heat pump in the UK and are suitable for many types of buildings . They work differently to gas boilers. The heat pump is normally provided as a 'monoblock' that sits outside the home. The heat pump unit is around the size of two domestic wheelie bins side by side.

Air source heat pumps use the same kind of technology that keeps a fridge or freezer cool – but in reverse.

The whole process only uses electricity and has an energy efficiency of over 350% – compared to an A-rated gas boiler, which is about 90% efficient (Source: British Gas). They are:

- Much better for the environment – cutting the buildings CO2 emissions and improving local air quality
- Able to be used with solar panels for a more self-sufficient system

To get the best efficiency from heat pumps, the building will need to retain a lot of its heat through good insulation.



1. Pump absorbs heat from outside air into a liquid refrigerant.
2. Pump compresses liquid to increase temperature, then condenses liquid to release heat.
3. Heat sent to radiators and hot water cylinder.

(Source: www.independent.co.uk)

It is essential that an air source heat pump has access and the right space surrounding it:

- Be easily accessible for servicing or maintenance
- Be as close to the building as possible to reduce length of pipework and associated heat loss
- On the ground (not wall-mounted)
- Consider noise impact on the room it is attached to as well as on neighbouring dwellings / buildings
- Be installed to the rear of the building, away from the public realm
- Be concealed behind a solid boundary between private amenity space and public realm, if positioned to the side of the building, if the rear is not an option
- Be enclosed (on all sides except the front) within a robust, structure that is well-integrated within the design of the building it serves, if positioned to the front of the dwelling and only if all other options are demonstrably not feasible.
- Listed Building Consent may be required for any internal or external works to a Listed Building

ASHP encloscure (source: https://airsourcecovers.co.uk)

Ground Source Heat Pumps

A ground source heat pump (also called a ground-to-water heat pump) transfers heat from the ground outside to heat the building. It can also heat water stored in a hot water cylinder, ready to use for your hot taps and showers. Ground source heat pumps are better suited to those who have a large garden or outdoor space to run a loop of underground pipes or sink boreholes. They tend to be more efficient than air source heat pumps but are currently more expensive to install.

It starts with a loop of pipe that's buried in your garden or outdoor space. This loop could either be a long or coiled pipe buried in trenches, or a long loop (called a 'probe') inserted into a borehole.

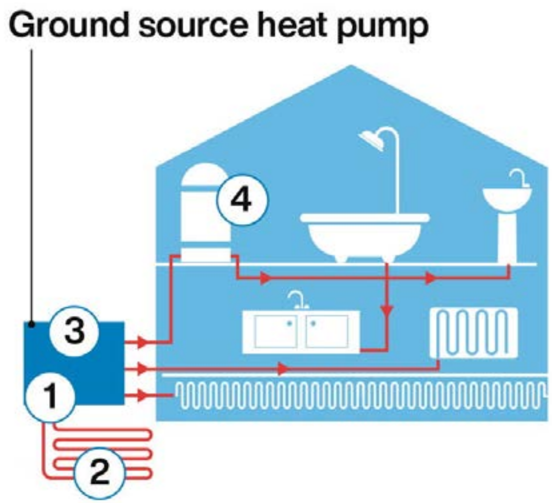
Inside this pipe is a mixture of water and antifreeze called a thermal transfer fluid (TTF), sometimes known as 'brine'.

The brine absorbs heat from the ground, which then passes through a heat exchanger into a refrigerant. The refrigerant is compressed, raising its temperature, and this heat is transferred again to your central heating system.

The benefits of ground source heat pumps include:

- **Lower energy bills:** switching to a heat pump could save you money compared to other ways of heating your home.
- **Reduce your energy use:** for every unit of electricity they use, heat pumps generate three units of heat. Having a heating system this efficient means you cut down how much energy you're using.
- **Improve your carbon footprint:** heat pumps are a low carbon heating system, emitting less CO_2 emissions than other fuel sources.

Pipe loop serving a Ground Source Heat Pump



1. Loop of water pipes is buried underground
2. Mixture of water and antifreeze is pumped around loop to absorb naturally-occurring heat stored in the ground
3. Mixture is compressed inside heat exchanger, which extracts heat and transfers it to pump
4. Heat sent to radiators and hot water cylinder.

(Source: www.independent.co.uk)

Construction Materials

The production and use of building materials in development consumes large quantities of energy and resources and generates waste. The choice of materials used in a building therefore has important implications for its sustainability and the environment; wherever possible they should be selected to minimise negative environmental impacts and the consumption of non-renewable resources.

There are many different construction methods that could be utilised for building low energy buildings: brick and block, timber frame, steel frame, structurally insulated panels, insulated concrete formwork, to name a few.

Some methods of construction lend themselves better to the aims of ultra low energy buildings than others. For example, closed panel timber framing may deliver a better quality and more thermally efficient structure than an open panel timber frame. Similarly, a solid, insulated masonry wall may be easier to control for airtightness than a cavity wall.

Huge amounts of materials are used to build new homes, offices, commercial and industrial buildings every year. Some materials have more of a negative effect on the environment than others. For example, producing polyvinyl chloride or PVC, which is often used to make window frames, causes pollution in the atmosphere.

For these reason we encourage developments to:

- Use materials from local suppliers to reduce the need for transport;
- Use reused and recycled materials (this will mean that fewer materials are thrown away);
- Use materials which do not damage the environment unnecessarily when mined, made and transported;
- Use timber from well-managed forests (this will help stop the unnecessary destruction of the world's forests); and
- Not use peat or weathered limestone because the supply of these materials destroys the special living places for plants and wildlife.

Modern Methods of Construction

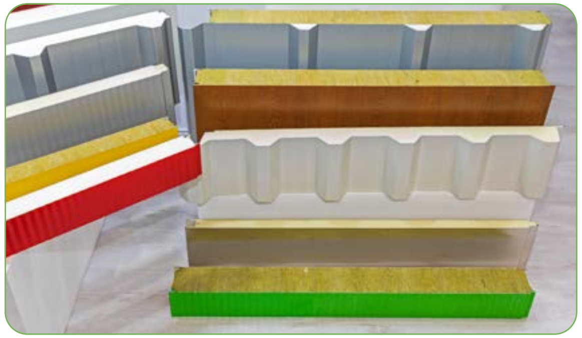
Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) include a range of processes and technologies which involve prefabrication, off-site assembly and various forms of supply chain specifications.

Off-site construction is a form of modern method of construction and involves the manufacture and fit out of building modules within a factory controlled environment, whilst ground works and foundations are prepared on site. The modular units are then delivered to site and craned into position to form the building. This process reduces the build time on site compared to traditional construction methods. Off-site construction generates less waste as a result of the factory environment which gives greater control of materials and affords greater opportunity to reduce, re-use or recycle waste, compared to site-based building methods. Modern Methods of Construction can be better for the environment, creating around 30 percent less pollution compared to on-site manufacturing

(Source: https://buildingbetter.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Environmental-benefits-of-MMC.pdf)

Aerated concrete blocks

Composite wooden sip panels erected in a factory



A range of insulated cladding used on commercial applications

Construction of new and modern modular house. Walls made from composite wooden sip panels with styrofoam insulation inside

Modular homes being lifted into place on site (source: www.constructionnews.co.uk)

California Meadows, Huntingdon - development used timber framed panels manufactured in factory conditions before being transported to site and craned into place (source: www.longhurst-group.org.uk)

Waste

The construction sector accounts for 62% of the UK's total waste (Source: Environment Agency). We must reduce the amount of waste we produce, recycle more and extract energy from waste.

Developers are encouraged to follow the Waste Hierarchy Framework that priorities waste management options based on their environmental impact and gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. When waste is created it gives priory to preparing it for re-use then recycling, then recovery, and last of all disposal (e.g. landfill).

By adhering to the waste hierarchy, developments can help reduce the carbon footprint of new buildings; lower construction costs; support a circular economy and encourage innovation in the re-use of materials.

Developers may be required to produce a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to show how they will reduce and recycle waste when building new homes or workplaces and avoid, minimise or mitigate any construction effects on the environment.

Prevention: The most desirable option, focusing on reducing the amount of waste generated in the first place. This can involve changes in product design, production processes, or consumption patterns.

Preparing for Re-Use: This involves ensuring products are suitable for further use, potentially through cleaning, repairing, or refurbishment.

Recycling: Transforming waste materials into new products, which can be a valuable resource for various industries.

Other Recovery (including energy recovery): This includes processes like incineration with energy recovery or anaerobic digestion, which can convert waste into usable energy or other resources.

Disposal: The least preferred option, involving landfilling or incineration without energy recovery. This option should be generally avoided as it can lead to environmental pollution and resource depletion.

Water Management and Air Quality

Water Management

The east of England is facing a water shortage with hosepipe bans becoming a regular event during the summer months. Water shortages will become more frequent as our climate gets hotter and an increase in sudden storms may lead to more flooding. Site wide flood risk and water management considerations are detailed on pages 116-118 within the HDC Design Guide and in the Cambridgeshire Flooding and Water SPD.

The Huntingdonshire Water Cycle Study 2024 notes that Huntingdonshire is in an area of serious water stress. As such there is sufficient justification for the tighter water efficiency target currently allowed for under building regulations of 110 litres per day, which is also referenced within Local Plan Policy LP12. Development proposals are therefore encouraged to incorporate water saving features.

Development proposals are encouraged to integrate rainwater harvesting and gray water recycling to help offset the potable water demand. Rainwater harvesting is where rainwater is collected and stored to provide the water demand for fittings that do not require water to be drinking safe, e.g. WC flushing. This would require an internal store, e.g. within roof space, which is then fed to the relevant fitting. Appliances such as taps, shower heads and toilets should be specified so as to not waste water (for example, install dual-flush toilets).

Grey water recycling is where wastewater from fittings such as showers is collected and used to flush WCs. This requires specific systems to be installed to connect the two fittings which would need to be considered within the bathroom design.

As water demand for external uses (such as watering plants and car washing) is not required to be 'potable', it can be met via rainwater harvesting. Water butts are commonly used as a method to reduce potable water demand for external uses and are connected to building / dwelling gutters to collect rainwater to store until needed. The sizing of the butt should be considered to maximise storage capacity.

Landscaping design can also consider potable water free systems, such as gulley's and pipes which are fed from the rainwater store to irrigate areas of land and controlled via a tap or other shut off valve. Landscape design is also encouraged to include natural drainage systems such as gravel or grass to allow rainwater to seep into the ground, rather than impermeable paving.

Permeable paving is encouraged for areas of hard standing including driveways and parking areas.

Water butts are commonly used as a method to reduce water demand

Permeable driveway

Air Quality

Air quality has a direct impact on human health, ecosystem integrity, and quality of life. Poor air quality is associated with increased rates of respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, and premature death. It can also damage vegetation, reduce biodiversity, and contribute to climate change. Within Huntingdonshire, the principal sources of air pollution are road traffic emissions (notably nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter, PM2.5), construction activity, and in some locations, domestic heating systems.

Development proposals should take proactive steps to minimise both the generation of air pollutants and exposure to them, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, older adults, and those with pre-existing health conditions.

To help improve and protect air quality, developments are encouraged to:

- Minimise traffic generation by prioritising walkable neighbourhoods, cycling infrastructure and accessible public transport links to reduce reliance on private cars;
- Include Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in accordance with Building Regulations Part S, enabling the transition to low-emission transport;
- Promote modal shift by integrating secure cycle parking, car clubs, and shared mobility hubs, especially for larger developments;
- Avoid siting residential units, schools or healthcare facilities immediately adjacent to heavily trafficked roads unless mitigation is in place;
- Incorporate green infrastructure such as street trees, hedgerows, green roofs and walls, which can help intercept airborne pollutants, lower ambient temperatures, and improve micro-climate;
- Consider building orientation, ventilation strategy, and internal air quality in areas with known pollution issues, including mechanical ventilation with filtration where necessary;
- Apply clean construction techniques, including dust suppression, use of non-diesel plant where feasible, and adherence to best practice as outlined in Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs);
- Select low-emission building materials, paints, sealants and finishes to reduce the release of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) within indoor environments;
- Design in buffer zones, planting, or screening in sensitive edge locations to reduce the impact of localised emissions from roads or industrial uses.

In areas with existing air quality concerns or those identified as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), applicants may be required to submit an Air Quality Assessment and demonstrate how mitigation has been integrated into the design from the outset. Early engagement with environmental health and planning officers is encouraged.

By embedding these considerations into the design and operation of new development, proposals can make a positive contribution to both local health outcomes and climate resilience.

Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

New development can disturb or destroy existing habitats and wildlife, and many species have become endangered or extinct due to pressures from housing, food production and resource extraction. Development in Huntingdonshire must therefore contribute positively to nature recovery by following a clear mitigation hierarchy:

- Do everything possible to first avoid, then minimise impacts on biodiversity, and, only as a last resort, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided including impacts not adequately addressed by Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations.
- Protect and enhance on-site priority habitats and priority species populations, ensuring their long-term management and resilience.
- Integrate biodiversity enhancements into building design, including the provision of bat and swift bricks and the creation of hedgehog highways through boundary treatments.
- Create green infrastructure and corridors throughout the development using native species to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services, enhance biodiversity, and establish landscape-scale connectivity for nature. Development boundaries and such corridors should be retained as unlit dark zones to support nocturnal species.
- Use only native species planting appropriate to the development's location. Non-native species should only be used where their inclusion is ecologically justified.
- Prioritise larger, longer-lived tree species to maximise carbon sequestration, contribute to canopy cover, and deliver wider environmental benefits.
- Provide undeveloped riparian buffer zones alongside watercourses to protect water quality, reduce flood risk, and support aquatic and riparian habitats.
- Support Huntingdonshire's Priority Natural Landscapes in line with the Nature Recovery Network for Huntingdonshire, ensuring development contributes to district-wide habitat connectivity and ecological restoration.
- Create sufficient on-site green space to meet the recreational needs of new residents and avoid increased visitor pressure on surrounding designated sites.
- Incorporate habitat-rich SuDS and wetland areas to provide wildlife habitat and improve surface water quality before it re-enters the natural water cycle.

These measures should be embedded from the earliest stages of site design to maximise benefits for both biodiversity and people.

Green Wall at Marks and Spencers, Norwich (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Gaps in fences create Hedgehog 'highways'

Bat Box built into a wall

Green roof

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is one of the most nature-depleted areas in England and developments should support wider environmental goals by aligning with the Local Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which identifies local habitat priorities and opportunities for nature recovery. This can help ensure site-specific interventions contribute meaningfully to the wider ecological network.

Biodiversity Net Gain

All major developments are now legally required to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) under the Environment Act 2021. This means that developments must leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before, contributing to the recovery of nature. A minimum of 10% net gain must be achieved, calculated using the Government's biodiversity metric and secured for at least 30 years. Developers are encouraged to further enrich biodiversity and exceed the 10% legal minimum.

This requirement follows the BNG mitigation hierarchy, which prioritises:

1. Avoiding biodiversity harm;
2. Minimising unavoidable impacts;
3. Restoring or enhancing habitats on-site; and
4. Offsetting any remaining loss through off-site measures.

Wherever possible, biodiversity enhancements should be integrated early into site design to maximise benefits for wildlife and people.

Trees

Huntingdonshire's tree canopy cover has reduced from 8.7% to 6.5% in the last four years - a loss of approximately 1,625 acres. This is significantly below the England average of 16% and well under the 20% target recommended by Forest Research for non-coastal areas. In some parts of the district coverage is as low as 3%, while others reach 24%. (Source - HDC Tree Canopy Assessment)

Given this deficit, substantial canopy growth is needed to meet best-practice targets. Proposals should therefore:

- Prioritise retention of existing trees, designing schemes around their mature canopy and root spread, and avoiding encroachment into rooting areas except where essential.
- Favour large-canopied, long-lived native species, which store more carbon, deliver greater ecological and environmental benefits, and contribute to the district's visual character.
- Commit to tree establishment, not just planting - ensuring adequate aftercare, watering, and protection until maturity.
- Replace losses at a ratio of at least two new trees for every one removed, where on-site space and context allow.
- Integrate tree planting with wider green infrastructure to improve air quality, manage surface water, and connect habitats.
- Trees provide substantial public benefits, including carbon storage, air purification, flood mitigation, property value uplift, and enhanced wellbeing. Development should aim to expand canopy cover, contributing to climate resilience and nature recovery.

EV Charging

Building Regulations Part S introduced requirements for electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in new buildings and certain types of renovations and are aimed at supporting the transition to electric vehicles and reducing carbon emissions.

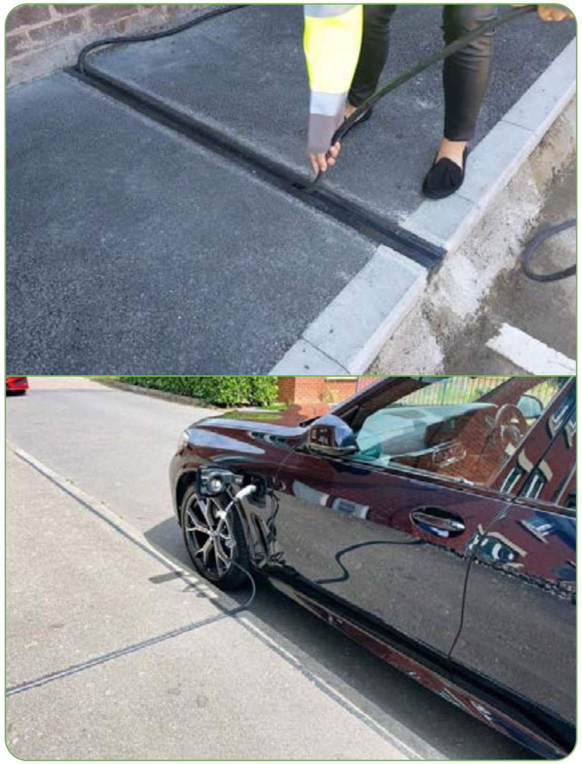
This requires at least one EV charging point for all new homes (including flats) with a minimum power rating of 7kW (mode 3 charging) provided the associated parking space is not within a covered car park. The total cost of compliance (including equipment and installation) is currently capped at £3,600 per charging point. If costs exceed this, the number of charge points required may be reduced and cable routes / ducts provided to allow the future installation of EV chargers.

Applicants should carefully consider the placement of electric vehicle (EV) chargers from the outset, along with the required cable routes between the charger and the parked vehicle. This may present challenges for terraced houses where parking is located on the street, as trailing cables could pose a trip hazard. To mitigate this risk, channel systems may be utilized to secure the cable in place. While these systems do not require planning permission, residents must obtain approval through a Section 173 (S173) agreement with the Highway Authority to authorise their use.

Listed Building Consent may be required if the charger is to be located on a listed building. In these instances, a charging unit on a free standing post may be more appropriate.

Further information can be obtained from Cambridgeshire County Councils Electric Vehicle Charging Points website.

With smart charging technology, EVs can be charged at times when electricity demand is low, helping to balance the grid and integrate more renewable energy sources. Advanced charging infrastructure allows EVs to not only draw power from the grid but also feed electricity back into the grid during peak demand periods, acting as a distributed energy storage system.



Channels cut within the pavement allow charging cables to be routed safely to on street parking spaces

EV chargers can be installed under permitted development (Class D) provided the outlet and its casing do not:

- Exceed 0.2 cubic metres
- Face onto and be within two metres of a highway
- Be within a site designated as a scheduled monument
- Be within the curtilage of a listed building.

Retrofitting

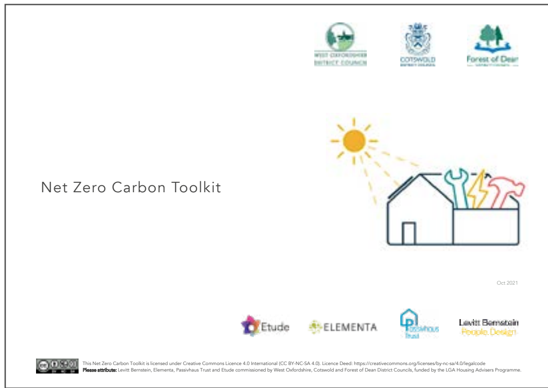
Approximately 80% of the homes that will exist in 2050 have already been built. If we are to successfully decarbonise housing, retrofitting is where the real challenge lies: we need to increase their energy efficiency, change their gas or oil heating system for low carbon heating systems and generate more renewable energy on their roofs.

There is a growing library of resources to help homeowners, landlords and renters understand what sustainable measures can be incorporated when retrofitting a property. To name a few:

- Cambridge City Council as part of the Action on Energy Partnership have commissioned a Retrofitting Guide. This includes practical advice on how to retrofit 7 common types of properties and sets out a range of low and no cost measures through to a more fundamental deep retrofit.
- The Net Zero Carbon Tool Kit, prepared by Levitt Bernstein, Elemanta, Passivhaus Trust and Etude commissioned by West Oxfordshire, Cotswold and Forest of Dean District Councils, includes guidance for both new residential and retrofit schemes.
- The Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide by LETI (Low Energy Transformation Initiative) includes retrofit guidance for four typical house archetype examples: Semi-detached, detached, mid terrace and a flats and sets out energy use targets and practical guidance on how to achieve them.

Many energy saving initiatives can be installed on homes within permitted development rights (when full planning permission is not required) and residents are encouraged to implement such measures. There may be occasions where schemes that do require planning permission could have a potential adverse impact on the character of the area and the amenity of nearby occupants.

The Planning Portal provides further guidance on planning and building regulation requirements for detached, semi-detached, terrace, shops and flats when considering domestic adaptations and advises if these works require planning permission.



Traditional and Historic Buildings

Special regard needs to be had when considering energy efficiency improvements to historic buildings, listed buildings and those within conservation areas. Historic England (The Governments specialist advisor on historic buildings) advocates a 'whole building approach', a holistic process of understanding a building in its context to find balanced solutions that save energy, sustain heritage significance, and maintain a comfortable and healthy indoor environment. Different buildings will have different opportunities for change.

Most traditional buildings also have an innate ability to offer greater resilience to our changing climate than their modern counterparts. Even so, there are things we can do to reduce energy use and carbon emissions, increase resilience, and help them remain viable and useful into the future

There is a growing library of resources available for the responsible retrofit of traditional and historic buildings including:

- Planning Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings (Sustainable Traditional buildings Alliance)
- Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings (Historic England)
- Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency (Historic England)

An insensitive external wall insulation application which damages the beauty and character of the street (Source: Planning Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings - Sustainable Traditional buildings Alliance

Solar panels on the rear extention of the Grade II listed Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart, St Ives

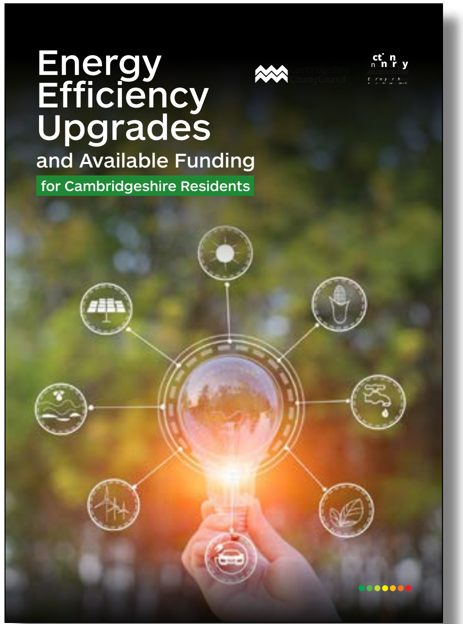
Interior of the outhouse at Hoggerstone Hill Farm, North Yorkshire, showing the ground source heat pump mechanics, with a view towards the converted farmhouse (Source: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency - Historic England)

External awnings, shutters or blinds can prevent overheating in summer (Source: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency - Historic England)

Home Efficiency Grants

Huntingdonshire District Council is part of the Action on Energy partnership between Cambridgeshire County Council and other district authorities in Cambridgeshire and provides advice on how to maximise the energy efficiency of their homes, save money on their energy bills and cut their carbon emissions. The website www.actiononenergycambs.org includes information on the energy efficiency measures available, practical guidance, funding opportunities and support to find an installer.

More information on the range of Government Grant funding available can be found from our website



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Technicians installing photovoltaic solar moduls on the roof of a house


House insulation by injecting insulating material into the cavity walls

Glossary

Adaptation: adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP): A low-carbon heating system that extracts warmth from the outside air and uses it to heat the interior space and water.

Airtightness: The degree to which a building prevents uncontrolled air leakage through the envelope, which is essential for energy efficiency.

Battery Storage: Technology that stores excess electricity (often from solar panels) for later use, enhancing self-sufficiency and reducing demand on the grid.

Be Lean / Be Clean / Be Green: The three stages of the Energy Hierarchy: reduce energy demand, use energy efficiently, and use renewable sources.

Biodiversity Net Gain: A principle requiring developments to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before.

Brise Soleil: Architectural feature that provides solar shading to reduce overheating, typically in the form of horizontal or vertical fins.

Building Fabric: The physical elements of the building envelope - walls, roof, windows, etc. - that separate the interior from the exterior.

Building Form: The three-dimensional shape and structure of a building that influences energy use, daylighting, and ventilation.

Building Orientation: The positioning of a building in relation to the sun's path, affecting natural heating, cooling, and daylighting.

Building Regulations (Parts F, L, O, S): Statutory requirements in England covering ventilation (F), energy efficiency (L), overheating (O), and EV charging (S).

BREEAM: Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method—a standard for assessing the environmental performance of non-residential buildings.

Carbon / Carbon Dioxide (CO2): A greenhouse gas contributing to climate change; often used as a shorthand for carbon emissions.

CHP / CCHP: Combined Heat and Power / Combined Cooling, Heating and Power systems that generate electricity and capture usable heat.

Circular Economy: An economic model aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources through reuse, repair, refurbishment, and recycling.

Climate Change: A long-term alteration of temperature and typical weather patterns, largely due to human activities emitting greenhouse gases.

Decarbonisation: The process of reducing carbon dioxide emissions from activities like energy use, transport, and manufacturing.

Decentralised Energy: Energy generated close to the point of use, such as solar panels or district heating networks, reducing transmission losses.

Deep Retrofit: Comprehensive upgrades to existing buildings to significantly improve energy efficiency and comfort, often including insulation, air sealing, and renewable systems.

Embodied Carbon: Carbon emissions associated with building materials throughout their life cycle - from extraction and manufacture to disposal.

Energy Hierarchy: A framework guiding sustainable energy use: 1) reduce demand, 2) use efficiently, 3) use renewables.

Energy efficiency: measures to reduce the amount of energy required for products and services.

EV Charging: Infrastructure that enables the charging of electric vehicles, typically required in new developments under Building Regulations Part S.

Fabric First: Design approach that prioritises improving the building envelope before considering mechanical or renewable systems.

Form Factor: The ratio of a building's external surface area to its internal volume - lower ratios typically reduce heat loss.

Future Homes Standard: Government standard due in 2025 requiring new homes to produce 75–80% fewer carbon emissions than those built to 2013 regulations.

Glazing Ratio: The proportion of window area to wall area on each elevation, affecting heat loss and solar gain.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs): Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, including CO2, CH4, N2O, and H2O vapour.

Grey Water Recycling: The reuse of wastewater from baths, sinks, or showers for non-potable uses such as toilet flushing.

Heat Pumps: Devices that transfer heat from a source (air, ground, water) into a building using a refrigeration cycle.

Insulated Concrete Formwork: A construction method using hollow blocks filled with concrete and insulation, offering high airtightness and thermal performance.
Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR): A ventilation system that extracts stale air and supplies fresh air while recovering heat from the outgoing air.

Modern Methods of Construction (MMC): Innovative construction methods such as off-site manufacturing and modular building aimed at improving quality and sustainability.

Natural Ventilation: Ventilation achieved without mechanical systems, using window openings, cross-ventilation, and stack effects.

Net Zero: the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 90% or more compared to a set baseline year, with the remaining emissions balanced by absorbing or removing them. The UK's Net Zero baseline year is 1990. The UK is committed to a target of Net Zero by 2050

Overheating: discomfort, and possible health risks to occupants caused by the accumulation of warmth within a building.

Passive Design: Building design strategies that utilise natural sources of heating, cooling, and lighting to reduce energy demand.

Permeable Paving: Surface materials that allow water to infiltrate the ground, reducing surface runoff and aiding drainage.

Photovoltaic (PV) Panels: Panels that convert sunlight directly into electricity, commonly installed on rooftops.

Rainwater Harvesting: Collecting and storing rainwater for use in non-drinking applications such as irrigation or toilet flushing.

Retrofit: the addition of new technologies or features to an existing building to change the way it performs or functions.

Sheep's Wool / Hemp / Wood Fibre Insulation: Natural, breathable insulation materials with low embodied carbon.

Smart Export Guarantee: A government initiative that pays households for electricity exported back to the grid from renewable sources.

Solar Thermal Panels: Panels that capture sunlight to heat water rather than generate electricity.

Stack Ventilation: Ventilation driven by the natural movement of warm air rising and escaping through high vents.

SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems): Drainage systems that mimic natural water processes to manage rainwater and reduce flooding.

Thermal Bridging: A pathway for heat to escape through elements of a building envelope with less insulation.

Thermal Mass: The ability of a material to absorb, store, and slowly release heat, moderating indoor temperatures.

Whole Building Approach: considers a building's context to find balanced solutions that save energy, sustain heritage significance, and maintain a comfortable and healthy indoor environment. It also considers wider environmental, cultural, community and economic issues, including energy supply. It can help to manage the risks of maladaptation.

Zero Carbon Ready: A term for buildings built to such a high efficiency standard that they will not require retrofitting to achieve net zero in the future.

Document produced by Huntingdonshire District Council Urban Design Team

Image: California Meadows, Huntingdon

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Service area	Planning
Date of assessment	01/10/2025
Name of policy/service to be assessed	Environmentally Sustainable Design and Construction Technical Advice Note (TAN)
Is this a new or existing policy/service?	New guidance
Name of manager responsible for new or amended policy/service	Clara Kerr
Names of people conducting the assessment	Matthew Paul
Step 1 – Description of new or amended policy/service	
Describe the aims; objectives and purpose of the new or amended policy/service (include how it fits in to wider aims or strategic objectives).	The TAN provides guidance to applicants, developers, businesses, and communities to support the Council's Climate Strategy, Local Plan, and Corporate Plan. It sets out practical measures for reducing carbon emissions, addressing biodiversity loss, improving building performance, and preparing for climate resilience.
The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, the Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council therefore needs to understand how its decisions and activities impact on different people. An Equality Impact Assessment is the current method by which the Council can assess and keep a record of the impact of new or amended strategies, policies, functions or services. The council retains these duties even when outsourcing services or providing shared services. *Definition of Adverse Impact - occurs when a decision, practice, or Policy has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group. Adverse Impact may be unintentional.*	

Are there any (existing) equality objectives of the new/amended policy/service	• To ensure new and existing homes and businesses are affordable to run (reducing fuel poverty). • To improve health outcomes by addressing overheating, damp, and air quality (benefiting vulnerable groups). • To ensure guidance is inclusive and accessible to all developers, households, businesses and community groups.
Who is intended to benefit from the new/amended policy/service and in what way?	• **Residents**: Lower running costs, healthier homes, better air quality, reduced risk from overheating and flooding. • **Vulnerable groups**: Those on low incomes (fuel poverty), older adults, disabled people, children, pregnant women (improved air quality, thermal comfort). • **Wider community**: Businesses gain opportunities in the green economy; nature recovery improves access to green space and wellbeing.
What are the intended outcomes of this new/amended policy/service?	• Net zero carbon ready development. • Healthier, more resilient homes, buildings and places. • Lower utility costs, supporting financial resilience. • Inclusive design standards that consider accessibility, health, and wellbeing.
Step 2 – Data	
What baseline **quantitative data (statistics)** do you have about the function relating to equalities groups (e.g. monitoring data on proportions of service users compared to proportions in the population), relevant to this new/amended policy/service? Huntingdonshire Statistics	We have the following baseline quantitative data relevant to equalities in Huntingdonshire, which help to identify which groups may be more affected by sustainable design / energy performance interventions:

	• Population estimate is ~186,070 (mid-2023). Huntingdonshire.gov.uk The district grew by ~6.7% between 2011 and 2021. Office for National Statistics • Ethnic minority population is relatively small: ~7.6% non-White (2021) compared to ~92.4% White. Cambridgeshire Insight+1 • Fuel poverty affects ~10.95% of households (2020 data). Para 4.30 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report • In some areas within Huntingdonshire (e.g. Stukeley Meadows and north of St Ives) fuel poverty is much lower (~4.2 %) in contrast to district average, indicating inequality within the district. Para 4.30 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report • Key health conditions relevant to housing quality: hypertension (15.3 %), depression (13.0 %), asthma (7.2 %) in the local population. Cambridgeshire Insight These data provide a “baseline” picture: e.g. with ~11% households in fuel poverty, interventions affecting energy efficiency will have material impacts, especially for lower income groups. The health data also indicates there is a local population with conditions that may be exacerbated by poor indoor environment (cold, damp, poor air quality).
What **qualitative data (opinions etc)** do you have on different groups (e.g. comments from previous consumer satisfaction surveys/consultation, feedback exercises, or evidence from other authorities undertaking similar work), relevant to this new/amended policy/service?	Feedback from local consultation exercises (e.g. the Huntingdonshire Climate Strategy 2023 engagement, Local Plan 2024 engagement, and previous planning policy consultations) has highlighted: • Public support for measures that reduce energy bills, tackle fuel poverty, and promote healthier homes, particularly from lower income and older residents. • Concerns about the affordability and practicality of implementing new technologies (e.g. heat pumps, EV charging), especially for small developers and residents in rural areas.

	• Interest from community groups in biodiversity enhancements, sustainable travel, and access to green spaces. Evidence from other local authorities (e.g. Greater London Authority, Cambridge City Council, Bristol City Council) indicates that sustainable design guidance tends to bring positive impacts for vulnerable groups when linked to affordability, health, and inclusive design, but risks exist around digital exclusion and the accessibility of technical information. Professional engagement with developers, housing associations and internal council teams (Planning, Housing, Environmental Health) suggests there is broad recognition of the benefits of sustainable design, but also the need for clarity, practical examples, and user-friendly guidance to ensure it is applied consistently across different development scales.
The Consultation and Engagement Strategy Accessibility Guidance may be helpful when thinking about the potential impact of a policy/service on people with different protected characteristics.	
Age – this refers to the protected characteristic of age. A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30-year olds). Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? For some services this should include consideration of impact in terms of safeguarding young people.	*Impact*: Positive – younger and older residents benefit from improved indoor comfort, reduced energy bills, and better air quality. Safeguards for children (air quality, safe streets) and older people (thermal comfort, resilience to heatwaves). *Evidence*: TAN emphasises overheating, air quality, water scarcity, and resilience

What evidence do you have for your answer?	
Disability – this refers the protected characteristic of disability. A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	*Impact*: Positive – improved accessibility through M4(2)/M4(3) standards, better ventilation, reduced damp/mould. Risk that some technologies (heat pumps, MVHR) require user understanding and maintenance which may disadvantage some disabled residents. Photovoltaic panels, used alongside battery storage can enhance resilience in the event of a power cut by providing a backup source of electricity to users of the building. This can be particularly important for disabled occupants who may rely on electrically powered medical equipment, mobility aids, or other essential devices. Ensuring continuity of power can help maintain safety, comfort, and independence during outages. *Mitigation*: Ensure guidance highlights the need for simple controls, accessible design, and clear user information.
Gender reassignment – gender reassignment discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently because they are trans*. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer? *although the term gender reassignment and transsexual is in the Equality Act 2010, it is accepted that the preferred term is trans.	*Impact*: Neutral – no direct differential impact. Benefits of healthier homes and safer public spaces apply equally.

Marriage and civil partnership in the workplace; this refers the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership which is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Civil partnership is between partners of the same sex. Discrimination is when a person is treated differently at work because a person is married or in a civil partnership. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	*Impact*: Neutral – no differential impact identified.
Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of **pregnancy and maternity** in the workplace (e.g. pregnant or breast-feeding women). Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?	*Impact*: Positive – improved air quality, reduced risk of overheating, better access to green space all support maternal and infant health.

What evidence do you have for your answer?	
Race – this refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Gypsy/Travellers are distinct group within this category Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	*Impact:* Positive – cleaner air, more resilient housing, reduced fuel poverty. Some communities may face barriers in accessing grants/retrofit advice. *Mitigation:* Ensure engagement and guidance material is accessible via the HDC website, and the document written in plain English.
Religion and Belief in the workplace - refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	*Impact:* Neutral – no direct impact, though access to green infrastructure and improved public realm benefits all communities.

Sex - this refers to the protected characteristic of sex which can mean either male or female, or a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	*Impact:* Neutral to positive – evidence suggests women are more likely to experience fuel poverty (due to caring roles, single-parent households). TAN indirectly supports gender equality by lowering running costs and improving housing quality.
Sexual orientation – this relates to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	*Impact*: Neutral – no differential impact identified.
Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact on **part time/full time** employees? What evidence do you have for your answer?	*Impact:* Neutral – no direct impact.
Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of specific characteristics of Huntingdonshire e.g. **Rural isolation**	*Impact*: Positive – supports resilience of rural housing (water stress, overheating, EV charging infrastructure).

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Findings

- The TAN has predominantly positive equalities impacts, particularly on age, disability, pregnancy/maternity, and socioeconomic inclusion.
- The main risk relates to accessibility of information and usability of technology (disadvantaging disabled or digitally excluded groups).
- No evidence of negative or discriminatory intent in the guidance.

Recommendations

- Ensure all TAN guidance and supporting material is available in accessible formats (electronic copy accessible via the HDC website, written in plain English and is easy to read).
- Highlight inclusive design and usability of sustainable technologies for vulnerable groups.
- Build links with the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy to ensure inclusive engagement on climate/sustainability initiatives.

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Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Council Tax Support Scheme 2026-27
Meeting/Date:	Cabinet: 18 November 2025 Council: 17 December 2025
Executive Portfolio:	Resident Services and Corporate Performance (Cllr S Ferguson)
Report by:	K Kelly – Revenues and Benefits Manager
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

Since the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in 2013, Local Authorities in England have been required to administer their own Council Tax Support (CTS) schemes.

Whilst support for residents of pensionable age is determined by Central Government, schemes for working age residents are set locally. Local Authorities are required to review their CTS schemes annually and to decide to either maintain their existing scheme or replace it.

The Council made amendments to the CTS scheme for 2024-25. The following report provides an update on the operation of the scheme since then, alongside recommendations for 2026-27.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

To note the contents of the report and endorse the recommendation that the scheme principles for 2026-27 remain unchanged, ensuring that the scheme continues to deliver support to low-income households across the district in line with the Corporate Priorities to improve the quality of life for local people, and to deliver good quality, high value-for-money services.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 Since 2013, the Council has been required to design and administer its own Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for residents of Working Age. The scheme for Pension Age residents is set by Central Government.

1.2 The Council is required to review the CTS scheme each year in accordance with schedule 1a (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and decide to maintain or amend the scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 CTS is a means-tested support scheme that reduces the amount of Council Tax payable by residents on low incomes. Whilst CTS rules for pension age residents are prescribed by Central Government, Local Authorities are required to design and administer their own schemes to support residents of working age.

2.2 In December 2023 the Council decided to amend the CTS scheme for 2024/25, offering a simplified scheme intended to provide greater levels of support for those most in need, in line with our Corporate Priority to keep people out of crisis and support those in crisis.

3. ANALYSIS

3.1 The redesigned CTS scheme launched in April 2024 with the intention of providing increased levels of support of up to 100% of Council Tax liability to low-income households across the district.

3.2 The new scheme was designed to be easier to understand, with levels of support determined by weekly income bands linked to Universal Credit (UC) standard allowances. The requirement for residents to make a separate claim for CTS when they made a claim for Universal Credit was also removed to make the scheme easier to access.

3.3 As a result of the changes implemented, the following impacts are noted:

Intention	Outcome
To provide increased levels of support to low-income households	The number of households receiving 100% CTS has increased from 1,307 in March 2024, to 3,893 in August 2024, and 3,941 in July 2025.
To make the scheme easier to understand and access	An additional 986 working age households are receiving support since March 2024, bringing the total to 5,152, or around 6% of all households across the district. Most of the additional new claims have arisen as a result of notifications received from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) advising of new UC claims in payment, following the removal of the requirement to make a separate claim for CTS.

To ensure a simplified scheme provides opportunities for automation and improvements in processing times* *please note the processing times quoted relate to CTS only, rather than the combined Housing Benefit and CTS performance that is reported as part of KPIs	The new scheme has enabled greater use of technology to automate the processing of changes in circumstances. In the period April – August 2025, 69.84% of changes were processed automatically, compared to 62.52% in 2024, and 30.6% in 2023. These advances in automation have enabled the team to tolerate the increased caseload volumes whilst improving response times, all within existing resources. The average number of days taken to process changes in circumstances has reduced from 8.78 days in 2023 to an average of 2.86 days in 2025. New claims for CTS are processed within an average of 18.8 days in 2025, compared to 19.64 days in 2023.
To reduce the number of bills issued due to CTS changes, and to reduce recovery action taken	There was a small increase (598 in 2024/25) in the total number of Council Tax bills issued due to CTS, since the scheme went live which is mainly due to new claims. An overall reduction in the number of Reminders and Summons has been noted, with 2,515 less reminders (10%) and 1205 (16%) less court summonses being issued in 2024/25 when compared to the previous year. During the same period the team achieved the highest in-year Council Tax collection rate for 5 years of 98.09%, and these trends have continued into 2025/26.

3.4 The analysis of the CTS scheme to date shows that it is performing as intended, delivering greater levels of support to residents in a more responsive time frame.

3.5 It is therefore recommended that the principles of the scheme, as shown in APPENDIX A. remain unchanged, with the starting point for the income bands to be increased in line with uplifts in the standard allowances for Universal Credit for 2026/27, as set out within the scheme.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) Panel discussed the Council Tax Support 2026/27 Report at its meeting on 7th November 2025.

4.2 Following a comment from Councillor Shaw, the Panel heard that the scheme also provided an administrative benefit to the team in addition to the benefits it provided to residents.

4.3 In response to a concern raised by Councillor Lowe, the Panel heard that the Council Tax Support Scheme had been fully planned and budgeted, and was in line with forecast for the year.

4.4 It was clarified to the Panel following a question from Councillor Pitt, that the previous response times had included automated responses although not to the same degree as currently. It was also noted that there were several reasons why changes were not able to be immediately implemented and that a human element had to be considered however the Panel were also assured that all response times were closely monitored

4.5 Councillor Hunt reflected on an excellent report and praised the principles implemented by the joint administration. The Panel further heard that despite the risks of the scheme, the dedication and hard work of the team ensured it's smooth implementational.

4.6 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

5.1 The cost of CTS is calculated as a reduction to the Council tax base. That is, the number of band D equivalent dwellings across the district from which Council Tax can be generated.

5.2 A forecast of the Council tax base is set each year, which includes estimates new properties being added to the Council Tax list, along with estimates for the impact of other discounts, exemptions and CTS. Regular monitoring of the taxbase is conducted, with the trend indicating that the forecast is likely to be met by the end of the financial year.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

(See Corporate Plan)

6.1 The Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 outlines our commitment to:

1. Improve the quality of life for local people
2. Create a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
3. Deliver good quality, high value-for-money services

6.2 The CTS scheme directly supports points 1 and 3, by ensuring that the requirement to pay Council Tax continues to be proportionate to financial circumstances by reducing or even eliminating the requirement to pay for low-income households across the district. The increase in caseload shows that the support is reaching those in need.

6.3 Changes to the scheme have also enabled improvements in service delivery, ensuring that residents receive decisions in a timely manner whilst reducing the risk of overpayments.

7. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

7.1 Following a review of the CTS scheme, it is evident that the scheme is performing as intended, with additional support being provided to low-income households alongside service delivery improvements, in line with our Corporate Priorities.

8. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A – CTS Scheme Principles

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APPENDIX A – CTS Scheme Principles

1) Income Bands
The scheme is designed so that Band 1 figures align with Universal Credit allowances, followed by bands of £50. These are uprated annually in line with UC allowance uprating. The figures shown below are for 2025/26.

Band	Discount	Single Person (weekly net income)	Couple with no children (weekly net income)	Couple or Lone Parent with one child/young person (weekly net income)	Couple or Lone Parent with two children /young persons (weekly net income)	Couple or Lone Parent with three children /young persons (weekly net income)	Couple or Lone Parent with four or more children/young persons (weekly net income)
1*	100%	£0 to £93.00	£0 to £145.00	£0 to £213.00	£0 to £281.00	£0 to £348.00	£0 to £416.00
2	75%	£93.01 to £143.00	£145.01 to £195.00	£213.01 to £263.00	£281.01 to £331.00	£348.01 to £398.00	£416.01 to £466.00
3	50%	£143.01 to £193.00	£195.01 to £245.00	£263.01 to £313.00	£331.01 to £381.00	£398.01 to £448.00	£466.01 to £516.00
4	25%	£193.01 to £243.00	£245.01 to £295.00	£313.01 to £363.00	£381.01 to £431.00	£448.01 to £498.00	£516.01 to £566.00
5	0%	£243.01 +	£295.01+	£363.01+	£431.01+	£498.01+	£566.01+

2) The highest level of discount is equal to the maximum Council Tax liability (100%), Band 1, and all current applicants that are in receipt of a '*passported benefit' such as Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based) and Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) will receive maximum discount;

3) All other discount levels are based on the applicant's and partner's, (where they have one) net weekly income, and the scheme allows for variation in household size with the levels of income per band increasing where an applicant has a partner, and / or dependants.

4) Any changes are applied on a daily basis in line with Council Tax liability. Claims can be backdated up to a maximum of 12 months from the date of claim where circumstances show that the applicant would have been continuously eligible for the period in question had they applied at the time.

5) There are no reductions in CTS award levels where an applicant has non-dependants living with them.

6) To encourage work, a standard disregard of up to £50 per week is provided against all earnings.

7) Disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment are disregarded, and a further disregard of £50 per week is applied to a customers’ total income where one of those benefits are in payment.

8) Carer’s Allowance and the Support Component of Employment and Support Allowance is disregarded to protect carers and those with additional support needs.

9) Childcare, child maintenance, and child benefit is disregarded, in order to support families.

10) Universal Credit is made up of different components dependant on the household circumstances. The following elements are disregarded within the scheme: housing element, limited capability for work, childcare, disabled child, and carer's element.

11) War pensions and war disablement pensions are disregarded.

12) The Capital limit is set at £10,000, and any applicant who has capital above that level will not qualify.

13) The full technical scheme document is published on the website here

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title:	**Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review 2025/26**
Meeting/Date:	**Cabinet – 18th November 2025**
Executive Portfolio:	**Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources**
Report by:	**Corporate Director (Finance and Resources)**
Wards affected:	**All Wards**

Executive Summary:

Best practice and prescribed treasury management guidance requires members to be kept up to date in respect of treasury management activity for the first half of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

The Council's 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy was approved by the Council on the 26th February 2025, this report sets out the Treasury Performance and indicators for period between 1st April 2025 and 30th September 2025.

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

The main purpose of Treasury Management is to.

- Ensure the Council has sufficient cash to meet its day-to-day obligations.
- Borrow when necessary to fund capital expenditure, including borrowing in anticipation of need when rates are low.
- Invest surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest, and prioritising liquidity before considering optimising investment returns.

The key market Treasury Management issues through the first half of 2025/26 influencing the Council's decision-making were.

- The Bank of England (BoE) Bank Rate decreased over the period from 4.5% to 4.0% in August 2025.
- Gilt rates (10 year government bonds) fluctuated between 4.4% and 4.8% and fell to 4.7% at the end of September. Gilt rates feed into the

rates paid for investing in the Debt Management Office.

- Interest rates are forecast to fall over the next 1 to 2 years, as long as the inflation rate continues to fall.
- Inflation and interest rates are both relatively high for the recent past, this feeds into the council's current strategy of using lower risk investments while high interest rates (and debt defaults) may lead to increased stress in financial institutions.

The Council's responses to the key issues were.

- When the Council has surplus funds, these will primarily be invested on a short-term basis, primarily in the DMO, money market funds, and the council's transactional bank NatWest.

- Where possible to take a higher return without sacrificing liquidity eg use of timed deposits at the DMO, as long as sufficient cash is available for short-term needs. Although currently money market fund and DMO rates are similar.

- If economic conditions are forecast to deteriorate it is vital to monitor financial institutions credit rating, and credit default swap rates (the cost to insure lending). This information is provided by the Council's treasury adviser – Link Group in regular updates.

The Council's Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS)

Indicators relating to the investments are shown in **section 11** of the report.

The commercial property portfolio is forecast to generate £2.5m of net income for the Council in 2025/26. The breakdown of the property portfolio is shown in **Appendix F** and the proportion of commercial property and service investments income in relation to net revenue stream, in **section 11** of the report.

The **Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review** is appended to this report.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet is recommended to.

- Note the treasury management performance included in the Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review, for the first 6 months of 2025/26 and to recommend the report to Council for consideration.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Council's treasury management activity for the first 6 months of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 It is regarded as best practice and prescribed treasury management practice, that Members are kept up to date with treasury management activity.

2.2 The Council approved the 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy at its meeting on 26th February 2025.

2.3 All treasury management activity undertaken during the first half of 2025/26 complied with the CIPFA Code of Practice, relevant legislative provisions and the Treasury Management Strategy.

2.4 The investment strategy is to invest any surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest. The Council's borrowing strategy permits borrowing for cash flow purposes and funding current and future capital expenditure over whatever periods are in the Council's best interests.

3. ANALYSIS

Economic Review

3.1 An economic review of the year has been provided by the council's treasury management advisors, Link Group, and is attached with an analysis of the local context implications in **section 3** of the report.

Performance of Council Funds

3.2 The treasury management transactions undertaken during the first 6 months of 2025/26 financial year and the details of the investments and loans held as at 30th September 2025 are shown in detail in **Appendix D** of the report.

Risk Management

3.3 The Council's primary objectives for the management of its investment are to give priority to the security and liquidity (how quickly cash can be accessed) of its funds before seeking the best rate of return. For more details see **section 9.**

Non-Treasury Investments

3.5 The definition of investments in CIPFA's Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. The full details of these investments can be found in **Section 11** and **Appendix F** of the report.

Compliance

4.0 Compliance with specific investment and debt limits and risk measures are indicated in **Appendix C** and **Appendix D**.

Treasury Management Indicators

5.0 The Council measures and manages its exposure to treasury management risks using indicators which are details in the **section 8** of the report, and Appendices C and D.

Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review is appended Including;

- Economic review (source: Link Group)
- Prudential and Treasury Indicators
- Borrowing and the Liability Benchmark
- Treasury and Prudential Limit Compliance
- Commercial Investment Strategy Indicators
- Borrowing and Investing Schedules
- Commercial Estates Property Listing
- Glossary

CONTACT OFFICER

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Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review 2025/26

Contents

Appendices

1. Background

1.1 CIPFA Consultation on the Treasury Management Code of Practice and the Prudential Code of Practice
The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy is currently consulting local authorities in respect of potential changes to the Codes. The focus appears to primarily be on the Non-Treasury investment aspects of local authority activity. An update will provided on material developments and changes after the consultation is completed..

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

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

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

> "The management of the local council's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

2. Introduction

This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021).
The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the council's treasury management activities.

2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.

3. Receipt by the full Council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement - including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy - for the year ahead, a Mid-year Review Report and an Annual Report, (stewardship report), covering activities during the previous year. Quarterly reports are also required for the periods ending April to June and October to December, these are

included with and follow the same process as the quarterly finance performance reports.

4. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.

5. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this council, the delegated body is Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth).

This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- An economic update for the first half of the 2025/26 financial year;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The council's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the council's investment portfolio for 2025/26;
- A review of the council's borrowing strategy for 2025/26;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2025/26;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2025/26.

3. Economics and Interest Rates

3.1 Economics Update

- The first half of 2025/26 saw:
- A 0.3% pick up in GDP for the period April to June 2025. More recently, the economy flatlined in July, with higher taxes for businesses restraining growth.
- The 3month/year-on-year rate of average earnings growth excluding bonuses has fallen from 5.5% to 4.8% in July.
- CPI inflation has ebbed and flowed but finished September at 3.8%, whilst core inflation eased to 3.6%.
- The Bank of England cut interest rates from 4.50% to 4.25% in May, and then to 4% in August.
  - The 10-year gilt yield fluctuated between 4.4% and 4.8%, ending the half year at 4.70%.
- From a GDP perspective, the financial year got off to a bumpy start with the 0.3% month-on-month fall in real GDP in April as front-running of US tariffs in Quarter 1 (when GDP grew 0.7% on the quarter) weighed on activity. Despite the underlying reasons for the drop, it was still the first fall since October 2024 and the largest fall since October 2023. However, the economy surprised to the upside in May and June so that quarterly growth ended up 0.3% quarter-on-quarter. Nonetheless, the 0.0% month-on-month change in real GDP in July will have caused some concern, with the hikes in taxes for businesses that took place in April this year undoubtedly playing a part in restraining growth. The weak overseas environment is also likely to have contributed to the 1.3% month on month fall in manufacturing output in July. That was the second large fall in three months and left the 3month rate at a 20-month low of -1.1%. The 0.1% month on month rise in services output kept its 3monthly rate at 0.4%, supported by stronger output in the health and arts/entertainment sectors. Looking ahead, ongoing speculation about further tax rises in the Autumn Budget on 26 November will remain a drag on GDP growth for a while yet. GDP growth for 2025 is forecast by Capital Economics to be 1.3%.
- For future economic sentiment, the composite Purchasing Manager Index for the UK fell from 53.5 in August to 51.0 in September. The decline was mostly driven by a fall in the services PMI, which declined from 54.2 to 51.9. The manufacturing PMI output balance also fell, from 49.3 to 45.4. That was due to both weak overseas demand (the new exports orders balance fell for the fourth month in a row) and the cyber-attack-induced shutdown at Jaguar Land Rover since 1 September reducing car production across the automotive supply chain. The PMIs suggest tepid growth is the best that can be expected when the Q3 GDP numbers are released.
- For retail sales, the 0.5% month on month rise in volumes in August was the third such rise in a row and was driven by gains in all the major categories except fuel sales, which fell by 2.0% month on month. Sales may have been supported by the warmer-than-usual weather. If sales were just flat in September, then in Q3 sales volumes would be up 0.7% quarter on quarter compared to the 0.2% quarter on quarter gain in Q2.

- With the November Budget getting nearer, the public finances position looks weak. Public net sector borrowing of £18.0bn in August means that after five months of the financial year, borrowing is already £11.4bn higher than the OBR forecast at the Spring Statement in March. The overshoot in the Chancellor’s chosen fiscal mandate of the current budget is even greater with a cumulative deficit of £15.3bn. All this was due to both current receipts in August being lower than the OBR forecast (by £1.8bn) and current expenditure being higher (by £1.0bn). Over the first five months of the financial year, current receipts have fallen short by a total of £6.1bn (partly due to lower-than-expected self-assessment income tax) and current expenditure has overshot by a total of £3.7bn (partly due to social benefits and departmental spending). Furthermore, what very much matters now is the OBR forecasts and their impact on the current budget in 2029/30, which is when the Chancellor’s fiscal mandate bites. As a general guide, Capital Economics forecasts a deficit of about £18bn, meaning the Chancellor will have to raise £28bn, mostly through higher taxes, if the chancellor wants to keep the buffer against the rule of £10bn.

- The weakening in the jobs market looked clear in the spring. May’s 109,000 month on month fall in the PAYE measure of employment was the largest decline (barring the pandemic) since the data began and the seventh in as many months. The monthly change was revised lower in five of the previous seven months too, with April’s 33,000 fall revised down to a 55,000 drop. More recently, however, the monthly change was revised higher in seven of the previous nine months by a total of 22,000. So instead of falling by 165,000 in total since October, payroll employment is now thought to have declined by a smaller 153,000. Even so, payroll employment has still fallen in nine of the ten months since the Chancellor announced the rises in National Insurance Contributions (NICs) for employers and the minimum wage in the October Budget. The number of job vacancies in the three months to August stood at 728,000. Vacancies have now fallen by approximately 47% since its peak in April 2022. All this suggests the labour market continues to loosen, albeit at a declining pace.

- A looser labour market is driving softer wage pressures. The 3 monthly year on year rate of average earnings growth excluding bonuses has fallen from 5.5% in April to 4.8% in July. The rate for the private sector slipped from 5.5% to 4.7%, putting it on track to be in line with the Bank of England’s Q3 forecast (4.6% for September).

- CPI inflation fell slightly from 3.5% in April to 3.4% in May, and services inflation dropped from 5.4% to 4.7%, whilst core inflation also softened from 3.8% to 3.5%. More recently, though, inflation pressures have resurfaced, although the recent upward march in CPI inflation did pause for breath in August, with CPI inflation staying at 3.8%. Core inflation eased once more as well, from 3.8% to 3.6%, and services inflation dipped from 5.0% to 4.7%. So, we finish the half year in a similar position to where we started, although with food inflation rising to an 18-month high of 5.1% and households’ expectations for inflation standing at a six year high, a further loosening in the labour market and weaker wage growth may be a requisite to UK inflation coming in below 2.0% by 2027.

- An ever-present issue throughout the past six months has been the pressure being exerted on medium and longer dated gilt yields. The yield on the 10-year gilt moved upwards in the second quarter of 2025, rising from 4.4% in early April to 4.8% in mid-April following wider global bond market volatility stemming from the “Liberation Day” tariff announcement, and then easing back as trade tensions began to de-escalate. By the end of April, the 10-year gilt yield had returned to 4.4%. In May, concerns about stickier inflation and shifting expectations about the path for interest rates led to another rise, with the 10-year gilt yield fluctuating between 4.6% and 4.75% for most of May. Thereafter, as trade tensions continued to ease and markets increasingly began to price in looser monetary policy, the 10-year yield edged lower, and ended Q2 at 4.50%.

- More recently, the yield on the 10-year gilt rose from 4.46% to 4.60% in early July as rolled-back spending cuts and uncertainty over Chancellor Reeves’ future raised fiscal concerns. Although the spike proved short lived, it highlighted the UK’s fragile fiscal position. In an era of high debt, high interest rates and low GDP growth, the markets are now more sensitive to fiscal risks than before the pandemic. During August, long-dated gilts underwent a particularly pronounced sell-off, climbing 22 basis points and reaching a 27-year high of 5.6% by the end of the month. While yields have since eased back, the market sell-off was driven by investor concerns over growing supply-demand imbalances, stemming from unease over the lack of fiscal consolidation and reduced demand from traditional long-dated bond purchasers like pension funds. For 10-year gilts, by late September, inflation, resilient activity data and a hawkish Bank of England have kept yields elevated over 4.70%.
- The FTSE 100 fell sharply following the “Liberation Day” tariff announcement, dropping by more than 10% in the first week of April - from 8,634 on 1 April to 7,702 on 7 April. However, the de-escalation of the trade war coupled with strong corporate earnings led to a rapid rebound starting in late April. As a result, the FTSE 100 closed Q2 at 8,761, around 2% higher than its value at the end of Q1 and more than 7% above its level at the start of 2025. Since then, the FTSE 100 has enjoyed a further 4% rise in July, its strongest monthly gain since January and outperforming the S&P 500. Strong corporate earnings and progress in trade talks (US-EU, UK-India) lifted share prices and the index hit a record 9,321 in mid-August, driven by hopes of peace in Ukraine and dovish signals from Fed Chair Powell. September proved more volatile and the FTSE 100 closed Q3 at 9,350, 7% higher than at the end of Q1 and 14% higher since the start of 2025. Future performance will likely be impacted by the extent to which investors’ global risk appetite remains intact, Fed rate cuts, resilience in the US economy, and AI optimism. A weaker pound will also boost the index as it inflates overseas earnings.

- **MPC meetings: 8 May, 19 June, 7 August, 18 September 2025**
- There were four Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meetings in the first half of the financial year. In May, the Committee cut Bank Rate from 4.50% to 4.25%, while in June policy was left unchanged. In June's vote, three MPC members (Dhingra, Ramsden and Taylor) voted for an immediate cut to 4.00%, citing loosening labour market conditions. The other six members were more cautious, as they highlighted the need to monitor for "signs of weak demand", "supply-side constraints" and higher "inflation expectations", mainly from rising food prices. By repeating the well-used phrase "gradual and careful", the MPC continued to suggest that rates would be reduced further.

- In August, a further rate cut was implemented. However, a 5-4 split vote for a rate cut to 4% laid bare the different views within the Monetary Policy Committee, with the accompanying commentary noting the decision was "finely balanced" and reiterating that future rate cuts would be undertaken "gradually and carefully". Ultimately, Governor Bailey was the casting vote for a rate cut but with the CPI measure of inflation expected to reach at least 4% later this year, the MPC will be wary of making any further rate cuts until inflation begins its slow downwards trajectory back towards 2%.

- The Bank of England does not anticipate CPI getting to 2% until early 2027, and with wages still rising by just below 5%, it was no surprise that the September meeting saw the MPC vote 7-2 for keeping rates at 4% (Dhingra and Taylor voted for a further 25bps reduction).

- The Bank also took the opportunity to announce that they would only shrink its balance sheet by £70bn over the next 12 months, rather than £100bn. The repetition of the phrase that "a gradual and careful" approach to rate cuts is appropriate suggests the Bank still thinks interest rates will fall further but possibly not until February.

3.2 Interest Rate Forecasts

The PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1 November 2012.

MUFG Corporate Markets' latest forecast on 11 August sets out a view that short, medium and long-dated interest rates will fall back over the next year or two, although there are upside risks in respect of the heightened inflation and a continuing tight labour market, as well as the size of gilt issuance.

MUFG Corporate Markets Interest Rate View 11.08.25													
	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28
BANK RATE	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3 month ave earnings	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
6 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.40	3.40	3.40
12 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.60
5 yr PWLB	4.80	4.70	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10
10 yr PWLB	5.30	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60
25 yr PWLB	6.10	5.90	5.70	5.70	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20
50 yr PWLB	5.80	5.60	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.20	5.10	5.10	5.00	5.00

4. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS), for 2025/26 was approved by the Council on 26th February 2025.

- There are no policy changes to the TMSS; the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

5. The Council's Capital Position and Prudential Indicators

This part of the report updates on:

- The council's capital expenditure plans;
- How these plans are being financed;
- The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the prudential indicators and the underlying need to borrow; and
- Compliance with the limits in place for borrowing activity.

5.1 Prudential Indicator for Capital Expenditure

This table shows the revised estimates for capital expenditure and the changes since the capital programme was agreed at the Budget.

Capital Expenditure by Service	2025/26 Original Budget £000s	2025/26 Current Budget (1) £000s	2025/26 Forecast £000s
Chief Digital and Information Officer	660	988	775
Customer Services	0	50	0
Facilities	80	80	699
Environmental Services	4,994	5,584	5,055
Community Services	1,650	1,610	2,150
Parks, Countryside & Climate	2,224	2,556	3,112
Finance	50	161	111
Housing and Regeneration	80	10,439	7,338
Leisure and Health	1,386	1,428	1,854
Planning	2,706	3,202	1,615
Property and Facilities	697	1,590	1,340
Total capital expenditure	**14,527**	**27,687**	**24,048**

(1)Includes rephased budgets from 2024/25

5.2 Changes to the Financing of the Capital Programme

The table below draws together the main strategy elements of the capital expenditure plans (above), highlighting the original supported and unsupported elements of the capital programme, and the expected financing arrangements of this capital expenditure. The borrowing element of the table increases the underlying indebtedness of the council by way of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), although this will be reduced in part by revenue charges for the repayment of debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision). This direct borrowing need may also be supplemented by maturing debt and other treasury requirements.

Capital Financing	2025/26 Original Budget £000s	2025/26 Current Budget £000s	2025/26 Forecast £000s
Total Capital expenditure	**14,527**	**27,687**	**24,048**
Financed by:			
Capital Grants	5,303	14,242	12,721
Capital Reserves	2,706	3,202	2,140
Capital Receipts	100	100	100
Total financing	**8,109**	**17,544**	**14,961**
Borrowing requirement	**6,418**	**10,143**	**9,087**

Capital is not charged directly to revenue, but there is an effect on revenue of capital expenditure. This is made up of the interest on any loans taken out to finance capital, and the annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge. The MRP charge is based on the cost of each asset divided by the life of the asset, the result is charged to revenue each year. The table below shows the effect on the charge to revenue as a result of changes to the capital programme.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	2025/26 Budget £000s	2025/26 Current Budget £000s	2025/26 Forecast £000s
Net Revenue Stream	26,464	26,772	25,848
Financing Costs	4,156	3,833	3,833
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream	**16%**	**14%**	**15%**

5.3 Changes to the Prudential Indicators for the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), External Debt and the Operational Boundary

The table below shows the CFR, which is the underlying external need to incur borrowing for a capital purpose. It also shows the expected debt position over the period, which is termed the Operational Boundary.

Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement

The CFR is forecast to be £1.056m less than current budget (the current budget includes budget rephasings from 2024/25).

Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt

	2025/26 Original Budget £000s	2025/26 Current Budget £000s	2025/26 Forecast £000s
Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement			
Capital Financing Requirement[1]	**82,664**	**80,138**	**79,082**
Net Movement in CFR	**5,940**	**7,283**	**6,227[4]**
Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt			
Borrowing[2]	115,000	34,255	34,255
Other long-term liabilities[3]	544	544	544
Total debt (year-end position)	**115,000**	**34,799**	**34,799**

[1]Opening CFR 2025/26 £72.855m actual used for Current Budget. For the original budget £76.724m.

[2] £115m is the limit set in the 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy.

[3] Finance lease for Phoenix Court.

[4] Borrowing Requirement – MRP = £9.087m - £2.860m = £6.227m

5.4 Limits to Borrowing Activity

The first key control over the treasury activity is a prudential indicator to ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purposes. Gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2024/25 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

Total Debt	2025/26 Original Budget £000s	2025/26 Current Budget £000s	2025/26 Forecast £000s
Borrowing[1]	34,255	34,255	34,255
Other long-term liabilities[2]	600	544	544
Total debt	**34,855**	**34,799**	**34,799**
CFR (Year end position)	**82,664**	**80,138**	**79,082**

(1) A Salix loan repayment is due in February 2026 of £4k, current balance of borrowing is £34.259m see listing in Appendix A, at year end the balance will be £34.255m.

(2) Finance lease for Phoenix Court.

A further prudential indicator controls the overall level of borrowing. This is the Authorised Limit which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Authorised limit for external debt	2025/26 Original Indicator £000s	2025/26 Current Budget £000s	2025/26 Forecast £000s
General Debt and Other long-term liabilities	95,000	10,544	10,544
Service Loans	15,000	0	0
CIS Debt	25,000	24,255	24,255
Total	**135,000**	**34,799**	**34,799[1]**

(1) This is the sum of the debt at the year-end (£34.255m) plus long-term liabilities (Phoenix Court lease) of £0.544m. The current debt is £34.259m, the Salix loan of £4k will be paid off in February 2026.

6. Borrowing

The council's forecast capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2025/26 is £79.1m. The CFR denotes the council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the council may borrow from the PWLB or the market (external borrowing), or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. The table in 5.4 shows the council has borrowings of £34.8m and has utilised £44.3m of cash flow and balance sheet funds in lieu of borrowing (CFR – external borrowing). This is a prudent and cost-effective approach in the current economic climate but will require ongoing monitoring if gilt yields remain elevated, particularly at the longer-end of the yield curve (25 to 50 years).

It is anticipated that further borrowing will not be undertaken during this financial year.

Liability Benchmark

The Council is required to estimate and measure the Liability Benchmark (LB) for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years, as a minimum. See Appendix B for the Liability Benchmark chart

The Council is currently in an under-borrowed position (external borrowing is less than the CFR, internal borrowing is being used i.e. reserves and working capital to fund capital expenditure), this according to the liability benchmark will continue until the mid 2030s, although as plans evolve the CFR will likely move outwards. The CFR is being gradually reduced by application of the minimum revenue provision (MRP) charge to revenue, although as new expenditure plans are made the CFR line will reduce at a slower rate, and will not in reality reach zero.

The cash available to invest will increase as the MRP builds up in the cash balances. The liability benchmark line (dotted) is the cash available to invest less a liquidity buffer to meet any immediate cashflow needs.

PWLB maturity certainty rates (gilts plus 80bps) year to date to 30 September 2025

Gilt yields and PWLB certainty rates have remained relatively volatile throughout the six months under review, but the general trend has been for medium and longer dated parts of the curve to shift higher whilst the 5-year part of the curve finished September close to where it begun in April.

Concerns around the resilience of inflation, elevated wages, households' inflation expectations reaching a six-year high, and the difficult funding choices facing the Chancellor in the upcoming Budget on 26 November dominated market thinking, although international factors emanating from the Trump administration's fiscal, tariff and geo-political policies also played a role.

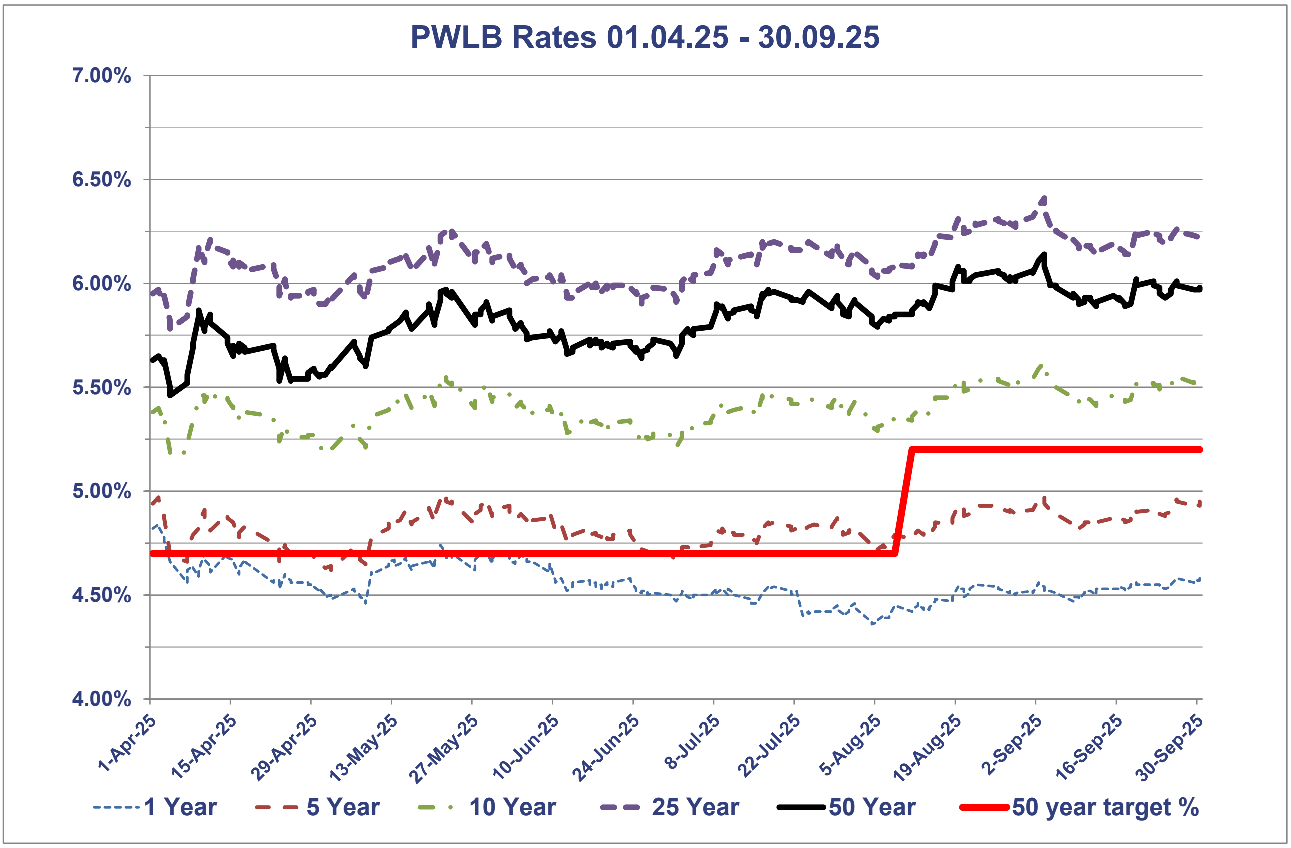
At the beginning of April, the 1-year certainty rate was the cheapest part of the curve at 4.82% whilst the 25-year rate was relatively expensive at 5.92%. Early September saw the high point for medium and longer-dated rates, although there was a small reduction in rates, comparatively speaking, by the end of the month.

The spread in the 5-year part of the curve (the difference between the lowest and highest rates for the duration) was the smallest at 37 basis points whilst, conversely, the 50-years' part of the curve saw a spread of 68 basis points.

At this juncture, MUFG Corporate Markets still forecasts rates to fall back over the next two to three years as inflation dampens, although there is upside risk to all forecasts at present. The CPI measure of inflation is expected to fall below 2% in early 2027 but hit a peak of 4% or higher later in 2025.

The Bank of England announced in September that it would be favouring the short and medium part of the curve for the foreseeable future when issuing gilts, but market reaction to the November Budget is likely to be the decisive factor in future gilt market attractiveness to investors and their willingness to buy UK sovereign debt.

PWLB RATES 01.04.25 - 30.09.25



HIGH/LOW/AVERAGE PWLB RATES FOR 01.04.25 – 30.09.25

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
01/04/2025	4.82%	4.94%	5.38%	5.95%	5.63%
30/09/2025	4.58%	4.95%	5.53%	6.23%	5.98%
Low	4.36%	4.62%	5.17%	5.78%	5.46%
Low date	04/08/2025	02/05/2025	02/05/2025	04/04/2025	04/04/2025
High	4.84%	4.99%	5.62%	6.41%	6.14%
High date	02/04/2025	21/05/2025	03/09/2025	03/09/2025	03/09/2025
Average	4.55%	4.82%	5.40%	6.11%	5.83%
Spread	0.48%	0.37%	0.45%	0.63%	0.68%

- The current PWLB rates are set as margins over gilt yields as follows: -.
  - **PWLB Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
  - **PWLB Certainty Rate (GF)** is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)
  - **PWLB Local Infrastructure Rate** is gilt plus 60 basis points (G+60bps)
  - **PWLB Certainty Rate (HRA)** is gilt plus 40bps (G+40bps)

- The **National Wealth Fund** will lend to local authorities that meet its scheme criteria at a rate currently set at gilt plus 40bps (G+40bps).

7. Debt Rescheduling

Debt repayment and rescheduling opportunities have increased over the course of the past six months and will be considered if giving rise to long-term savings. However, no debt repayments or rescheduling have been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

8. Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

It is a statutory duty for the council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. During the half year ended 30 September 2024, the council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2025/26, and no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with these indicators.

All treasury management operations have also been conducted in full compliance with the council's Treasury Management Strategy and Practices.

See Appendix C for details of the Prudential and Treasury indicators.

9. Annual Investment Strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2025/26, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the Council on 26th February 2025. In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, it sets out the council's investment priorities as being:

- Security of capital
- Liquidity
- Yield

The council will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and with the council's risk appetite. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit quality financial institutions, using the Link suggested creditworthiness approach, including a minimum sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information.

Creditworthiness.
The UK's sovereign rating has proven robust through the first half of 2025/26. The Government is expected to outline in detail its future fiscal proposals in the Budget scheduled for 26 November 2025.

Investment Counterparty criteria
The current investment counterparty criteria selection approved in the TMSS is meeting the requirement of the treasury management function. The portfolio of investments as at 30th September 2025 are listed in Appendix D.

Credit Default Swap prices
It is noted that sentiment in the current economic climate can easily shift, so it remains important to undertake continual monitoring of all aspects of risk and return in the current circumstances. See Appendix D.

Investment balances
The average level of funds available for short-term investment purposes during the first half of the financial year was **£71.6m**. These funds are available in the short-term to medium - term, the level of funds available was mainly dependent on the timing of precept payments, receipt of grants and progress on the capital programme as well as balances on reserves (eg CIL reserve) and balance sheet working capital e.g. debtors and creditors.

Investment Performance

The following indicators are to be reported on as stated within the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26. See also Appendix C.

- Portfolio risk score; **1.01**
- Average credit rating (security); **AA-**
- Weighted average maturity (Fixed term deposits); **14 days** (as at 30/09/2024)
- Interest rate risk; **£600,733**
- Rate of return; **4.11%**
- Liquidity; **£18.185m**

The council's budgeted investment interest return for 2025/26 is £1.14m, and the current forecast for the year is £2.62m.

Approved limits
The approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the period ended 30 September 2025.

Proportionality of Investments
The Council is dependent on investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget. The table below shows the extent to which the expenditure planned to meet the service delivery objectives of the Council is dependent on achieving the expected net investment income from investments, and how this has changed since the budget was set.

Proportionality of Investments	2025/26 Budget £000s	2025/26 Current Budget £000s	2025/26 Forecast £000s
Gross Service Expenditure	84,349	84,793	90,837
Net Investment income	3,620	3,600	2,854
Proportion	**4%**	**4%**	**3%**

Approved limits
Officers can confirm that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the half year ended 30 September 2025.

10. Other Treasury Issues

1. IFRS 9 Fair Value of Assets Statutory Override

Following the consultation undertaken by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on IFRS 9, the Government has extended the statutory override for local authorities to reverse out (to an unusable reserve) all unrealised fair value movements resulting from pooled investment funds until 1st April 2029**.** This only applies to existing pooled fund investments not to new investments. This mechanism applies to the CCLA Property Fund in which the council has £4m invested.

2. Changes in risk appetite
The 2021 CIPFA Codes and guidance notes place importance on risk management. Where an council changes its risk appetite e.g., for moving surplus cash into or out of certain types of investment funds or other types of investment instruments. During this half year the council has maintained its use of the Debt Management Officer (DMADF) and Money Market Funds as been its strategy over the last few years.

3. Sovereign limits
The Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from the UK, and from countries with a **minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- from fitch or equivalent (investing in the UK will continue even if the UK's credit rating falls below AA-).** The list of countries that qualify using this credit criteria as at the date of this report are shown in Appendix E. This list will be added to, or deducted from, by officers should ratings change in accordance with this policy.

11. Commercial Investment Strategy Indicators

Commercial Investment Indicators	2025/26 Original Forecast	2025/26 Current Forecast	2026/27 Forecast
Interest Cover Ratio	1.7	1.7	1.7
Loan to Value Ratio	104.9%	104.9%	104.9%
Gross Rent Multiplier	**14.0**	12.9	14.0

Interest cover ratio (income/interest) is used to measure how readily a business can pay the interest due on loans. The reduction from Original Forecast to Current Forecast is due to vacant units at Fareham and Rowley. Loan to value is the value of the loan to the value of the property. If the percentage is over 100% that means the value of loan is more than the value of the property. Gross rent multiplier is the value of a property compared to its annual rental income, the lower the ratio the higher the yield.

Net income from Commercial and Service Investments	2025/26 Budget £000s	2025/26 Current Budget £000s	2025/26 Forecast £000s
Net income (1)	3,620	3,600	2,854
Net revenue stream	26,464	26,772	25,848
Proportion of net revenue stream	**14%**	**13%**	**11%**

(1) This is the total of CCLA Property Fund, Loans to Organisations and Commercial Estates. Forecast - £160k+£150k+£2,544k = £2,854k

The summary property listing is below, with valuations as at 31st March 2025. See Appendix F for the full detail.

Commercial Investment Property (Summary)	**31/03/2024 Value £000s**	**Gain/(Loss) Addition £000s**	**31/03/2025 Value[(1)] £000s**
Legacy Properties;			
Huntingdon	21,592	367	21,959
St Ives	1,444	79	1,523
St Neots	7,278	49	7,327
	30,314	**495**	**30,809**
CIS Properties			
2 Stonehill	2,276	0	2,276
80 Wilbury Way	1,908	0	1,908
Shawlands Retail Park	5,783	(232)	5,551
1400 & 1500 Parkway	4,037	0	4,037
Rowley Arts Centre, St Neots	6,543	(644)	5,899
Little End Road, St Neots	3,288	1,977	5,265
Tri-link, Wakefield	14,686	1,264	15,950
Alms Close	1,449	57	1,506
	39,970	**2,422**	**42,392**
Total	**70,284**	**2,917**	**73,201**

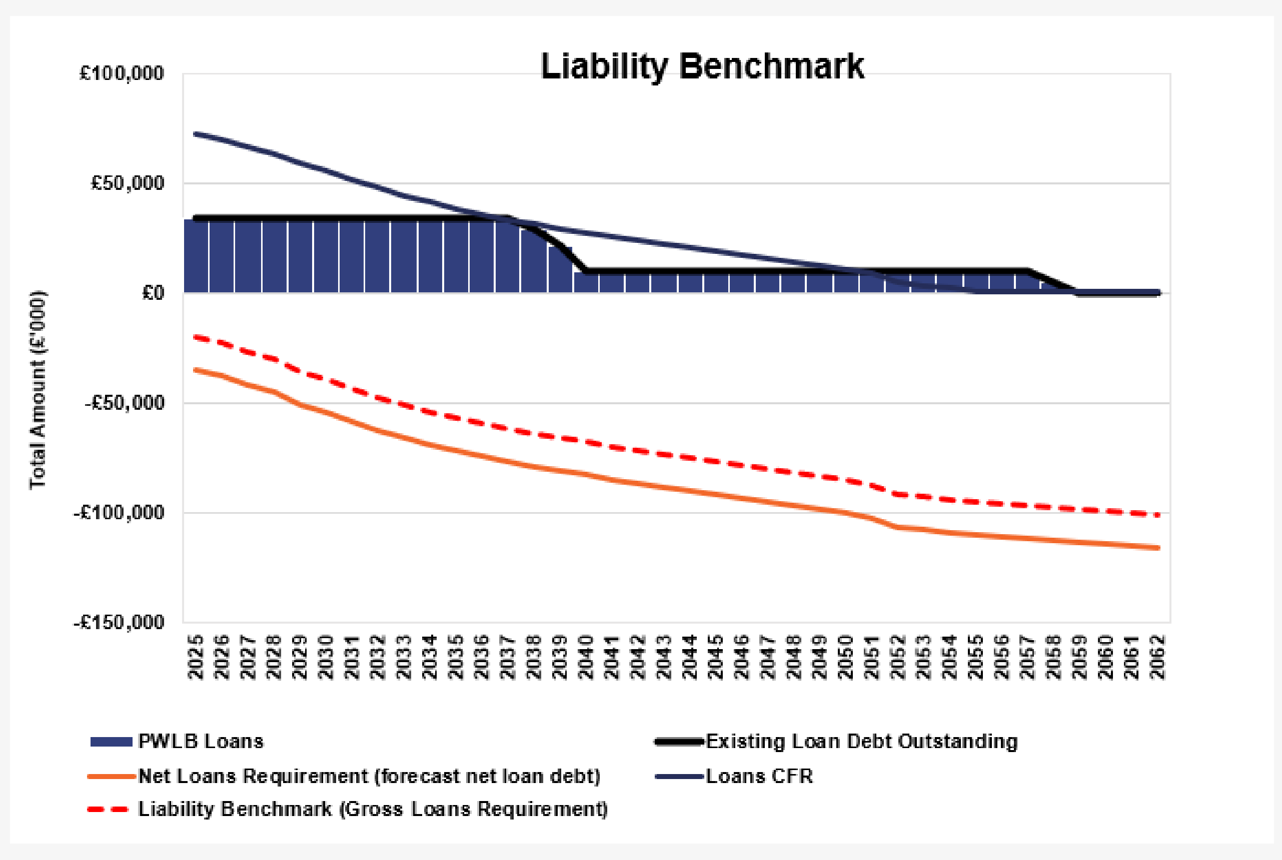
(1)The valuations are still subject to review and audit

APPENDIX A: Borrowing Schedule

Counterparty	Type	Amount £	Rate %	Start Date	Maturity Date
PWLB	Maturity	5,000,000	3.91	19/12/2008	19/12/2057
PWLB	Maturity	5,000,000	3.90	19/12/2008	19/12/2058
PWLB	Maturity	5,000,000	2.78	02/10/2017	02/10/2037
PWLB	Maturity	7,291,685	2.49	11/03/2019	11/03/2039
PWLB	Maturity	11,963,000	2.18	26/06/2019	26/06/2039
Salix	Repayment	4,387	0.00	17/02/2021	17/02/2026
		34,259,072			

APPENDIX B: CFR, Liability Benchmark and Borrowing

The Council is required to estimate and measure the Liability Benchmark (LB) for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years, as a minimum.



There are four components to the LB: -

1. **Existing loan debt outstanding**: the Council's existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.
2. **Loans CFR**: this is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP. This includes only current borrowing not future unplanned borrowing.
3. **Net loans requirement**: this will show the Council's gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flows forecast.
4. **Liability benchmark** (or gross loans requirement): this equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance. In practice this is the amount required to pay the regular precept payments.

The Council is currently in an under-borrowed position (external borrowing is less than the CFR, internal borrowing is being used i.e. reserves and working capital to fund capital expenditure), this according to the liability benchmark will continue until the mid 2030s, although as plans evolve the CFR will likely move outwards. The CFR is being gradually reduced by application of the minimum revenue provision (MRP) charge to revenue, although as new expenditure plans are made the CFR line will reduce at a slower rate, and will not in reality reach zero.

The cash available to invest will increase as the MRP builds up in the cash balances. The liability benchmark line (dotted) is the cash available to invest less a liquidity buffer to meet any immediate cashflow needs

APPENDIX C: Prudential and Treasury Indicators

Treasury Indicators	2025/26 Limit £'000	30.09.25 Actual £'000
Authorised limit for external debt	135,000	34,259
Operational boundary for external debt	115,000	34,259
Gross external debt		34,259
Investments		87,637
Net investment		53,378
Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing - upper and lower limits		
Under 12 months	0%/80%	0.1%
12 months to 2 years	0%/80%	0.0%
2 years to 5 years	0%/80%	0.0%
5 years to 10 years	0%/100%	0.0%
10 years to 20 years	0%/100%	70.7%
20 years to 30 years	0%/100%	0.0%
30 years to 40 years	0%/100%	29.2%
40 years to 50 years	0%/100%	0.0%
Upper limit for principal sums invested over 365 days Year 1 Year 2 Year 3	 10,000 9,000 8,000	 4,000 4,000 4,000
Minimum Total Cash Available (3 month rolling – July to September)(1)	15,000	18,185

Interest Rate Risk (Impact of 1% rise/fall)	600	601
Average Credit Rating[2] of investments[3]	A-	AA-
Portfolio Average Risk[4]		1.01

[1] Simple average on month end balances

[2]Credit ratings (Fitch, investment grade) are in descending order AAA, AA+, AA, AA-,A+,A,A-,BBB+,BBB,BBB-.

[3] Includes MMFs, DMO and Banks

[4]Score is on scale 1 to 7, with 7 the highest risk, this is calculated by Link from a return made monthly 30/09/2023 = 1.03, 31/03/2024 = 1.02, 30/06/2024 = 1.01

Prudential Indicators	2025/26 Budget £'000	2025/26 Forecast £'000
Capital expenditure		
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	82,664	79,082
Annual change in CFR	5,940	6,227
In year borrowing requirement	0	0
Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream	16%	15%

APPENDIX D: Investment Portfolio

Investments held as of 30 September 2024 compared to the 2024/25 counterparty list:

Counterparty	2025/26 Limit £m	30/09/2025 Actual £m
Deposit Accounts		
Natwest Business Reserve Account	4.00	0.20
Barclays Interest Bearing Account	4.00	.0001
Debt Management Office (DMO)	Unlimited	63.10
Money Market Funds		
Aberdeen Liquidity Fund	5.00	2.700
BlackRock Institutional sterling liquidity Fund	5.00	2.685
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	5.00	2.300
Federated Short Term Prime Fund	5.00	2.825
HSBC Global Liquidity Funds ESG	5.00	2.650
Insight Liquidity Fund	5.00	1.200
Invesco Liquidity Fund	5.00	2.790
Legal & General Sterling Liquidity Fund	5.00	1.200
Property Fund		
CCLA Property Fund	5.00	4.000
Total Investments		**85.650**

Counterparty	Balance 01/04/2025 £m	Movement £m	Balance 30/09/2025 £m	Weighted Average Rate[(1)] %	Weighted Average Maturity (Days)[(1)]
Banks	0.333	(0.130)	0.203	2.50	1
Debt Mgt Office	47.750	15.350	63.100	3.98	14
Money Market Funds	17.030	1.320	18.350	4.06	1
Property Fund	4.000	0.000	4.000[(5)]	4.59[(3)]	>365
Total Investments	**69.113**	**16.54**	**85.653[(2)]**	**4.02**	
Loans	1.986	(0.002)	1.984	7.92	1,108
Total	**71.099**	**16.538**	**87.637[(4)]**	**4.11**	

[(1)]At month end

[(2)]This is a net movement, invested was £408.778m and repaid £323.125m.

[(3)]Dividend yield on net asset value.

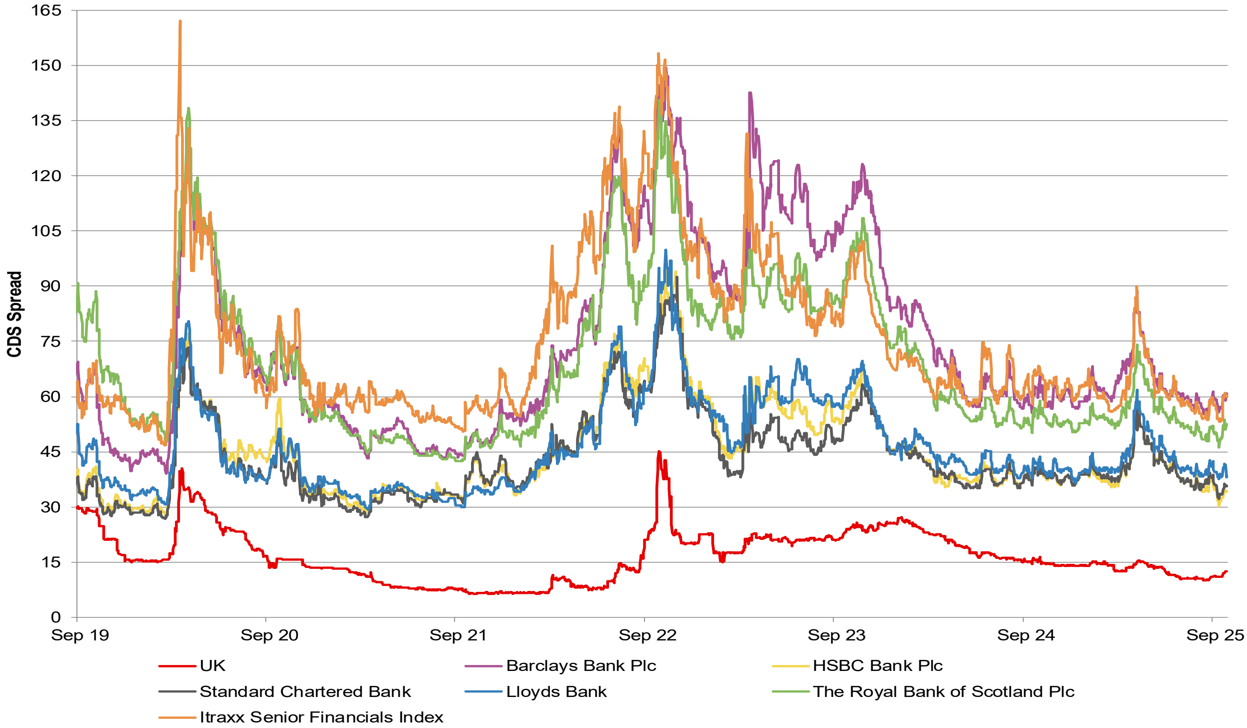
[(4)]The total investment balance at the end of Q1 was £74.904m

[(5)]The Net Asset Valuation as at 30/09/2025 is £3.659m

UK Banks 5 Year Senior Debt Credit Default Swaps (CDS) Spreads as of 30 September 2025

The cost of insuring against default low in historic terms, this cover is available to large financial institutions only. The chart below shows the cost in basis points of ensuring against the prospect of default on 5 year “paper” issued by major UK banks v the ITRAXX Senior Financials Index.

The price paid for CDS swaps by institutions is an indicator of risk within that institution, and so it is often used as in addition to credit rating to assess counterparty risk.



APPENDIX E: Approved Countries for Investments as of 30 September 2025

The UK will remain on the list of approved countries even if its credit rating drops below AA-.

Based on lowest available rating

AAA

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

AA+

- Canada
- U.S.A.

AA

- Abu Dhabi (UAE)
- Finland
- Qatar

AA-

- **U.K.**

A+

- Belgium
- France

Appendix F: Commercial Estates Property Listing

Commercial Investment Property	31/03/2023 Value £000s	Gain/(Loss) Additions £000s	31/03/2024 Value £000s	Gain/(Loss) Additions £000s	31/03/2025 Value £000s
Legacy Properties;					
Huntingdon					
Cinema and Shops	540	12	552	(5)	547
Oak Drive Shops	977	134	1,111	(52)	1,059
Mayfield Road Shops	750	(8)	742	(62)	680
Pub Site Sapley Square	193	0	193	0	193
Oak Tree Health Centre	11,786	0	11786	0	11,786
Clifton Road Industrial Units	1,825	0	1825	(79)	1,746
Alms Close Industrial Units	1,453	102	1,555	86	1,641
Land Clifton Road	144	0	144	0	144
Land St Peters Road	2,930	0	2,930	0	2,930
Land Redwongs Way	380	5	385	0	385
Phoenix Court Units	621	(252)	369	479	848
	21,599	**(7)**	**21,592**	**367**	**21,959**
St Ives					
Library Row Shops	532	29	561	0	561
Enterprise Centre	883	0	883	79	962
	1,415	**29**	**1,444**	**79**	**1,523**
St Neots					
Queens Gardens Shops	430	78	508	17	525
Naseby Gardens Shops	273	0	273	0	273
Leys Road Shops	117	9	126	0	126
Cambridge Street Shops	140	(8)	132	0	132
Cambridge Street Warehouse and Yard	719	0	719	0	719
Levellers Lane Industrial Units	5,220	(115)	5,105	32	5,137
Caravan Site Rush Meadows	257	0	257	0	257
Café Riverside Park	158	0	158	0	158
	7,314	**(36)**	**7,278**	**49**	**7,327**
Total	**30,328**	**(14)**	**30,314**	**495**	**30,809**
CIS Properties					
2 Stonehill, Huntingdon	2,481	(205)	2,276	0	2,276
80 Wilbury Way, Hitchin	1,873	35	1,908	0	1,908
Shawlands Retail Park, Sudbury	6,055	(273)	5,783	(232)	5,551
1400 & 1500 Parkway, Fareham	4,037	0	4,037	0	4,037
Rowley Arts Centre, St Neots	6,641	(98)	6,543	(644)	5,899
Little End Road, St Neots	3,321	(33)	3,288	1,977	5,265
Tri-link, Wakefield	14,748	(62)	14,686	1,264	15,950
Alms Close, Huntingdon	1,447	2	1,449	57	1,506
	40,603	**(634)**	**39,970**	**2,422**	**42,392**
Total	**70,931**	**(648)**	**70,284**	**2,917**	**73,201**

GLOSSARY

Bail in Risk
Bail in risk arises from the failure of a bank. Bondholders or investors in the bank would be expected to suffer losses on their investments, as opposed to the bank being bailed out by government.

Bank Equity Buffer
The mandatory capital that financial institutions are required to hold, in order to provide a cushion against financial downturns, to ensure the institution can continue to meet it liquidity requirements.

Bank Rate
The official interest rate of the Bank of England, this rate is charged by the bank on loans to commercial banks.

Bank Stress Tests
Tests carried out by the European Central Bank on 51 banks across the EU. The tests put banks under a number of scenarios and analyse how the bank's capital holds up under each of the scenarios. The scenarios include a sharp rise in bond yields, a low growth environment, rising debt, and adverse action in the unregulated financial sector.

Basis Point
1/100th of 1% i.e. 0.01%. 10 basis points is 0.1%.

Bonds
A bond is a form of loan, the holder of the bonder is entitled to a fixed rate of interest (coupon) at fixed intervals. The bond has a fixed life and can be traded.

Call Account
A bank account that offers a rate of return and the funds are available to withdraw on a daily basis.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)
The CFR is a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically but has yet to be financed; by for example capital receipts or grants funding. The current CFR balance is therefore financed by external borrowing, and internal borrowing (i.e. use of working capital on the balance sheet – creditors, cash etc).

Capital Receipts
Funds received when an asset is sold. This can be used to fund new capital expenditure.

Certificate of Deposit
Evidence of a deposit with a financial institution repayable on a fixed date. They are negotiable instruments, and have a secondary market, and can be sold before maturity.

Collar (Money Market Fund)
The fund "collar" forms part of the valuation mechanism for the fund. LVNAV funds allow investors to purchase and redeem shares at a constant NAV calculated to 2 decimal places, i.e. £1.00. This is achieved by the fund using amortised cost for valuation purposes, subject to the variation against the marked-to-market NAV being no greater than

20 basis points (0.2%). (This compares to current Prime CNAV funds which round to 50 basis points, or 0.5%, of the NAV.)

Constant Net Asset Value (CNAV)
Constant Net Asset Value refers to funds which use amortised cost accounting to value all of their assets. They aim to maintain a Net Asset Value (NAV), or value of a share of the fund at £1 and calculate their price to 2 decimal places.

Counterparty
Another organisation with which the Council has entered into a financial transaction with, for example, invested with or borrowed from. There will be an exposure of risk with a counterparty.

Credit Default Swaps (CDS)
A financial agreement that the seller of the CDS will compensate the buyer in the event of a loan default. The seller insures the buyer against a loan defaulting.

Credit Ratings
A credit rating is the evaluation of a credit risk of a debtor and predicting their ability to pay back the debt. The rating represents an evaluation of a credit rating agency of the qualitative and quantitative information, this result in a score, denoted usually by the letters A to D and including +/-.

DMADF
The Debt Management Account Deposit Facility. This is run by the UK's Debt Management Office and provides investors with the ability to invest with UK central government.

ECB
The European Central Bank, one of the institutions that makes up the EU. Its main function is to maintain price stability across the Eurozone.

ESG
Environmental, society, and governance investing, makes reference to a set of standards for an organisation's behaviour, which can be used by a socially aware investor to make investment decisions. Environmental factors include how an organisation safeguards the environment, social criteria look at how the organisation manages its relationships with the community, employees, suppliers, and customers, and governance deals with leadership, internal controls and audits.

Federal Reserve (Fed)
The central bank of the United States.

FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee)
The committee within the US Federal Reserve that makes decisions about interest rates, and the US money supply.

Forward Deal
The act of agreeing today to deposit/loan funds for an agreed time limit at an agreed date and rate.

GDP (Gross Domestic Product)
The total value of all final goods and services produced and sold in a year by a country.

Gilts
Bonds issued by the Government in Sterling.

Link Group
The council's treasury advisors, who took over from Arlingclose in March 2023. Now called MUFG Corporate Markets.

Liquidity
The degree to which an asset can be bought or sold quickly.

LVNAV Money Market Fund
Low volatility net asset value. The fund will have at least 10% of its assets maturing on a daily basis and at least 30% of assets maturing on a weekly basis.

MiFID
Markets in Financial Instruments Directive, is a regulation that increases the transparency across the EU's financial markets and standardises the regulatory disclosures required. In force since 2008.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)
An amount set aside annually from revenue to repay external debt.

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)
A committee of the Bank of England that meets to decide on the UK interest rate.

Monetary Policy
A policy adopted by government to affect monetary and financial conditions in the economy.

Money Market Funds
An open-ended mutual fund that invests in short-term debt securities. A deposit will earn a rate of interest, whilst maintaining the net asset value of the investment. Deposits are generally available for withdrawal on the day.

MUFG Corporate Markets
The council's treasury advisors, were called Link Group.

Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR)
An independent public sector body that provides independent forecasts.

Passive Investor
An investor that does not usually or frequently buy individual stocks, and does not individually pick investments to beat the market. Holdings are usually long term. This contrasts with an active investor.

Prudential Code
The CIPFA code of practice which ensures local authorities spending plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Public Works Loans Board (PWLB)
The PWLB is an agency of the Treasury, it lends to public bodies at fixed rates for periods up to 50 years. Interest rates are determined by gilt yields.

Purchasing Managers Index
Economic indicators derived from monthly surveys of private sector companies.

REFCUS
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute. Expenditure which would normally be considered revenue expenditure, but has been statutorily defined as capital expenditure, including the giving of a loan, grant or other financial assistance to any person, whether for use by that person or by a third party, towards expenditure which would, if incurred by the authority, be capital expenditure. Or expenditure incurred on the acquisition, production or construction of assets for use by, or disposal to, a person other than the local authority which would be capital expenditure if those assets were acquired, produced or constructed for use by the local authority.

Reserves
The accumulation of past revenue surpluses and contributions, which can be used to meet future expenditure. The reserves can be general reserves, or earmarked for a specific purpose.

Security, Liquidity, Yield (SLY)
The factors taken into account when investing and are prioritised in the order.

SONIA
Sterling overnight index average interest rate. On each London business day, SONIA is measured as the trimmed mean, rounded to four decimal places, of interest rates paid on eligible sterling denominated deposit transactions.

Transactional Banking
Use of a bank for day-to-day banking requirement, e.g. provision of current accounts, deposit accounts and on-line banking.

UN Principles for Responsible Banking
Are a unique framework for ensuring that signatory banks' strategy and practice align with the vision society has set out for its future in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.

The framework consists of 6 Principles designed to bring purpose, vision and ambition to sustainable finance. They were created in 2019 through a partnership between founding banks and the United Nations. Signatory banks commit to embedding these 6 principles across all business areas, at the strategic, portfolio and transactional levels.

- Principle 1: Alignment, align business strategy with individual's goals as expressed in the sustainable development goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and national and regional frameworks.
- Principle 2: Impact and Target Setting, increase positive impacts and reduce negative impacts on, and managing the risks to people and environment.
- Principle 3: Clients and Customers, work with clients and customers to encourage sustainable practices and enable economic activities that create shared prosperity.
- Principle 4: Stakeholders, engage with stakeholders to achieve society's goals.
- Principle 5: Governance and Culture, implement the commitment to these principles through effective governance.
- Principle 6: Transparency and Accountability, periodic review of the implementation of these principles, and be transparent about and accountable for the positive and negative impacts, and the contribution to society's goals.
-

A 3-step process guides signatories through implementing their commitment:

1. Impact Analysis: identifying the most significant impacts of products and services on the societies, economies and environments that the bank operates in.
2. Target Setting: setting and achieving measurable targets in a banks' areas of most significant impact.
3. Reporting: publicly report on progress on implementing the Principles, being transparent about impacts and contributions.

UN Principles for Responsible Investments

The 6 principles for responsible investments offer possible actions for incorporating ESG issues into investment practice.

The principles that the signatories sign up to are;

- **Principle 1:** We will incorporate ESG issues into investment analysis and decision-making processes.
- **Principle 2**: We will be active owners and incorporate ESG issues into our ownership policies and practices.
- **Principle 3**: We will seek appropriate disclosure on ESG issues by the entities in which we invest.
- **Principle 4:** We will promote acceptance and implementation of the Principles within the investment industry.
- **Principle 5**: We will work together to enhance our effectiveness in implementing the Principles.
- **Principle 6:** We will each report on our activities and progress towards implementing the Principles.

The Principles for Responsible Investment were developed by an international group of institutional investors reflecting the increasing relevance of environmental, social and corporate governance issues to investment practices. The process was convened by the United Nations Secretary-General.

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Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	**2025/26 Finance Performance Report – Forecast at Quarter 2**
Meeting/Date:	**Cabinet – 18th November 2025**
Executive Portfolio:	**Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**
Report by:	**Corporate Director (Finance and Resources)**
Ward affected:	**All**

Executive Summary:

This report sets out the forecast outturn for the financial year 2025/26 for both revenue and capital as at the end of quarter 2.

REVENUE FORECAST

The current net revenue budget for 2025/26 is £26.772m (Original budget of £26.464m plus brought forward budgets of £0.308m). The forecast net expenditure for 2025/26 is £27.591m, less contributions from reserves of £1.745m, this is a forecast underspend of £0.926m. It should be noted that this underspend is largely due to planning performance agreement income the timing of which cannot easily be predicted.

The significant variations that contribute to this forecast are as follows:

REVENUE UNDERSPENDS

Head of Economy, Regeneration and Housing – underspend of £0.1m, as a result of: Civil Parking Enforcement set up expenditure being lower than budgeted and improvements in pay and display fees of around £50k over the quarter 1 forecast, and an increase in parking permit income.

Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection - underspend of £1.0m, as a result of: Additional income from Planning Performance Agreements (£800k), though a proportion of this will be carried forward to 2026/27 as the work will extend beyond the current financial year. Also, additional planning fee income is forecast. Whilst there is extra expenditure on agency staff, this is partly offset by vacant posts.

Head of Environmental Services - underspend of £0.5m, as a result of: Recycling credit income (£600k) from Cambridgeshire County Council, which was previously not expected and therefore not budgeted for. Also, additional income from Street Cleansing Grounds maintenance, Green Waste and CCTV. Watercourse expenditure is overspent due to bank works.

Head of Finance - underspend of £1.8m, as a result of: Investment income is above budget because interest rates are remaining higher for longer than expected and a

reduction in the Minimum Revenue Provision which has now been calculated after the accounts for 2023/24 were finalised.

Customer Change Director - underspend of £0.3m as a result of: A reduction in Housing Benefit paid but also a reduction in the subsidy grant received. Additional grant to cover costs of homelessness and rough sleeping. The introduction of a forecasting and demand led resourcing model has generated efficiencies of £0.120m.

Head of Policy, Performance and Emergency Planning – underspend of £0.1m as a result of: Savings as a result of the vacant Head of Service post and Community Resilience posts.

REVENUE OVERSPENDS

Chief Executive Officer overspend of £0.3m, as a result of: Costs because of data work required for review of pay negotiations and joining the NJC (National Joint Council) framework.

Chief Digital and Information Officer overspend £0.1m, as a result of: Additional expenditure on upgrades and restructuring, work is on-going to identify efficiencies.

Head of Leisure, Health and Environment - overspend of £1.3m, as a result of: Costs of One Leisure projects (although these costs will be capitalised if the projects proceed), and lower than budgeted Swim School and Health and Fitness income. Income though is up at Hinchingbrooke Country Park café.

Head of Property and Facilities - overspend of £0.7m, as a result of: Reduced rental income due to vacant properties and units on reduced rent payments. There are however currently savings from vacant posts and reduced consultants' costs.

Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer - overspend of £0.4m, as a result of: Increased legal costs in relation to the Local Government Review, and additional costs for the new Monitoring Officer post, and risk, audit, and procurement support. Some of this is offset from savings arising from vacant posts.

Head of Communications. Engagement and Public Affairs overspend of £0.1m as a result of: Additional expenditure on corporate campaigns and Local Government Review work.

CAPITAL FORECAST

The approved gross capital programme for 2025/26 is £14.527m, this total included budgeted rephasings of £2.7m. At the year-end a total of £15.86m was rephased, an additional rephase of £13.16m. The total current budget is £27.687m, (£14.527m plus £13.160m).

The forecast expenditure for 2024/25 is £24.048m, an in-year underspend of £3.639m (this is likely to result in requests to rephase to 2026/27).

The significant variations that contribute to this forecast are as follows;

CAPITAL IN-YEAR UNDERSPENDS

Market Town Programme £3.1m, Community Infrastructure Levy grants £1.6m, Vehicle replacements £1.1m, Estates Properties £0.3m, ICT projects £0.2m.

CAPITAL OVERSPENDS

Solar Canopy and Panels £0.6m, Civil Parking Enforcement works £0.6m, Disabled Facilities Grants £0.5m, St Neots Riverside toilets and paths £0.6m, One Leisure Improvements £0.4m.

Recommendations:
It is recommended that:

- Cabinet is **invited to consider and comment** on the revenue financial performance for the financial year 2025/26 quarter 2, as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.2.

- Cabinet is **invited to consider and comment** on the capital financial performance for 2025/26 quarter 2, as detailed in Appendix 2 and summarised in paragraph 3.3.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present details of the Council's financial performance for 2025/2026 as at quarter 2.

- Revenue forecast of an underspend of £0.926m.
- Capital forecast in-year underspend of £3.639m.

BACKGROUND

2.1 The revenue budget and MTFS for 2025/26 approved in February 2025, assumed a net expenditure budget of £26.464m, since increased by brought forward budgets of £0.308m a total current budget of £26.772m.

2.2 A gross capital budget of £14.527m was approved, increased to £27.687m due to additional re-phasing of schemes at the year-end of £13.160m.

2.3 The detailed analysis of the 2025/26 forecast outturn is attached at Appendix 1 for revenue, and Appendix 2 for capital.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

3.1 Financial Performance Headlines

The outturn position for the current financial year and the impact of variations will be incorporated within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Revenue The current budget is £26.772m (original budget £26.464m plus budgets brought forward from 2024/25 of £0.308m), the forecast net expenditure is £27.591m, taking into account contributions from reserves of £1.745m this is a forecast underspend of £0.926m (£26.772m less {£27.591 less £1.745m} is -£0.926m).

Capital The approved gross capital programme for 2025/26 is £14.527m, this total included budgeted rephasings of £2.7m. At the year end a total of £15.86m was rephased, an additional rephase of £13.16m. The total current budget is £27.687m, (£14.527m plus £13.16m).

3.2 Summary Revenue Variances by Service

The table below shows the total variances for each Service and the main reasons for the variances;

Head of Service	Budget £'000s	Budget c/fwd £'000s	Current Budget £'000s	Forecast Actual £'000s	Reserve Movements £'000s	Forecast Variance £'000s	Commentary on Overspend/Underspend
Chief Executive Officer	1,021	-	1,021	1,316	-	295	Costs of data work for NJC pay bargaining.
Chief Digital & Information Officer	3,090	-	3,090	3,195	(13)	92	Extra expenditure on Microsoft upgrade and restructuring, work is on-going to identify efficiencies. Aged debt has been reduced.
Head of Economy, Regeneration & Housing	(194)	43	(151)	50	(273)	(72)	Civil Parking Enforcement costs lower than budgeted, also market rents paid and business rates lower. Improvement in pay and display income (c£50k) over Q1 and permit income increased in September.
Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection	2,795	65	2,860	2,362	(539)	(1,037)	Additional income from Planning Performance Agreements, though some of this income (c£800k) will be due in 2026/27 as the work will be performed then. Also Planning Fees are up on budget. Overspend on use of agency staff, partly offset by vacant posts.
Head of Environmental Services	4,396	40	4,436	3,989	(81)	(528)	Recycling credit income (£600k) is being received from Cambridgeshire County Council this had not previously been expected. Additional income from Street Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance, Green Waste and CCTV is above forecast. Watercourses expenditure increased due to repair works.
Head of Leisure, Health & Environment	1,083	20	1,103	2,451	(29)	1,319	Feasibility costs £1.3m are included in revenue, untill approved and then capitalised. One Leisure expenditure has been reduced due to lower levels than budgeted of Swim School and Health and Fitness income. Additional income at Hinchingbrooke Country Park cafe.
Head of Property & Facilities	(2,221)	40	(2,181)	(1,463)	-	718	Reduced rental income due to vacant units and units on reduced rents. Savings from vacant posts and reduced consultants costs.
Head of Human Resources & Officer Development	984	-	984	1,082	(88)	10	Workforce strategy costs funded from reserves.
Head of Finance	7,618	-	7,618	6,133	(389)	(1,874)	Increased income from investment interest due to higher for longer interest rates, also additional grant income, and saving on Minimum Revenue Provision following 2024/25 accounts closure. Also some additional employee costs.
Head of Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer	1,744	100	1,844	2,188	99	443	Legal costs higher due to Local Government Review work, and additional costs for provision of the new Monitoring Officer post , risk, procurement and audit, some savings from vacant posts.
Customer Change Director	4,945	-	4,945	4,851	(222)	(316)	A reduction in Housing Benefits paid and subsidy received. An increase in homelessness and rough sleeping costs, but an increase in grant to cover this. Efficiency savings (£120k) from the introduction of a forecasting and demand led resoucing model.
Head of Communications, Engagement & Public Affairs	247	-	247	363	0	116	Additional expenditure on corporate campaigns and Local Government Review work.
Head of Policy, Performance & Emergency Planning	956	-	956	1,074	(211)	(93)	Savings from vacant Director and Community Resilience post.
Total	**26,464**	**308**	**26,772**	**27,591**	**(1,745)**	**(926)**	

Further analysis of the revenue variance and service commentary are in Appendix 1. This provides the variances by service and comments have been provided by the budget managers.

3.3 Capital Programme

The approved gross capital programme for 2025/26 is £14.527m, this total included budgeted rephasings of £2.7m. At the year end a total of £15.86m was rephased, an additional rephase of £13.16m. The total current budget is £27.687m, (£14.527m plus £13.16m). An in-year underspend of £3.639m is forecast.

The table below shows the total variances for each Service and the main reasons for the variances.

Head of Service	Existing and New Bids £000s	Budget Rephase (1) £000s	Original Budget £000s	Year End Rephase (2) £000s	Net Rephase (3) £000s	Growth/ Virement £000s	Current Budget £000s	Q2 Actual £000s	Q2 Forecast £000s	Over/(Under) Spend £000s	Comment on Significant Variances
Chief Digital and Information Officer	395	265	660	593	328	0	988	390	775	(212)	The Data Rack projected has been halted, Windows 10 and Pubclic Switched Network completed under budget, and Server 2019 project delayed. The AV equipment project is forecast to overspend.
Customer Services	0	0	0	50	50	0	50	0	0	(50)	Voice Bots and Data Warehouse projects are currently delayed.
Facilities	80	0	80	0	0	0	80	511	699	619	Solar projects (funded from reserves and grants) and meeting pods for Pathfinder House and Eastfield House.
Environmental Services	4,871	123	4,994	713	590	0	5,584	1,421	5,055	(529)	Delayed expenditure on vehicle replacements as a result of extending useful lives, offset by expenditure on Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) infrastructure.
Community Services	1,600	50	1,650	10	(40)	0	1,610	997	2,150	540	Increased forecast expenditure for home improvements due to clearing of previous backlog, mostly offset by increase in forecast grant income.
Parks, Countryside & Climate	63	2,161	2,224	2,493	332	0	2,556	66	3,112	556	St Neots Riverside paths and toilets funded by grants and CIL.
Finance	50	0	50	111	111	0	161	0	111	(50)	Budget not needed as partial exemption limit not breeched.
Housing and Regeneration	0	80	80	10,439	10,359	0	10,439	954	7,338	(3,100)	Future High Street and Market Town projects due to complete in 2026/27.
Leisure and Health	1,365	21	1,386	63	42	0	1,428	579	1,854	426	Additional expenditure on upgrading customer facilities including lift at the Burgess Hall and the St Neots 3G pitch.
Planning	2,706	0	2,706	496	496	0	3,202	880	1,615	(1,587)	External projects have been delayed and as a result payment of funding is delayed.
Property and Facilities	697	0	697	893	893	0	1,590	132	1,340	(250)	Tendered contract prices less than estimates.
Total	**11,827**	**2,700**	**14,527**	**15,860**	**13,160**	**0**	**27,687**	**5,929**	**24,048**	**(3,639)**	

(1) This is the estimated rephase when the budget is set.

(2) This is the actual rephase at the year end when all costs are known

(3) This is the actual rephase less the budget rephase. Original budget + net rephase + growth = Current budget

3.4 Council Tax and Business Rates Collection

The Council Tax collection rate at the end of quarter 2 (55.97%) is lower than the previous year (56.20%). The Business Rates collection rate at the end of quarter 2 (59.06%) is lower than at the end of quarter 2 in the previous year (59.20%).

The number of working age Council Tax Support claimants at the end of quarter 2 was 5,166 which is 251 more than at the end of quarter 2 in 2024/25 (4,915). The number of pensioner Council Tax Support claimants was 2,822 at the end of quarter 2 in 2025/26, compared to 2,825 for the same period last year.

3.5 Miscellaneous Debt Update

The table below shows the debtor analysis as at 30th September 2025.

	Debtor Aged Days Q2							
Service	**Current**	**<90**	**91 to 180**	**181 to 365**	**>365**	**Future**	**Total Debt**	**Total Debt Q1**
	£000s	**£000s**	**£000s**	**£000s**	**£000s**	**£000s**	**£000s**	**£000s**
3C Shared Services	0	(13)	0	0	27	1,610	**1,624**	**149**
Business Improvement District	1	1	0	16	6	0	**24**	**25**
Community Infrastructure Levy	265	19	0	14	0	2,935	**3,233**	**3,647**
Commercial Rent	429	16	30	133	208	119	**935**	**518**
Community	6	1	1	0	5	1	**14**	**20**
Corporate	0	0	44	0	0	0	**44**	**44**
Environmental	0	0	0	0	3	0	**3**	**3**
Finance	3	3	13	2	18	1	**40**	**38**
Housing Benefit Overpayment	0	0	0	0	21	0	**21**	**21**
Hinchingbrooke Country Park	1	0	0	1	1	61	**64**	**4**
Housing	37	12	8	35	295	42	**429**	**378**
Licensing	5	3	1	2	2	20	**33**	**10**
Markets	1	0	0	0	1	1	**3**	**3**
Mobile Home Park	12	3	6	0	0	42	**63**	**73**
Moorings	0	2	0	0	1	5	**8**	**10**
One Leisure	16	5	2	1	(1)	77	**100**	**99**
Operations	20	54	8	6	12	47	**147**	**299**
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**
Paxton Pits	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**	**10**
Planning	56	1	0	0	0	110	**167**	**141**
Private Sector Housing	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**
Section 106	171	37	0	0	0	0	**208**	**37**
Trade Waste	1	9	1	0	(5)	69	**75**	**95**
Total	**1,024**	**153**	**114**	**210**	**594**	**5,141**	**7,236**	**5,624**

4.0 Update on the Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Properties

4.1 The implementation of the CIS was seen as a key means by which the Council can generate income to assist it in meeting the forecast gap in the revenue budget.

4.2 For quarter 2 2025/26, the budget and forecast expenditure and income for the CIS and investment properties are:

CIS Investments	Budget £000s	Forecast Outturn £000s	Variance £000s
Cash Investments			
CCLA Property Fund Dividend Income	(162)	(160)	2
Total Cash Investments	**(162)**	**(160)**	**2**
Property Rental Income	(5,030)	(4,077)	953
Loan Interest (On CIS related borrowing)	581	581	0
Total Property Investments	**(4,449)**	**(3,496)**	**953**
TOTAL	**(4,611)**	**(3,656)**	**955**
CIS Borrowing (Maturity Loans from PWLB)			
Property	**Maturity Date**	**Principal Amount**	**% (Fixed)**
Wakefield	26/06/2039	11,963	2.18
Fareham	02/10/2037	5,000	2.78
Rowley Centre	11/03/2039	7,292	2.49

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Cabinet is invited to **consider and comment** on the revenue financial performance for the financial year 2025/26 quarter 2, as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.2.
- Cabinet is invited to **consider and comment** on the capital financial performance for 2025/26 quarter 2, as detailed in Appendix 2 and summarised in paragraph 3.3.

6. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Financial Performance for revenue quarter 2 2025/26.
Appendix 2 – Financial Performance for capital quarter 2 2025/26.

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Appendix 1

2025/26 Q2 Forecast - Revenue

Head of Service Summary

Head of Service	Year to Date Actual £000	Year to Date Current Budget £000	Year to Date Over/ (Under) Spend £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Full Year Original Budget £000	Full Year Budget c/fwd £000	Full Year Current Budget £000	Full Year Contribution To /(From) Reserves £000	Full Year Over/ (Under) Spend £000	*Commentary On Underspend/Overspend*
Chief Executive Officer										
Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**Income:**
Expenses	795	511	284	1,316	1,021	-	1,021	-	295	**Expenditure:** £300k of costs for the data work carried out to support the move to NJC pay bargaining.
Net	**795**	**511**	**284**	**1,316**	**1,021**	**-**	**1,021**	**-**	**295**	
Chief Digital & Information Officer										
Income	(3,052)	(3,074)	22	(6,139)	(6,148)	-	(6,148)	-	9	**Income:** Aged debt has been recovered, and cost shared with partners are higher.
Expenses	4,638	4,619	19	9,334	9,238	-	9,238	(13)	83	**Expenditure:** Extra expenditure approved for Microsoft upgrade and restructure costs. Work is continuing on identifying savings.
Net	**1,586**	**1,545**	**41**	**3,195**	**3,090**	**-**	**3,090**	**(13)**	**92**	
Head of Economy, Regeneration & Housing										
Income	(1,356)	(1,582)	226	(2,796)	(3,164)	-	(3,164)	(153)	215	**Income:** Lower grant income but vacancies are offsetting this. Market income in line with current occupancy. PCN income lower because of transition period, but permit income higher in September and also pay and display income improved by £50k over Q1 forecast.
Expenses	1,206	1,507	(301)	2,846	2,970	43	3,013	(120)	(287)	**Expenditure:** Rent payable for St Neots market lower than budget. CPE expenditure and car parks business rates lower than budget.
Net	**(150)**	**(75)**	**(75)**	**50**	**(194)**	**43**	**(151)**	**(273)**	**(72)**	
Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection										
Income	(2,351)	(1,729)	(622)	(4,621)	(3,457)	-	(3,457)	(251)	(1,415)	**Income:** Additional income from Planning Performance Agreements, though a signficant proportion of this (c£800k) will be moved to 2026/27 when the exact figure is known, as the work will be carried out in 2026/27. Also additional planning fees are forecast due to the new Local Plan. Mobile Home Park income and Licencing income are also both forecast up on budget.
Expenses	3,309	3,159	150	6,983	6,252	65	6,317	(288)	378	**Expenditure:** Underspend on 3C Building Control fees, temporary vacant posts in Licencing, Community Resilience, Community Development, Commercial Team and Environmental Protection. Also underspend on Empty Homes budget. Overspend as a result of use of agency staff (partly offset by vacancies) in Planning Policy and Development Control.
Net	**958**	**1,430**	**(472)**	**2,362**	**2,795**	**65**	**2,860**	**(539)**	**(1,037)**	

Head of Service	Year to Date Actual £000	Year to Date Current Budget £000	Year to Date Over/ (Under) Spend £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Full Year Original Budget £000	Full Year Budget c/fwd £000	Full Year Current Budget £000	Full Year Contribution To /(From) Reserves £000	Full Year Over/ (Under) Spend £000	*Commentary On Underspend/Overspend*
Head of Environmental Services										
Income	(4,224)	(3,345)	(879)	(8,448)	(6,689)	-	(6,689)	(81)	(1,840)	**Income:** Recycling credit income (£600k) from Cambridgeshire County Council is higher than budgeted as the expectation was this would not be paid. Also CCTV income up on budget to cover costs of project work, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing income from third parties has increased. The Green Waste subscription income is maintaining a level higher than budget.
Expenses	6,220	5,564	656	12,437	11,085	40	11,125	-	1,312	**Expenditure:** Overspend in Watercourses due to works required on collapsed bank, also increased use of agency staff in Waste (partly offset by vacant posts) and Street Cleansing and the Hire of a sweeper to cover vehicle delivery delays.
Net	**1,996**	**2,219**	**(223)**	**3,989**	**4,396**	**40**	**4,436**	**(81)**	**(528)**	
Head of Leisure, Health & Environment										
Income	(4,294)	(4,074)	(220)	(8,742)	(9,139)	-	(9,139)	(80)	317	**Income:** Forecast income for Swim School and Health and Fitness are lower than budget but ahead of last year. Additional income at Hinchingbrooke Country Park (HCP) café, but car park income is below budget due to part year closure. Net Zero Village grants have made both income and expenditure higher.
Expenses	5,975	5,122	853	11,193	10,222	20	10,242	51	1,002	**Expenditure:** Feasible costs of projects (£1.3m) have been included in revenue until the projects are approved. Adjustments have been made to expenditure to mitigate the shortfall in forecast income. Employee costs at HCP lower than budget.
Net	**1,681**	**1,048**	**633**	**2,451**	**1,083**	**20**	**1,103**	**(29)**	**1,319**	
Head of Property & Facilities										
Income	(2,340)	(2,778)	438	(4,681)	(5,555)	-	(5,555)	-	874	**Income:** There has been a reduction in rental income due to various vacant units and units on reduced rent. However there has been increased income from selling electricity back to the grid.
Expenses	1,603	1,688	(85)	3,218	3,334	40	3,374	-	(156)	**Expenditure:** Increased maintenance costs on fire doors and air source heat pump, but savings on vacant posts and consultants.
Net	**(737)**	**(1,090)**	**353**	**(1,463)**	**(2,221)**	**40**	**(2,181)**	**-**	**718**	

Head of Service	Year to Date			Full Year						
	Actual £000	Current Budget £000	Over/ (Under) Spend £000	Forecast £000	Original Budget £000	Budget c/fwd £000	Current Budget £000	Contribution To /(From) Reserves £000	Over/ (Under) Spend £000	*Commentary On Underspend/Overspend*
Head of Human Resources & Officer Development										
Expenses	486	492	(6)	1,084	984	-	984	(88)	12	**Expenditure:** Increased expenditure on the Workforce Strategy but this has been funded from reserves.
Net	**481**	**492**	**(11)**	**1,082**	**984**	**-**	**984**	**(88)**	**10**	
Head of Finance										
Income	(1,584)	(914)	(670)	(3,168)	(1,827)	-	(1,827)	(313)	(1,654)	**Income:** Increase in income from investment income, also NNDR pool income, and grants received.
Expenses	4,629	4,723	(94)	9,301	9,445	-	9,445	(77)	(221)	**Expenditure:** Savings from reduced Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) due to in-year underspend in 2024/25, calculated following the closure of the accounts. Also additional employee costs.
Net	**3,046**	**3,809**	**(763)**	**6,133**	**7,618**	**-**	**7,618**	**(389)**	**(1,874)**	
Head of Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer										
Income	(313)	(117)	(196)	(626)	(234)	-	(234)	39	(353)	**Income:** Extra grant to cover provision of local and Mayoral elections.
Expenses	1,433	1,039	394	2,814	1,978	100	2,078	60	796	**Expenditure:** 3C Legal contibutions expected to be higher as a result of LGR. Additional costs for Monitoring Officer post, and election costs (covered by income). Also additional costs for agency staff (procurement cover), internal audit programme, and rsik support work whilst post vacant. There have been savings from 2 vacant audit posts.
Net	**1,120**	**922**	**198**	**2,188**	**1,744**	**100**	**1,844**	**99**	**443**	
Customer Change Director										
Income	(12,318)	(10,842)	(1,476)	(24,640)	(21,683)	-	(21,683)	(102)	(3,059)	**Income:** Decrease in Housing Benefit subsidy, and increase in homelessness rough sleeping grants.
Expenses	14,756	13,315	1,441	29,491	26,628	-	26,628	(120)	2,743	**Expenditure:** A reduction in Housing Benefit paid, but an increase in homelessness and rough sleeping costs (covered by grant). Efficiency savings (£120k) from the introduction of a forecasting and demand led resourcing model and also new technology.
Net	**2,438**	**2,473**	**(35)**	**4,851**	**4,945**	**-**	**4,945**	**(222)**	**(316)**	
Head of Communications, Engagement & Public Affairs										
Expenses	182	124	58	363	247	-	247	0	116	**Expenditure:** Overspend from corporate campaigns and LGR work.
Net	**182**	**124**	**58**	**363**	**247**	**-**	**247**	**0**	**116**	
Head of Policy, Performance & Emergency Planning										
Income	(5)	(63)	58	(10)	(125)	-	(125)	(177)	(62)	**Income:**
Expenses	428	540	(112)	1,084	1,081	-	1,081	(34)	(31)	**Expenditure:** Underspend from part year vacant post (Community Resilience), and Director post currently vacant. Additional programme and project managers approved these are funded from reserves.
Net	**423**	**477**	**(54)**	**1,074**	**956**	**-**	**956**	**(211)**	**(93)**	
Total	**13,818**	**13,885**	**(67)**	**27,591**	**26,464**	**308**	**26,772**	**(1,745)**	**(926)**	

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2025/26 Q2 Forecast - Revenue

Head of Service Detail

Appendix 1 Continued

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date			Full Year						Commentary On Underspend/Overspend
		Actuals £000	*Current Budget £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	*Forecast £000*	*Original Budget £000*	*Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000*	*Current Budget £000*	*Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	
Chief Executive Officer	**Directors**										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**Expenditure**: £300k of costs for the data work carried out to support the move to NJC pay bargaining.
	Expenses	795	511	284	1,316	1,021	-	1,021	-	295	
	Net Impact	**795**	**511**	**284**	**1,316**	**1,021**	**-**	**1,021**	**-**	**295**	
	HoS Total	**795**	**511**	**284**	**1,316**	**1,021**	**-**	**1,021**	**-**	**295**	
Chief Digital & Information Officer	**ICT Shared Service (Old Model)**										
	Income	23	-	23	23	-	-	-	-	23	**Income:** Chief Digital Officer has recovered significant amount of aged debt from Cambridge City, during this exercise a duplicate invoice was discovered which needed to be written off. This was outside of CDIO's control.
	Expenses	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	0	
	Net Impact	**23**	**-**	**23**	**23**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**23**	
	3C ICT Shared Service										
	Income	(3,075)	(3,074)	(1)	(6,162)	(6,148)	-	(6,148)	-	(14)	**Reserves:** Grant for Serious Violence Duty (SVD) project & Staff Development grant, these will be used for those specific purposes to offset costs. **Income:** Recharges to Partners (Cambridge City & SCDC) when costs shared are higher, also recharges are higher than expected. **Expenses:** Approved by 3 Councils, Microsoft E5 upgrade and restructure costs. **Quarter 1:** The overspend at Quarter 1 was reported at £108k, the service worked hard to decrease this forecast by £39k. The work continues to identify further efficiencies.
	Expenses	4,638	4,619	19	9,334	9,238	-	9,238	(13)	83	
	Net Impact	**1,563**	**1,545**	**18**	**3,172**	**3,090**	**-**	**3,090**	**(13)**	**69**	
	HoS Total	**1,586**	**1,545**	**41**	**3,195**	**3,090**	**-**	**3,090**	**(13)**	**92**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date			Full Year						Commentary On Underspend/Overspend
		Actuals £000	*Current Budget £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	*Forecast £000*	*Original Budget £000*	*Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000*	*Current Budget £000*	*Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	
Head of Economy, Regeneration & Housing	**Economic Development**										
	Income	-	(37)	37	(12)	(74)	-	(74)	-	62	**Income:** (£68k) was put into the budget to offset salary budget to recognise efficiencies. Therefore, this is offset by underspend on salaries where vacancies are held to offset this. **Overall Overspend:** At Q2 the service forecast Infrastructure Matters Consultancy work.
	Expenses	200	234	(34)	418	424	43	467	-	(49)	
	Net Impact	**200**	**197**	**3**	**406**	**350**	**43**	**393**	**-**	**13**	
	Housing Strategy										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	145	163	(18)	330	325	-	325	-	5	
	Net Impact	**145**	**163**	**(18)**	**330**	**325**	**-**	**325**	**-**	**5**	
	Markets										
	Income	(55)	(48)	(7)	(99)	(96)	-	(96)	-	(3)	**Income:** Forecast income in line with current occupancy. Discussions ongoing around St Neots markets, currently forecasting the rent payable by the council for St Neots Market will be lower than budgeted
	Expenses	43	120	(77)	193	240	-	240	-	(47)	
	Net Impact	**(12)**	**72**	**(84)**	**94**	**144**	**-**	**144**	**-**	**(50)**	
	Car Parks - Off Street										
	Income	(1,250)	(1,416)	166	(2,572)	(2,832)	-	(2,832)	-	260	**Income:** Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) lower than budget due to transition from old to new legislation with warning notice period. Permit income peak in September linked to on-street permits and commenced on-street enforcement. Pay and Display income lower than budget, however the position has improved since Q1 wth an additional £50k of income now forecast. **Expenditure:** Reduction in spend is linked to business rates payable being less than budgeted, and CPE costs lower than budget.
	Expenses	707	884	(177)	1,587	1,768	-	1,768	(120)	(301)	
	Net Impact	**(543)**	**(532)**	**(11)**	**(985)**	**(1,064)**	**-**	**(1,064)**	**(120)**	**(41)**	
	Car Park - On Street										
	Expenses	(3)	-	(3)	1	-	-	-	-	1	
	Net Impact	**(3)**	**-**	**(3)**	**1**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1**	
	Market Towns										
	Income	(51)	(81)	30	(113)	(162)	-	(162)	(153)	(104)	**Income and Expenditure:** Vibrant communities project, spend is claimed from CPCA (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority), hence income and expenses are overperforming by the same amount and overall breakeven.
	Expenses	114	106	8	317	213	-	213	-	104	
	Net Impact	**63**	**25**	**38**	**204**	**51**	**-**	**51**	**(153)**	**-**	
	HoS Total	**(150)**	**(75)**	**(75)**	**50**	**(194)**	**43**	**(151)**	**(273)**	**(72)**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date Actuals £000	Year To Date Current Budget £000	Year To Date Over/ (Under) Spend £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Full Year Original Budget £000	Full Year Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000	Full Year Current Budget £000	Full Year Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000	Full Year Over/ (Under) Spend £000	Commentary On Underspend/Overspend
Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection	**Building Control**										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**Expenditure:** £23k underspend created from 3C Building control contributions anticipated to be less than budgeted based on last financial years performance
	Expenses	58	83	(25)	141	165	-	165	-	(24)	
	Net Impact	**58**	**83**	**(25)**	**141**	**165**	**-**	**165**	**-**	**(24)**	
	Planning Policy										
	Income	(618)	(230)	(388)	(1,193)	(461)	-	(461)	(251)	(983)	**Income:** Additional income from Planning Performance Agreements (significant amounts already received), though a large proportion (c£800k) of this will need to be moved to 2026/27 as the work will be done in that year. Also Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring income increased. **Expenditure:** Increased agency staff spend as maternity cover
	Expenses	802	765	37	1,969	1,467	65	1,532	(308)	129	
	Net Impact	**184**	**535**	**(351)**	**776**	**1,006**	**65**	**1,071**	**(559)**	**(854)**	
	Development Management										
	Income	(1,042)	(981)	(61)	(2,235)	(1,963)	-	(1,963)	-	(272)	**Income:** Expected upturn in planning applications which is line with regulation 18 of the new local plan. The Council is in tilted balance. **Expenditure:** Agency staff is being used within Development Management this is partially offset by vacant posts.
	Expenses	1,029	952	77	2,171	1,904	-	1,904	20	287	
	Net Impact	**(13)**	**(29)**	**16**	**(64)**	**(59)**	**-**	**(59)**	**20**	**15**	
	Environmental Health Admin										**Expenditure:** Service performing within budget
	Expenses	24	25	(1)	47	50	-	50	-	(3)	
	Net Impact	**24**	**25**	**(1)**	**47**	**50**	**-**	**50**	**-**	**(3)**	
	Licencing										
	Income	(186)	(193)	7	(368)	(386)	-	(386)	-	18	**Income**: £12.5k anticipated under achievement of income due to less renewals for licences this year (5 year licences) as well as £3k under achievement of Street Trading income (The service has proposed a change in the fees & charges for Street trading to try and deliver an increase in this income for next financial year) **Expenses:** £44k underspend caused by partial vacancy of Licensing Manager post currently filled part time
	Expenses	162	194	(32)	339	388	-	388	-	(49)	
	Net Impact	**(24)**	**1**	**(25)**	**(29)**	**2**	**-**	**2**	**-**	**(31)**	
	Community Resilience										
	Income	(140)	(105)	(35)	(246)	(209)	-	(209)	-	(37)	**Income**: £27k over achievement of income on electricity for Mobile Home Parks due to higher energy consumption (all energy consumption costs are recovered in full from residents) as well as £12k of non-budgeted income achieved for sale of mobile home (10% of income from the sale of the asset kept within the revenue budget). **Expenses:** £24k underspend on salaries, now forecast to be filled from November at 0.6 FTE as well as £4k saving to be achieved from dog control contract as a result of work done by the service to deliver efficiencies
	Expenses	243	269	(26)	507	539	-	539	-	(32)	
	Net Impact	**103**	**164**	**(61)**	**261**	**330**	**-**	**330**	**-**	**(69)**	
	Communities										
	Income	(340)	(185)	(155)	(520)	(369)	-	(369)	-	(151)	**Income:** £151k higher income expected to be released into the position due to an increased number of payments for the Homes for Ukraine scheme this is reflected within the expenses **Expenses:** £151k higher costs due to an increase in payments for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, partially offset by £23k salary saving within the Community Development team due to two fixed term contracts ending and not being re-recruited to. **Overall:** £23k salary saving within the Community Development team due to two fixed term contracts ending and not being re-recruited to. As well as £10k underspend created by no anticipated costs for relocation grants
	Expenses	543	388	155	898	775	-	775	-	123	
	Net Impact	**203**	**203**	**(0)**	**378**	**406**	**-**	**406**	**-**	**(28)**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date *Actuals £000*	*Current Budget £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	Full Year *Forecast £000*	*Original Budget £000*	*Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000*	*Current Budget £000*	*Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	*Commentary On Underspend/Overspend*
	Environmental Health Services										
	Income	(25)	(35)	10	(59)	(69)	-	(69)	-	10	**Income:** £9k under achievement on costs recovered for Burials Under Health Act as a result of less burials leading to a lower costs recover (These are burials carried out for people who have no family or friend and are therefore required to be buried by the local authority), in addition some people who are buried have no estate to recover costs from. **Expenses:**£30k underspend caused by no anticipated spend for Empty homes as well a £10k underspend on salaries for the commercial team due to a short term vacancy and £18k overall underspend on the Environmental protection for vacancies partially offset by agency costs
	Expenses	448	483	(35)	911	964	-	964	-	(53)	
	Net Impact	**423**	**448**	**(25)**	**852**	**895**	**-**	**895**	**-**	**(43)**	
	HoS Total	**958**	**1,430**	**(472)**	**2,362**	**2,795**	**65**	**2,860**	**(539)**	**(1,037)**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date Actuals £000	Year To Date Current Budget £000	Year To Date Over/ (Under) Spend £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Full Year Original Budget £000	Full Year Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000	Full Year Current Budget £000	Full Year Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000	Full Year Over/ (Under) Spend £000	Commentary On Underspend/Overspend
Head of Environmental Services	**Environmental Protection Team**										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	0	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	
	Net Impact	**0**	**-**	**0**	**0**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**0**	
	CCTV										
	Income	(61)	(59)	(2)	(120)	(117)	-	(117)	-	(3)	
	Expenses	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	
	Net Impact	**(61)**	**(59)**	**(2)**	**(119)**	**(117)**	**-**	**(117)**	**-**	**(2)**	
	CCTV Shared Service										
	Income	(645)	(248)	(397)	(1,289)	(496)	-	(496)	-	(793)	**Income and Expenditure:** Project work, costs are to be recovered through recharging
	Expenses	792	388	404	1,583	775	-	775	-	808	
	Net Impact	**147**	**140**	**7**	**294**	**279**	**-**	**279**	**-**	**15**	
	Head of Operations										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**Expenditure:** Additional employee costs
	Expenses	72	61	11	143	121	-	121	-	22	
	Net Impact	**72**	**61**	**11**	**143**	**121**	**-**	**121**	**-**	**22**	
	Green Spaces										
	Income	(89)	(94)	5	(178)	(187)	-	(187)	(81)	(72)	**Grounds Maintenance** - Increased income generation from third party organisations, improved productivity and efficiency has meant that the service has not filled the two vacancies previously which has increased the underspend. The service will look to fill these posts in the second half of the year. **Watercourses** - Overspend due to a bank collapse in a residential watercourse, this has been more expensive than expected. Arboricultural - Underspend due to additional income from selling logs, and not replacing vacant post. Sewer Ditches - No planned works, repairs only occur on confirmed council responsible assets
	Expenses	700	683	17	1,399	1,364	-	1,364	-	35	
	Net Impact	**611**	**589**	**22**	**1,221**	**1,177**	**-**	**1,177**	**(81)**	**(37)**	
	Street Cleansing										
	Income	(19)	(6)	(13)	(39)	(11)	-	(11)	-	(28)	**Income:** This is overspend is partially offset by additional income from town/parish council work. **Expenditure:** Agency usage has increased to fill vacant posts whilst we find suitable candidates. Issues with current fleet and delays on vehicles on order meant that the service needed to hire a sweeper to ensure business as usual. Hire of weekend team to reduce overtime was approved by CLT this was not budgeted for but it is hoped that this will change how the service is run.
	Expenses	661	633	28	1,320	1,265	-	1,265	-	55	
	Net Impact	**641**	**627**	**14**	**1,281**	**1,254**	**-**	**1,254**	**-**	**27**	
	Waste Management										
	Income	(3,394)	(2,919)	(475)	(6,788)	(5,839)	-	(5,839)	-	(949)	**Income:** Forecast includes recycling credit income (£600k) from the Cambridgeshire County Council which was not previously expected. Green bin subscription service has seen a significant uptake, currently forecasting the income to be higher than budget. Funding for green initiatives is occurring at a slower rate, so currently forecasting a underspend **Expenditure:** Increased agency staff costs partially offset by vacant posts within the establishment.
	Expenses	3,802	3,608	194	7,603	7,176	40	7,216	-	387	
	Net Impact	**409**	**689**	**(280)**	**815**	**1,337**	**40**	**1,377**	**-**	**(562)**	
	Fleet Management										
	Income	(17)	(19)	2	(34)	(39)	-	(39)	-	5	
	Expenses	194	191	3	388	384	-	384	-	4	
	Net Impact	**177**	**172**	**5**	**354**	**345**	**-**	**345**	**-**	**9**	
	HoS Total	**1,996**	**2,219**	**(223)**	**3,989**	**4,396**	**40**	**4,436**	**(81)**	**(528)**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date			Full Year						Commentary On Underspend/Overspend
		Actuals £000	*Current Budget £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	*Forecast £000*	*Original Budget £000*	*Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000*	*Current Budget £000*	*Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	
Head of Leisure Health & Environment	**Head of Leisure & Health**										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	58	55	3	117	110	-	110	-	7	
	Net Impact	**58**	**55**	**3**	**117**	**110**	**-**	**110**	**-**	**7**	
	One Leisure Active Lifestyles										
	Income	(248)	(254)	6	(496)	(545)	-	(545)	(80)	(31)	**Income:** Income levels continue to perform well particularly in-terms of membership growth. **Expenditure:** Increased employee costs relating to extension of contracts to increase the level of physical activity across the district. Other expenditure is being managed to ensure costs are minimised where possible.
	Expenses	370	350	20	740	700	-	700	-	40	
	Net Impact	**122**	**96**	**26**	**244**	**155**	**-**	**155**	**(80)**	**9**	
	One Leisure Facilities										**Summary:** One Leisure's Q2 financial forecast is £510k surplus, compared with a budget of £632k surplus. This financial forecasted surplus is £121k off of the budget. However the income performance compared with 24/25's actual is 10.80% better year on year continuing to show income growth at all centres. The reason for the difference in trading performance and the budget is due to anticipated trends in Swim School and Health and Fitness have not followed the previous years trajectory anticipated at the time of building the budget. Adjustments to expenditure forecast have been made to mitigate this to ensure a I&E contribution from the service is achieved.
	Income	(3,496)	(3,589)	93	(7,485)	(8,132)	-	(8,132)	-	647	
	Expenses	3,592	3,696	(104)	6,766	7,390	-	7,390	96	(528)	
	Net Impact	**96**	**107**	**(11)**	**(719)**	**(742)**	**-**	**(742)**	**96**	**119**	
	Parks and Open Spaces										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	1	1	-	2	2	-	2	-	-	
	Net Impact	**1**	**1**	**-**	**2**	**2**	**-**	**2**	**-**	**-**	
	Parks, Countryside and Climate										
	Income	(550)	(231)	(319)	(761)	(462)	-	(462)	-	(299)	**Income: C**afé income is £97k above budget due to the delayed start of the Hinchingbrooke Country Park development, allowing extended trading, which has also led to a £30k overspend on cost of sales as a result of increased activity. Car park income is £75k below budget, reflecting the Hinchingbrooke Country Park car park being non-operational for a portion of the year. **Expenditure:** Employee costs are £120k under budget, driven by savings from vacant posts. **Grants:** Expenditure & Income significantly higher due to Net Zero Villages Grant paid in form of grants in and out of the council.
	Expenses	1,055	788	267	1,771	1,555	20	1,575	(45)	151	
	Net Impact	**505**	**557**	**(52)**	**1,010**	**1,093**	**20**	**1,113**	**(45)**	**(148)**	
	One Leisure Projects										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**Expenditure:** Feasibility costs as per the One Leisure Independent Review. If the projects are approved these costs will be capitalised, and if not then the costs will be funded from reserves.
	Expenses	899	232	667	1,797	465	-	465	-	1,332	
	Net Impact	**899**	**232**	**667**	**1,797**	**465**	**-**	**465**	**-**	**1,332**	
	HoS Total	**1,681**	**1,048**	**633**	**2,451**	**1,083**	**20**	**1,103**	**(29)**	**1,319**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date			Full Year						Commentary On Underspend/Overspend
		Actuals £000	*Current Budget £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	*Forecast £000*	*Original Budget £000*	*Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000*	*Current Budget £000*	*Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	
Head of Property & Facilities	**Energy & Sustainability Mgt**										
	Expenses	23	24	(1)	51	48	-	48	-	3	
	Net Impact	**23**	**24**	**(1)**	**51**	**48**	**-**	**48**	**-**	**3**	
	Public Conveniences										
	Expenses	1	-	1	8	-	-	-	-	8	
	Net Impact	**1**	**-**	**1**	**8**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**8**	
	Facilities Management										
	Income	(302)	(263)	(39)	(604)	(525)	-	(525)	-	(79)	**Income:** Additional income from selling electricity back to the grid. **Expenditure:** Spend has increased due to fire doors remedials and repairs on air source heat pump at PFH
	Expenses	823	817	6	1,646	1,594	40	1,634	-	12	
	Net Impact	**521**	**554**	**(33)**	**1,042**	**1,069**	**40**	**1,109**	**-**	**(67)**	
	Commercial Estates										
	Income	(2,038)	(2,515)	477	(4,077)	(5,030)	-	(5,030)	-	953	**Income:** A reduction in income throughout the portfolio, at Levellers Lane and Phoenix Court there are vacant units. Fareham has seen slow lettings due to market conditions, Stonehill is not generating income due to damage and with Cineworld in adminstration The Rowley Centre income is also down. Negotiations ongoing regarding the Phoenix Court rent review. The expectation is that the rent will increase and that the backrent will need to be paid this has been included within the forecast. **Expenditure:** There is currently vacant posts within the Estates team which has seen employee costs fall, there is also an expectation that there will be savings made on consultancy fees.
	Expenses	756	847	(91)	1,513	1,692	-	1,692	-	(179)	
	Net Impact	**(1,282)**	**(1,668)**	**386**	**(2,564)**	**(3,338)**	**-**	**(3,338)**	**-**	**774**	
	HoS Total	**(737)**	**(1,090)**	**353**	**(1,463)**	**(2,221)**	**40**	**(2,181)**	**-**	**718**	
Head of Human Resources & Officer Development	**Corporate Health & Safety**										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	31	33	(2)	63	66	-	66	-	(3)	
	Net Impact	**31**	**33**	**(2)**	**63**	**66**	**-**	**66**	**-**	**(3)**	
	Human Resources										
	Income	(5)	-	(5)	(2)	-	-	-	-	(2)	**Expenditure:** £101.4k overspend is offset by contribution from workforce strategy reserve (£88.2k), which leaves £13.3k overspend, mainly caused by £7.8k one off Severance Payment.
	Expenses	455	459	(4)	1,021	918	-	918	(88)	15	
	Net Impact	**450**	**459**	**(9)**	**1,019**	**918**	**-**	**918**	**(88)**	**13**	
	HoS Total	**481**	**492**	**(11)**	**1,082**	**984**	**-**	**984**	**(88)**	**10**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date			Full Year						Commentary On Underspend/Overspend
		Actuals £000	*Current Budget £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	*Forecast £000*	*Original Budget £000*	*Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000*	*Current Budget £000*	*Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	
Head of Finance	**Corporate Finance**										
	Income	(1,584)	(914)	(670)	(3,168)	(1,827)	-	(1,827)	(313)	(1,654)	**Income:** Increased interest receivable on short term investments £1.5m (as a result of interest rates being higher for longer than expected), also income received from NNDR pool £95k, plus government grants of £23k for Audit and £35k contribution towards increased Internal Drainage Board costs. **Expenditure:** Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) saving as a result of capital programme underspends and rephasings in 2024/25 this is calculated following the accounts closure. MRP commences in the year following expenditure.
	Expenses	3,793	3,921	(128)	7,587	7,842	-	7,842	-	(255)	
	Net Impact	**2,210**	**3,007**	**(797)**	**4,419**	**6,015**	**-**	**6,015**	**(313)**	**(1,909)**	
	Finance										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	482	446	36	1,006	892	-	892	(77)	37	**Expenditure:** Additional employee costs
	Net Impact	**482**	**446**	**36**	**1,006**	**892**	**-**	**892**	**(77)**	**37**	
	Corporate Insurance										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	354	356	(2)	708	711	-	711	-	(3)	
	Net Impact	**354**	**356**	**(2)**	**708**	**711**	**-**	**711**	**-**	**(3)**	
	HoS Total	**3,046**	**3,809**	**(763)**	**6,133**	**7,618**	**-**	**7,618**	**(389)**	**(1,874)**	
Head of Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer	**Legal**										
	Income	-	-	-	(1)	-	-	-	-	(1)	**Expenditure:** 3C Legal contributions expected to be higher based on Q1 outturn being 20% higher than budgeted as the council approach Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
	Expenses	165	139	26	331	278	-	278	-	53	
	Net Impact	**165**	**139**	**26**	**330**	**278**	**-**	**278**	**-**	**52**	
	Democratic & Elections										
	Income	(313)	(117)	(196)	(625)	(234)	-	(234)	39	(352)	**Income:** £400k of non budgeted income forecast for Local and Mayoral Elections to cover election costs **Expenses:**£80k overspend caused by agreed pressure for Head of Democratic Services & Monitoring post, this post will be budgeted from 2026/27 from the previous Chief Operating Officer post. Plus £400k of costs for Local and Mayoral Elections to cover elections being covered by additional income.
	Expenses	874	685	189	1,746	1,269	100	1,369	60	437	
	Net Impact	**561**	**568**	**(7)**	**1,121**	**1,035**	**100**	**1,135**	**99**	**85**	
	Audit										
	Expenses	186	96	90	291	192	-	192	-	99	**Expenditure:** Underspend created by 2 vacant posts (1x Internal Audit Manager & 1x Trainee Internal Auditor), offset by £210k Internal Audit for 25/26 – increased work to get back on track
	Net Impact	**186**	**96**	**90**	**291**	**192**	**-**	**192**	**-**	**99**	
	Procurement										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	156	102	54	343	204	-	204	-	139	**Expenditure:** £136k overspend on Agency costs for Procurement Manager
	Net Impact	**156**	**102**	**54**	**343**	**204**	**-**	**204**	**-**	**139**	
	Risks & Control										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**Expenditure:** £15k for staff development and training as a result of new legislation as well as £46k for RSM additional Risk support whilst vacant post was being filled (Post now filled support has been scaled right back to just the system support)
	Expenses	52	17	35	103	35	-	35	-	68	
	Net Impact	**52**	**17**	**35**	**103**	**35**	**-**	**35**	**-**	**68**	
	HoS Total	**1,120**	**922**	**198**	**2,188**	**1,744**	**100**	**1,844**	**99**	**443**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date Actuals £000	Year To Date Current Budget £000	Year To Date Over/ (Under) Spend £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Full Year Original Budget £000	Full Year Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000	Full Year Current Budget £000	Full Year Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000	Full Year Over/ (Under) Spend £000	*Commentary On Underspend/Overspend*
Customer Change Director	**Council Tax Support**										
	Income	(128)	(116)	(12)	(256)	(232)	-	(232)	-	(24)	**Expenditure:** Underspend due to Benefit Administration Subsidy
	Expenses	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Net Impact	**(127)**	**(116)**	**(11)**	**(256)**	**(232)**	**-**	**(232)**	**-**	**(24)**	
	Housing Benefits										
	Income	(11,347)	(10,187)	(1,160)	(22,694)	(20,374)	-	(20,374)	1	(2,319)	**Income:** The differences are largely as a result of fluctuations on HB subsidy which is difficult to forecast and may continue to change further during the year. **Expenditure:** There has been a reduction in subsidy which is as a result of a reduction in benefits paid creating an overall underspend due to subsidies not always covering full costs
	Expenses	12,607	11,458	1,149	25,213	22,916	-	22,916	-	2,297	
	Net Impact	**1,260**	**1,271**	**(11)**	**2,519**	**2,542**	**-**	**2,542**	**1**	**(22)**	
	Housing Needs										
	Income	(843)	(486)	(357)	(1,687)	(972)	-	(972)	-	(715)	**Income**: Homelessness and rough sleeping Grant £400k higher than expected plus additional £206k to fund new posts as well as £130k received for Rough Sleeping initiative that was not budgeted **Expenses:** Additional costs of new posts funded by Rough Sleeping Winter pressures, plus £230k to support the Housing Team.
	Expenses	1,489	1,143	346	2,978	2,286	-	2,286	(120)	572	
	Net Impact	**645**	**657**	**(12)**	**1,291**	**1,314**	**-**	**1,314**	**(120)**	**(143)**	
	Customer Services										
	Income	-	(53)	53	(3)	(105)	-	(105)	(103)	(1)	**Expenditure**: £120k underspend created from salary savings being offered of 1.85 FTE (Grade D) and 0.81 FTE (Grade G) post, as a result of the introduction of a forecasting and demand led resourcing model and also new technology.
	Expenses	577	638	(61)	1,155	1,275	-	1,275	-	(120)	
	Net Impact	**577**	**585**	**(8)**	**1,152**	**1,170**	**-**	**1,170**	**(103)**	**(121)**	
	Document Centre										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Expenses	82	76	6	145	151	-	151	-	(6)	**Expenditure:** £7k savings due to team leader restructuring within Document Centre
	Net Impact	**82**	**76**	**6**	**145**	**151**	**-**	**151**	**-**	**(6)**	
	HoS Total	**2,438**	**2,473**	**(35)**	**4,851**	**4,945**	**-**	**4,945**	**(222)**	**(316)**	
Head of Communications, Engagement & Public Affairs	**Communications & Information**										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**Expenditure:** £35k overspend from corporate campaigns as well as overspend on salary costs due to approved Communications Executive post to support with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
	Expenses	182	124	58	363	247	-	247	0	116	
	Net Impact	**182**	**124**	**58**	**363**	**247**	**-**	**247**	**0**	**116**	
	HoS Total	**182**	**124**	**58**	**363**	**247**	**-**	**247**	**0**	**116**	

Head of Service	Service Grouping	Year To Date			Full Year						Commentary On Underspend/Overspend
		Actuals £000	*Current Budget £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	*Forecast £000*	*Original Budget £000*	*Budget Carry Forwards/ Virements £000*	*Current Budget £000*	*Contribution To/(From) Reserves £000*	*Over/ (Under) Spend £000*	
Head of Policy, Performance & Emergency Planning	**Emergency Planning**										
	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**Expenditure:** Now that the emergency planning structure has been agreed and implemented, the hire of the community resilience officer post part way through the year which has led to an underspend.
	Expenses	52	64	(12)	151	128	-	128	(34)	(11)	
	Net Impact	**52**	**64**	**(12)**	**151**	**128**	**-**	**128**	**(34)**	**(11)**	
	Transformation										
	Income	-	(63)	63	-	(125)	-	(125)	(177)	(52)	**Expenditure:** Approved overspend due to hiring of a programme manager and a project manager and 3 project coordinators . These posts would will be funded from the Invest2Save and LGR reserves
	Expenses	260	323	(63)	698	646	-	646	-	52	
	Net Impact	**260**	**260**	**-**	**698**	**521**	**-**	**521**	**(177)**	**(0)**	
	Strategic Insight & Delivery										
	Income	(5)	-	(5)	(10)	-	-	-	-	(10)	**Expenditure:** Place Strategy post under review due to other immediate priorities. The head of service post is currently vacant
	Expenses	116	153	(37)	235	307	-	307	-	(72)	
	Net Impact	**111**	**153**	**(42)**	**225**	**307**	**-**	**307**	**-**	**(82)**	
	HoS Total	**423**	**477**	**(54)**	**1,074**	**956**	**-**	**956**	**(211)**	**(93)**	
	Total	**13,818**	**13,885**	**(67)**	**27,591**	**26,464**	**308**	**26,772**	**(1,745)**	**(926)**	

APPENDIX 2

Forecast Quarter 2 2025/26 - Capital Programme

Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

Budget Manager	Project Name	*Existing/New Bids*	*Budget Rephase*	*Original Budget*	*Year End Rephase*	*Net Rephase*	*Growth/ Virement*	*Current Budget*	*Q2 Actual*	*Q2 Forecast*	*Over/(Under)Spend*	Comments on Expenditure Variances over £10,000
Chief Digital and Information Officer	Hardware Replacement	126	34	160	6	(28)	0	132	190	132	0	
	Telephony Replacement	8	8	16	0	(8)	0	8	0	0	(8)	Budget not required in this and future years.
	No2 Server & SQL Server 2012 Migration	0	10	10	20	10	0	20	0	20	0	
	Datacentre Racks	0	62	62	299	237	0	299	65	50	(249)	Procurement completed - decision taken not to award as poor value for money.
	Windows 2012 Server Replacement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	Budget phased and merged with project Server 2016/2019 Migration
	WIFI Access Points	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Budget phased and merged with project EastNet Replacement
	EastNet Replacement	200	49	249	50	1	0	250	94	250	0	
	Server 2016/2019 Migration	41	29	70	58	29	0	99	20	69	(30)	Due to supplier's lack of ability to deliver the work ICT is expecting to spend c70% of the budget in 25/26.
	Windows 10 End of Life	20	0	20	0	0	0	20	0	0	(20)	Project closed. No futher budget needed.
	Public Switched Telephone Network	0	73	73	81	8	0	81	0	14	(66)	Project closure June-25 / Budget was carried over to cover any incidental costs, however the ICT team managed to mitigate these resulting in an underspend.
	Server 2016 Migration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Replacement Income Management Software	0	0	0	19	19	0	19	19	19	0	
	AV Equipment	0	0	0	60	60	0	60	0	220	160	It is currently predicted by the service that the costs could exceed the budget. Potential overspend agreed with Corporate Director. (Finance and Resources).
	UPS Replacement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
	Total	**395**	**265**	**660**	**593**	**328**	**0**	**988**	**390**	**775**	**(212)**	
Customer Services	Voice Bots	0	0	0	34	34	0	34	0	0	(34)	This project has been delayed.
	Data Warehouse	0	0	0	16	16	0	16	0	0	(16)	This project has been delayed.
	Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**50**	**50**	**0**	**50**	**0**	**0**	**(50)**	
Facilities	Civic Suite Audio Visual Equipment	80	0	80	0	0	0	80	0	80	0	
	Solar Canopy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	184	191	191	This project is funded by Swmin England.
	OL Roof Mounted Solar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	327	368	368	Project has budget £412k which fully funded from Capital Reserves (this was approved by Cabinet in Nov 2024).
	Pathfinder House Meeting Pods	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	Approved by CLT, relates to hybrid working policy.
	Eastfield House Meeting Pods	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	Approved by CLT, relates to hybrid working policy.
	Total	**80**	**0**	**80**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**80**	**511**	**699**	**619**	
Environmental Services	Lone Worker Software	0	20	20	0	(20)	0	0	0	0	0	
	Wheeled Bins	254	0	254	0	0	0	254	67	254	0	
	Vehicle Fleet Replacement	2,262	103	2,365	469	366	0	2,731	752	1,585	(1,146)	Based on current projection of vehicles that will need replacing as a result of extending useful lives.
	Godmanchester Mill Weir Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
	Waste and Grounds Maintenance Tablet and Smartphones	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Food Waste Collection	1,802	0	1,802	0	0	0	1,802	9	1,802	0	
	2nd Green Bin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Chipper Fleet	35	0	35	0	0	0	35	0	35	0	
	Trail Mower	45	0	45	0	0	0	45	0	45	0	
	Environmental Improvement Team Vehicle	70	0	70	0	0	0	70	0	70	0	
	Litter Bin Replacements	28	0	28	0	0	0	28	0	28	0	
	Remote Control Flail Mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	CCTV Generator	135	0	135	0	0	0	135	0	135	0	
	CCTV Upgrade	240	0	240	0	0	0	240	0	240	0	
	Secure Cycle Storage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
	Civil Parking Enforcement	0	0	0	244	244	0	244	592	860	616	Increased expenditure on highways lining which was was highlighted in the April 2024 report. The council had entered into agency agreement which required the council to fund the anticipated overspend.
	Total	**4,871**	**123**	**4,994**	**713**	**590**	**0**	**5,584**	**1,421**	**5,055**	**(529)**	

Budget Manager	Project Name	Existing/New Bids	Budget Rephase	Original Budget	Year End Rephase	Net Rephase	Growth/ Virement	Current Budget	Q2 Actual	Q2 Forecast	Over/(Under)Spend	Comments on Expenditure Variances over £10,000
Community Services	Disabled Facilities Grants	1,600	50	1,650	0	(50)	0	1,600	997	2,140	540	Increased forecast expenditure for home improvements due to clearing of previous backlog, mostly offset by increase in forecast grant income.
	Mobile Devices	0	0	0	10	10	0	10	0	10	0	This project due to be complete by the end of the financial year.
	Total	**1,600**	**50**	**1,650**	**10**	**(40)**	**0**	**1,610**	**997**	**2,150**	**540**	
Parks, Countryside & Climate	Fencing	13	0	13	0	0	0	13	0	14	1	This project is to carry out various fencing replacements across all parks within the district.
	Water Safety Signs	20	0	20	0	0	0	20	0	20	0	
	Biodiversity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	This project externally funded by CPCA.
	St Neots Riverside Park Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	250	250	This project externally funded by MHCLG, St Neots Town Council, CIL Contribution and County Council Local Facilities Grant.
	Changing Places	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	St Neots Riverside Park Path/Cycle Imps	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(4)	303	303	This project is funded from CIL.
	Play Equipment	30	0	30	5	5	0	35	0	35	0	
	St Ives Park	0	0	0	80	80	0	80	0	80	0	Project initiation depends on a lease being signed.
	Hinchingbrooke Country Park	0	2,161	2,161	2,378	217	0	2,378	53	2,378	(0)	Works looking to start in December, with the procurement currently being finalised.
	Godmanchester Recreation Ground Works Grant	0	0	0	30	30	0	30	0	30	0	Works to mooring area of the recreation ground delayed, and budget was slipped into 25/26. Town Council to carry out tender and works, the council to reimburse to the sum of £30k.
	Total	**63**	**2,161**	**2,224**	**2,493**	**332**	**0**	**2,556**	**66**	**3,112**	**556**	
Finance	Company Investment	0	0	0	100	100	0	100	0	100	0	
	VAT Partial Exemption	50	0	50	0	0	0	50	0	0	(50)	Budget not needed as partial exemption limit not breeched.
	Capita Upgrade	0	0	0	11	11	0	11	0	11	0	
	Bridge Place Car Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	T1 Fixed Asset Module and Invoice Scanning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Total	**50**	**0**	**50**	**111**	**111**	**0**	**161**	**0**	**111**	**(50)**	
Housing and Regeneration	Future High Streets	0	21	21	7,126	7,105	0	7,126	0	0	(7,126)	Part of Future High Streets Projects - overall underspend is (£1.02m) and it is due to some projects starting in year, these will continue into 2026/27.
	Market Towns Programme	0	0	0	1,081	1,081	0	1,081	0	410	(671)	Local growth fund. Funds are claimed as the costs occur.
	Wayfinding and Information	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62	62	62	Funding claimed in 2024/25, these are final costs.
	RPF Grants to Business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	0	0	0	65	65	0	65	(10)	65	0	
	Rural England Prosperity Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	REPF Digital Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(104)	(104)	(104)	Project Closed. Delays in claims being paid by CPCA for 2024/25.
	REPF Capacity Building	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(3)	0	0	
	Ramsey Public Realm	0	0	0	1,677	1,677	0	1,677	0	409	(1,268)	c£1m will be spent next year. This expenditure will require planning and highways approvals.
	St Neots Masterplan Phase 1	0	59	59	178	119	0	178	0	88	(90)	Funding already spent in 2024/25, £88k will be spent and claimed in 2025/26
	Huntingdon and St Ives Future Schemes	0	0	0	4	4	0	4	14	0	(4)	
	Moores Walk Improvement	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	(3)	
	Smarter Towns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	
	Market Town Huntingdon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2)	(2)	(2)	
	Old Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	120	120	Part of Future High Streets Projects - overall underspend is (£1.02m) and it is due to some projects starting in year, these will continue into 2026/27.
	Priory Centre & QTR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	896	4,581	4,581	Part of Future High Streets Projects - overall underspend is (£1.02m) and it is due to some projects starting in year, these will continue into 2026/27.
	Transport Project	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	59	1,200	1,200	Part of Future High Streets Projects - overall underspend is (£1.02m) and it is due to some projects starting in year, these will continue into 2026/27.
	St Neots Market Rights	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	205	205	Part of Future High Streets Projects - overall underspend is (£1.02m) and it is due to some projects starting in year, these will continue into 2026/27.
	Properies - Main Element	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Housing Fund	0	0	0	305	305	0	305	0	305	0	
	Total	**0**	**80**	**80**	**10,439**	**10,359**	**0**	**10,439**	**954**	**7,338**	**(3,100)**	

Budget Manager	Project Name	*Existing/New Bids*	*Budget Rephase*	*Original Budget*	*Year End Rephase*	*Net Rephase*	*Growth/ Virement*	*Current Budget*	*Q2 Actual*	*Q2 Forecast*	*Over/(Under)Spend*	Comments on Expenditure Variances over £10,000
Leisure and Health	One Leisure Improvements	300	0	300	0	0	0	300	177	660	360	With deferred work of c. £100k from 2024/25 and aging buildings, further expenditure is needed for improving facilities, specifically at St Ives Burgess Hall (Lift) and St Neots (3G Pitch)
	One Leisure Ramsey Car Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	OL St Neots and St Ives Fitness Equipment and Refresh	25	0	25	0	0	0	25	24	24	(1)	Additional equipment due to peak pressures and member feedback to reduce waiting times for equipment and to address high attrition even in the event of gym refurbishment.
	OL Ramsey Solar PV Panels	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	One Leisure Refurbishment and Refresh	1,040	0	1,040	0	0	0	1,040	370	507	(533)	One Leisure (OL) Huntingdon refresh delivered on-time and complete, with positive feedback from customers and councillors. Within OL Ramsey, an alternate option for the project is to be approved. This option is for the use of capital which will replace current gym equipment with new and to refresh the existing gym, while future proofing for a gym expansion or studio by inserting a joist and double doors into the wall and into the old sauna and steam room space.
	Ramsey Car Park	0	21	21	63	42	0	63	0	63	0	Ramsey school require resolution on drainage and access routes for pupils, this requires to consult with planning again - until this is resolved the forecast is assumed at budget.
	Plant Reinstall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	600	600	Majority of surveys complete and procurement underway, the expectation is that the project will be within budget.
	Total	**1,365**	**21**	**1,386**	**63**	**42**	**0**	**1,428**	**579**	**1,854**	**426**	
Planning	Community Infrastructure Levy Projects	2,706	0	2,706	496	496	0	3,202	880	1,615	(1,587)	External projects have been delayed and so as a result the payment of funding is delayed.
	A14 Upgrade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Total	**2,706**	**0**	**2,706**	**496**	**496**	**0**	**3,202**	**880**	**1,615**	**(1,587)**	
Property and Facilities	Stonehill Refurbishment	300	0	300	0	0	0	300	0	300	0	
	Eastfield House Refresh	102	0	102	0	0	0	102	32	63	(39)	Tendered contract prices less than estimate.
	Pathfinder House Refresh	295	0	295	0	0	0	295	53	84	(211)	Tendered contract prices less than estimate.
	Health and Safety Works - Commerial Properties	0	0	0	51	51	0	51	0	51	0	
	Energy Efficiency - Commercial Properties	0	0	0	62	62	0	62	0	62	0	
	Estates Roofs	0	0	0	130	130	0	130	0	130	0	
	Reletting Works	0	0	0	500	500	0	500	48	500	0	
	Fareham Offices Capital Works	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Reletting Incentives	0	0	0	150	150	0	150	0	150	0	
	Total	**697**	**0**	**697**	**893**	**893**	**0**	**1,590**	**132**	**1,340**	**(250)**	
	Grand Total	**11,827**	**2,700**	**14,527**	**15,860**	**13,160**	**0**	**27,687**	**5,929**	**24,048**	**(3,639)**	

Budget Manager	Project Name		*Existing/New Bids*	*Budget Rephase*	*Original Budget*	*Year End Rephase*	*Net Rephase*	*Growth/ Virement*	*Current Budget*	*Q2 Actual*	*Q2 Forecast*	*Over/(Under)Spend*	Comments on Expenditure Variances over £10,000
	Funding												
	Grants and Contributions												
	Disabled Facilities Grants	Cambs CC	(1,400)	0	(1,400)	0	0	0	(1,400)	(1,786)	(1,812)	(412)	
	Wheeled Bins	Developers	(101)	0	(101)	0	0	0	(101)	(52)	(52)	49	
	Market Town Funding (Including future schemes)	CPCA	0	0	0	(1,081)	(1,081)	0	(1,081)	0	(410)	671	
	Future High Streets	MHCLG	0	(21)	(21)	(7,126)	(7,105)	0	(7,126)	0	(6,105)	1,021	
	Future High Streets	CIL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Future High Streets	NH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Huntingdon and St Ives Future Schemes	Horizons	0	0	0	(4)	(4)	0	(4)	0	0	4	
	St Neots Riverside Park Path/Cycle Imps (Rephase)	CIL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(303)	(303)	
	St Ives Park	CIL	0	0	0	(80)	(80)	0	(80)	0	(80)	0	
	Hinchingbrooke Country Park	CIL	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	0	1,500	0	0	0	0	0	
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	MHCLG	0	0	0	(65)	(65)	0	(65)	0	(65)	0	
	Rural England Prosperity Fund	MHCLG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Ramsey Market Hub/Public Realm/Food Hall	CPCA	0	0	0	(1,677)	(1,677)	0	(1,677)	0	(409)	1,268	
	St Neots Masterplan Phase 1	CPCA	0	(59)	(59)	(178)	(119)	0	(178)	0	(88)	90	
	Upgrade works at Fareham	Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Wayfinding	CPCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(62)	(62)	
	Smarter Towns	CPCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Moores Walk	CPCA	0	0	0	(3)	(3)	0	(3)	0	0	3	
	Small Accelerated Projects	CPCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Housing Fund	MHCLG	0	0	0	(305)	(305)	0	(305)	0	(305)	0	
	Market Towns	CPCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
	Rural England Prosperity Fund	MHCLG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	St Neots Riverside Park Toilets	STNTC/CIL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(250)	(250)	
	Ramsey Food Hall	CPCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Food Waste Collections	DEFRA	(1,802)	0	(1,802)	0	0	0	(1,802)	0	(1,802)	0	
	One Leisure Refurbishment and Refresh	CIL	(420)	0	(420)	0	0	0	(420)	0	(420)	0	
	Biodiversity	CPCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2)	(2)	(2)	
	Solar Canopy		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(184)	(191)	(191)	
	OL Roof Mounted		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(327)	(368)	(368)	
			(3,723)	**(1,580)**	**(5,303)**	**(10,519)**	**(8,939)**	**0**	**(14,242)**	**(2,351)**	**(12,721)**	**1,521**	
	Use of Capital Reserves												
	Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve	Developers	0	0	0	(496)	(496)	(2,706)	(3,202)	0	(2,140)	1,062	
			0	**0**	**0**	**(496)**	**(496)**	**(2,706)**	**(3,202)**	**0**	**(2,140)**	**1,062**	
	Capital Receipts												
	Housing Clawback Receipts	PfP	(100)	0	(100)	0	0	0	(100)	0	(100)	0	
	Asset Sales		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
			(100)	**0**	**(100)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(100)**	**0**	**(100)**	**0**	
	Net		**8,004**	**1,120**	**9,124**	**4,845**	**3,725**	**(2,706)**	**10,143**	**3,578**	**9,087**	**(1,056)**	

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Corporate Performance Report, Quarter 2 2025/26
Meeting/Date:	Cabinet, November 18th 2025,
Executive Portfolio:	Councillor Ferguson, Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance and Councillor Davenport-Ray, Executive Councillor for Climate Transformation & Workforce
Report by:	Gregory Moore (Performance Coordinator) and Steffen Gosling (Business Performance and Insights Team Leader)
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

This report provides Cabinet with an update on the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan at the end of Quarter 2 2025/26 (covering the period July to September 2025) including:

- Progress with Corporate Plan actions and projects
- Operational performance measures.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is invited to consider and comment on progress and performance during Quarter 2, as summarised in the Corporate Performance Report attached and detailed in Appendices A, B, C and D

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This report presents the Council's progress against the Corporate Plan Actions and Corporate Performance Indicators during Quarter 2 (July to September 2025).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028 was refreshed for 2025/26 and approved at Council in May 2025.

2.2 The performance data in the attached Corporate Performance Report and its appendices relate to the performance measures, actions and projects agreed for 2025/26 and has been collated in accordance with standardised procedures.

2.3 An accessible version of the performance data is enclosed as Appendix D.

3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

3.1 Robust performance management is a priority at Huntingdonshire District Council, with stretch targets being commonplace and external benchmarking occurring where possible. This was noted as a strength for HDC by our recent Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge.

3.2 Cabinet members and the Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel are central to the Council's Performance Management Framework. This report provides regular performance data, allowing Councillors to review quarterly progress on strategic outcomes.

3.3 The **Corporate Performance Report** (**Appendix A**) summarises progress and performance by outcome. Each outcome has a summary followed by tables and pie charts summarising the status of actions/ and projects followed by the performance measures. A full list is also provided for each outcome which shows the status reported for each action/project and performance measure linked to that outcome as at the end of Quarter 2. The appendices to the Corporate Performance Report provide more detail.

3.4 **Appendix B** provides integrated updates on Corporate Plan actions and projects from officers, covering both progress against planned delivery and the impact that has had on the outcome.

3.5 **Appendix C** provides updates on operational performance measures, showing this year's performance broken down by month and how this compares to targets, intervention levels and the performance of the previous two years, where possible. This is provided via graphs to make such comparisons simpler and provide a visual indicator of direction of travel. For those who may need to use screen readers to access the information, an accessible table version is available online here:

Corporate Plan and Performance - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk

3.6 The following table summarises overall progress in delivering Corporate Plan actions for 2025/26 at the end of Q2:

Status of Corporate Plan Actions	Number	Percentage
Green (on track)	41	75%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	14	25%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%

Note: actions being delivered as/through projects/programmes are not included in this table as their status is being reported via project reporting mechanisms instead, and this avoids any double-counting. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

75% of our Corporate Plan actions are reported as on track (green) this quarter. The remaining 25% of projects were reported as being within the acceptable variance (amber), with no actions reported as being behind schedule (red). All 41 of the projects reported as green in quarter two were also reported as green in quarter one. Five of the 14 projects reported as amber this quarter have reduced from reporting as green, and the remaining nine continue to report as amber.

3.7 The statuses of Corporate Plan projects at the end of June 2025 are shown in the following table.

Status of Corporate Plan Projects/Programmes	Number	Percentage
Green (on track)	9	75%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	2	17%
Red (behind schedule)	1	8%

Note: this only includes corporate projects which are linked to actions in the current Corporate Plan. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Quarter two has seen a reduction in the number of Corporate Plan projects reporting as green, with 75% (nine) now reporting as being on target. Eight of these projects continue to report as green after quarter one, and one has improved from being within the acceptable variance (amber). Two projects are currently reporting as amber, with one remaining as this status and one falling behind its target. One project is currently reporting as being behind schedule (red).

3.8 The latest status of operational performance measures at the end of June are summarised here:

Latest Operational Performance Indicator Results	Number	Percentage
Green (on track)	25	74%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	4	12%
Red (behind schedule)	5	14%

Metric	Result	Direction of Travel (since Q4)
8. The number of households housed through the Housing Register and Home-Link scheme	R	↔
11. The number of new affordable homes delivered	R	↔
15. The number of planning applications over 16 weeks where there is no current extension in place.	R	↓

19. Percentage of household waste reused / recycled / composted	R	↔
32. Staff short-term sickness days lost per FTE	R	↔

Please note: that other metrics are routinely reported internally to other committees (e.g. HR data goes before the Employment Committee and the Corporate Governance Committee receives an annual report on complaints and compliments), copies of these reports can be requested.

3.09 The number of households housed through the Housing Register and Home-Link scheme continues to perform below the intervention level. Through September, 270 households have been housed through the scheme. This is due to the number of new homes becoming available being lower than previous years. As new houses become available, we are working hard to get our residents housed. This trend has, in turn, impacted the number of homelessness preventions achieved, with the performance falling below target in the months of July and August. However, this has since bounced back above target due to our work with our partners to deliver more homes and minimise the root causes of homelessness.

3.10 While the delivery of affordable housing remains below target this quarter, this is due to external factors beyond our direct control. These include market conditions, developer viability assessments, broader economic pressures such as inflation and interest rates and government funding. While we continue to work proactively with partners to maximise delivery, it is important to recognise that progress is inherently linked to these external dependencies and that most Council's do not achieve their yearly target of affordable delivery matched to demand

3.11 The number of planning applications over 16 weeks has performed below the intervention level this quarter, with 43 applications now being over 16 weeks old. Although a significant improvement on the 79 applications over 16 weeks old in September 2024, the target has not been achieved because of a number of sensitive sites which require additional work to be resolved.

3.12 In September, a total of 5240.06 tonnes of waste were collected from domestic properties across the district, with 48% of this being either recycled or composted. Year to date, the recycling rate stands at 49.98%, a 3.02% decrease on last year. Although the number of garden waste subscriptions is higher for the 2025/26 period, the amount of garden waste being collected has reduced, mainly due to the exceptional dry period we are experiencing, as recycling is measured by weight this has a direct impact on the overall percentage recycled.

3.13 Short-term sickness has decreased slightly compared to quarter one, following a detailed review there is no clear pattern or reason at this point. HR continues to work with managers to address the increase by helping people back into work. This reflects a national trend in short-term sickness increases.

3.14 However, the average waiting time between referral and completion of jobs funded through the Disabled Facilities grants has improved by 4.4 weeks compared to last quarter, and by 9.4-weeks compared to the same period last year. The percentage of planning applications processed within 8 weeks or the agreed extension period for major, minor, and household extension applications has also consistently exceeded 95% or higher this quarter. Finally, the number of missed bins is on target, with a missed collection rate of 0.052% of the 1,471,471 bins collected.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANELS

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel is due to receive this report at its meeting on 5th November 2025. Comments from the Panel will be shared with Cabinet following the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's meeting.

4.2 The Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 5th November 2025.

4.3 Councillor Jennings raised a question around training for AI, asking if this is used by Officers in a structured way or on an ad hoc basis. He also drew attention to Corporate Plan Action 64 of the report, commenting that it was classed as amber but was green previously. He asked how listening to residents is measured and does amber mean this is not happening. The Panel heard that the proper use of AI can be a huge productivity enhancement and an automated service is being introduced to the Customer Service Team as part of an aggressive cost saving project. In response to a query regarding CPA 64, it was confirmed that the Team have joined a County wide service to responding to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), including sending a series of surveys to residents and interact with FAQ's and information on key questions are available on the website. They also heard that clarification regarding green, amber and red status can be provided to the Panel.

4.4 Councillor Catmur praised the report for including the preferred direction of travel and suggested if the Green waste could be normalised by rainfall. The Panel heard that rainfall is a factor but there are many factors and perhaps the target can be reviewed again.

4.5 Councillor Corney commented on the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) and questioned why it was showing green. The Panel heard that the green status shows the strategy is in place and the data will be reviewed over six months before conclusions can be drawn.

4.6 Councillor Martin referred to PI17, relating to number of business engagements by the Economic Development Team. He would like to have seen more detail regarding the successes of the Team, such as the Huntingdonshire Does Defence event. He also raised a question about PI11, the number of Affordable Houses that have been delivered, noting that the target is predicted to remain at Red. He requested that Councillor Wakeford come back to the Panel to advise how this is going to be addressed.

4.7 Councillor Gardener commented on PI23, stating that it would be useful to know where the inspections have taken place and asked for further insight into the grading system. The Panel heard that a methodology and breakdown of the wards visited was provided previously but Officers were happy to share after the meeting. *A paper copy was provided to Councillor Gardener after the meeting.

4.8 Councillor also questioned when Civil Parking Enforcement will be rolled out across the District as he is still experiencing issues in his area. The Panel heard this will be taken away and an answer sought. They were also advised that a further update will be provided in a All Member's briefing in the future once more data has been and information is available.

4.9 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider and comment on progress and performance during Quarter 2, as summarised in the **Corporate Performance Report** (**Appendix A**) and detailed in **Appendices B and C**.

6. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Corporate Performance Report, Quarter 2, 2025/26
Appendix A – Cover Report, Quarter 2, 2025/26
Appendix B – Progress on Corporate Plan Actions/Projects, Quarter 2, 2025/26
Appendix C – Operational Performance Measure Graphs, Quarter 2, 2025/26
Appendix D – Accessible Copy of Performance Measure, Quarter 2, 2025/26

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Performance Report

Quarter 2 - 2025/26

Do - Enable - Influence

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Outcome 1: Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

We want the highest possible quality of life for the people of Huntingdonshire. It will be a place which attracts employers and visitors and somewhere residents are proud to call home. We will be evidence based, responsive and support the foundations of a good life. This includes personal independence, prosperity, social connection, community and good health.

All of the corporate plan actions for this outcome are on track at the end of this quarter. The priorities of Huntingdonshire Futures continue to be embedded in our work as a council, whilst enabling our communities to do the same. The Huntingdonshire Futures grants scheme continued to focus on fostering Pride in Place in Huntingdonshire, with 19 organisations across Huntingdonshire being awarded grants. The project to determine the value of establishing a self-designated landscape in the Great Ouse Valley has been completed, with a business case to be finalised in quarter three.

The Community Health & Wealth Strategy has continued to progress well this quarter, with 71 Expressions of Interest received in the August Pilot. This resulted in two training workshops being held alongside Support Cambridgeshire, and 17 full applications being received. The outcome of these applications will be determined by the first panel meeting in October.

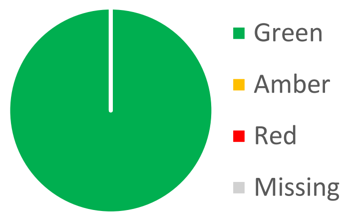
We have continued to work with partners to further skills and opportunities in Huntingdonshire by continuing to engage with WorkWell. There was a focus on supporting businesses in managing sickness absence in the workplace and helping residents back into the workplace after extended sick leave. Following the success of our operation and collaboration model, WorkWell has awarded us an additional three years of funding to continue supporting residents back into the workplace.

The One Leisure Improvement Programme has continued to progress well since quarter one. The website redevelopment has been completed and has been launched this quarter, and the upgrades to Huntingdon gym have been concluded. Works in Ramsey are targeted for implementation in quarter three. The continued investments and improvements to our One Leisure sites have resulted in an 8.5% increase in admissions to our One Leisure facilities compared to the same period last year.

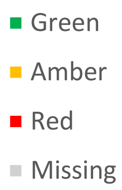
Active Lifestyles is continuing to deliver weight management programmes for inactive adults, along with activities for frailty in older adults, in partnership with the local Primary Care Network and integrated neighbourhoods. New activities for teens have been hosted in partnership with the Community Action Team and funded by the Crime and Police Commissioner's Office. Active Leisure has continued to roll-out specialised and targeted sessions across this district. The delivery of established and new classes has seen a year-on-year increase of 8.5k more attendances, and by attending seventeen events, direct contact has been made with 720 residents.

Performance Summary:

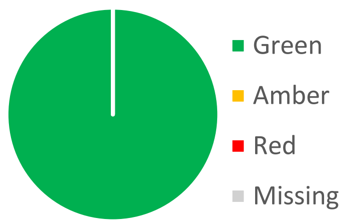
Status of Corporate Plan actions	Number	%
Green (on track)	10	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



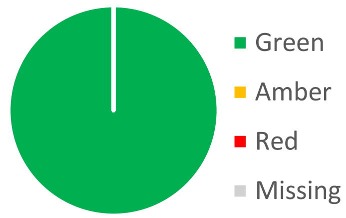
Status of Corporate Plan projects/programmes	Number	%
Green (progress on track)		
Amber (behind schedule, project may be recoverable)		
Red (significantly behind schedule, serious risk/issues)		
Missing		



Operational PI latest status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	2	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI year-end forecast status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	2	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Corporate Plan Action	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
1. Deliver the approved Community Health & Wealth Strategy and go-live with funding mechanisms to invest in initiatives identified and chosen by our communities.	↔	G
2. Refresh our Social Value Procurement Policy to ensure our spend benefits local communities and ensure our work complies with recent changes to the Procurement Act 2024.	↔	G
3. Improve our evaluation of how we make a difference to local people ensuring we become even better at demonstrating impact	↔	G
4. Deliver continued improvements to the One Leisure offer, enhancing existing facilities, implementing recommendations of the One Leisure Long-Term Operating Model and other beneficial opportunities.	↔	G
5. Work with partners to further skills and employment opportunities in the District: including direct delivery of funded schemes.	↔	G
6. Work with other organisations and businesses to maximise the impact they can have on the health and wellbeing of local communities. Our focus will be on piloting new approaches that can be embedded in future years	↔	G
7. Focus on maximising physical activity in the district, and work to promote this across local partners.	↔	G
8. Maximise, and report on, the benefits of a targeted approach to support residents to improve their quality of life through the promotion and delivery of relevant services.	↔	G
9. Continue to work with statutory partners to secure improvements to transport options for Huntingdonshire, including active travel.	↔	G
10. Embed the priorities of Huntingdonshire Futures across the work of the Council and Partners whilst influencing and enabling communities to do the same.	↔	G

Operational Performance Indicator	Latest Status	Forecast Status
The number of attendances at One Leisure Active Lifestyles and Sports Development Programmes	G	G
The number of One Leisure Facilities Admissions - swimming, Impressions and fitness classes, sports hall and pitches (excluding Burgess Hall and school admissions)	G	G

Outcome 2: Keeping people out of crisis

We will identify the root causes that lead people into crises and find ways to prevent them. We will do this through our own actions. We will also work in partnership with residents, businesses, community groups, charities and our public sector partners.

The delivery of an integrated financial vulnerability model, working with our partners, has progressed well this quarter. The first multi-agency group meetings of professionals was held, and an approach of response, implement, and resilience has been agreed. Works are ongoing to achieve the aim of moving communities from poverty to resilience.

Quarter two has also seen progress in our aim to prevent homelessness through targeting its root causes. The vulnerable young people pathway has been completed and signed off, with roll-out taking place through a series of joint webinars with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board. Reviews of the pathways for care and prison leavers also commenced in this quarter, with completion on track for this year.

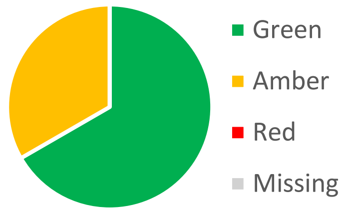
Our project which aims to maximise the benefits of a targeted approach to support residents at risk of experiencing crisis through the promotion and delivery of relevant services has stalled this quarter. This is due to other priorities for all partners in preparing for this work taking precedence. However, conversations with Cambridgeshire Police on a potential expansion of the successful trial in sharing data to help tackle the risks of serious violence in the District remain ongoing.

The number of residents enabled to live safely at home and prevented from requiring a long hospital stay due to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) has exceeded target this quarter, with 124 residents getting access to the funding this year, a 49% increase in the same period two years ago. The average time taken between referral and completion of DFG-funded jobs is now surpassing its target, and has decreased by over 9 weeks since the same period last year. Improvements to this service are essential in enabling residents to access the funding they need to live independently.

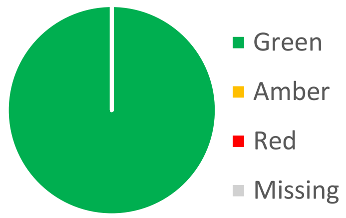
However, the number of households housed through the Housing Register and Home-Link scheme remains below target this quarter, at 270 households. The number of new builds becoming available from our partners continues to cause underperformance in this area; however, as new homes become available, we are working hard to get our residents into long-term housing. This trend has also impacted the number of homelessness preventions achieved. However, this metric remains above target, due to our work with our partners to deliver more homes and target the root causes of homelessness.

Performance Summary:

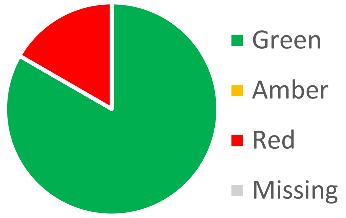
Status of Corporate Plan actions	Number	%
Green (on track)	2	67%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	1	33%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



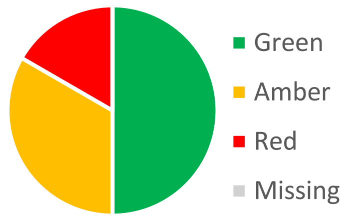
Status of Corporate Plan projects/programmes	Number	%
Green (progress on track)	1	100%
Amber (behind schedule, project may be recoverable)	0	0%
Red (significantly behind schedule, serious risk/issues)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI latest status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	5	83%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	1	17%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI year-end forecast status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	3	50%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	2	33%
Red (below acceptable variance)	1	17%
Missing	0	0%



Corporate Plan Action	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
12. Act on opportunities for early intervention and regularly report on learning and impact.	↔	G
13. Maximise, and report on, the benefits of a targeted approach to support residents at risk of experiencing crisis through the promotion and delivery of relevant services (e.g. improve data sharing with the police to inform a targeted on-the-ground door-knocking campaign to help prevent crime).	↓	A
14. Prevent the causes of homelessness wherever we can by our own efforts but also by working with other partners to tackle the root causes where we can	↔	G

Corporate Plan Project/Programme	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
11. Report regularly on progress on the delivery of an integrated financial vulnerability model between HDC and partners (PROJECT).	↔	G

Operational Performance Indicator	Latest Status	Forecast Status
The number of residents enabled to live safely at home and prevented from requiring care or a prolongued stay at hospital due to a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	G	G
The average time (weeks) between date of referral and practical completion of jobs funded through Disabled Facilities Grants	G	A
The average number of days to process new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support	G	G
The average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefits and Council Tax support	G	G
The number of homelessness preventions achieved	G	A
The number of households housed through the Housing Register and Home-Link Scheme	R	R

Outcome 3: Helping people in crisis

Where a crisis has already happened, we will work holistically to understand the issues, the cause of these issues and what opportunities exist to address them. We will seek to prevent multiple personal crises becoming entrenched and unmanageable by addressing root causes

All actions relating to this outcome have continued to remain on target since quarter one. We have continued to support guests in Huntingdonshire, helping them to establish independent and resilient lives in our district. As the number of new arrivals remains low, the focus remains on ensuring that our existing guests have sustained accommodation so that they can successfully integrate and build resilient lives. We are also continuing to offer support to our hosts across the district.

To ensure that the recommendations from the review into Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) process are delivered, a national consultation has now been completed. This has provided an opportunity to highlight the issues established by the review and continually affirm that our funding is being used to effectively provide residents with the support that they need. The improvements to the DFG system continue to be reflected in the performance of both of the DFG metrics, with an additional 30 residents supported this year compared to the same period last year.

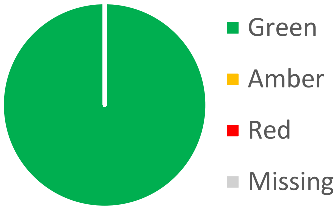
Our work to lobby and support campaigns for improvements to the living conditions of local residents has seen sustained progress in quarter two. Discussions have begun with partners to capitalise on the work already completed across the district to help tackle recommendations from the commission. This work is ensuring that those most in need are aware of and have access to the support available, and ensuring all residents have a safe place to live.

Through our work in being an active partner in health and social care, we have been able to ensure that new projects and initiatives are delivered in Huntingdonshire and that they maximise the positive impact felt locally. In this quarter, a successful bid was made to the government to be involved in the national pilots of local neighbourhood services based in GP areas, which will help to bring healthcare back into the hands of our residents and improve access to medical help and advice. Alongside this, we are continuing to work with local GPs to measure the impacts of our Active Lifestyles and the WorkWell programme interventions.

Our efforts to tackle the root causes of homelessness have resulted in the number of households in temporary accommodation continuing to exceed its target every month this quarter, and is below the regional and national average, keeping the associated costs low. This is despite a lower number of households housed through Home-Link and the Housing register this period.

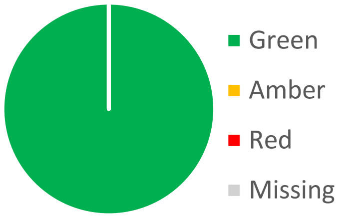
Performance Summary:

Status of Corporate Plan actions	Number	%
Green (on track)	5	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%

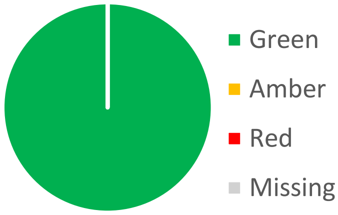


Status of Corporate Plan projects/programmes	Number	%
Green (progress on track)	0	0%
Amber (behind schedule, project may be recoverable)	0	0%
Red (significantly behind schedule, serious risk/issues)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%

Operational PI latest status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	1	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI year-end forecast status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	1	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Corporate Plan Action	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
15. Continue to support refugees and other guests, seeking to support good community relations and smooth transition into long-term residency or return home.	↔	G
16. Deliver the recommendations of the review into Disabled Facilities Grants undertaken by Officers and Members in 2024/25.	↔	G
17. Maximise, and report on, the benefits of a targeted approach to support residents experiencing crisis through the promotion and delivery of relevant services (e.g. identifying individuals who could benefit from support offered by the Resident Advice and Information team and reporting on outcomes).	↔	G
18. Lobby, and support campaigns, for improvements to the living conditions of local residents.	↔	G
19. Be an active partner working with others within health and social care to make sure projects and new initiatives are delivered within Huntingdonshire and maximise the positive impact felt locally	↔	G

Operational Performance Indicator	Latest Status	Forecast Status
The number of households in temporary accommodation	G	G

Outcome 4: Improving housing

We want everyone to live in a safe, high quality home regardless of health, stage of life, family structure, income and tenure type. Homes should be energy efficient and allow people to live healthy and prosperous lives. New homes should be zero carbon ready and encourage sustainable travel.

Quarter two saw further development of the new Housing Strategy and Action Plan for 2025-2030. The Housing Needs Assessment, which is essential for informing the completion of the Housing Strategy, has now been completed as evidence for the review of the Local Plan. The progress made has enabled an advanced draft to be provided towards the end of next quarter, which will enable the direct delivery of new homes where they are needed the most, as well as ensuring that the correct types of homes are built to match the needs of the district.

The project aiming to maintain the level of new housing delivery to meet the needs of our residents retains its amber status this quarter. We are continuing to work with partner Housing Associations and Developers to deliver new homes across key sites in the district. The construction of new homes tends to begin in the spring and summer months, with the remaining deliveries expected in the final two quarters of this financial year. This has also impacted the performance in the construction of affordable homes, which remains below target.

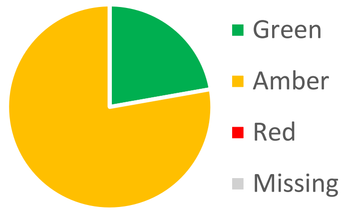
We continue to work with Places for People, our primary social housing provider, to improve living conditions in their properties through existing regeneration schemes. Residents have now been informed of the regeneration project, and we are regularly meeting with Places for People to address issues that are identified by the Corporate Team. We are now prepared for Awaab's law which is coming into effect in quarter three, giving the council a greater ability to take action against indecent accommodation.

Our work to produce sustainable housing guidance for developers remains at an amber status this quarter. The work, which encourages sustainable construction methods and new homes to be of high environmental standards, will focus on compliance with Future Homes Standard for net zero ready home.

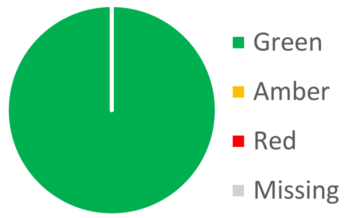
The planning service continues to perform excellently in ensuring new planning applications are processed on time. The percentage of planning applications processed within 8 weeks or the agreed extension period for major, minor, and household extension applications is 95% or higher. However, the backlog of planning applications has fallen below the tolerance level this quarter, with 43 applications now behind schedule. This is an improvement from the 79 cases in the backlog last year, and with additional resources acquired to drive positive performance in this metric.

Performance Summary:

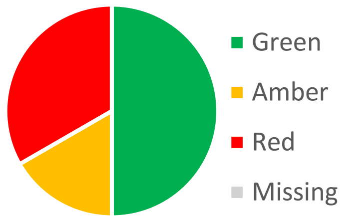
Status of Corporate Plan actions	Number	%
Green (on track)	2	22%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	7	78%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



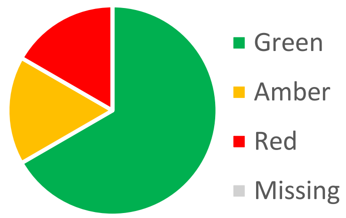
Status of Corporate Plan projects/programmes	Number	%
Green (progress on track)	1	100%
Amber (behind schedule, project may be recoverable)	0	0%
Red (significantly behind schedule, serious risk/issues)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI latest status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	3	50%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	1	17%
Red (below acceptable variance)	2	33%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI year-end forecast status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	4	67%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	1	17%
Red (below acceptable variance)	1	17%
Missing	0	0%



Corporate Plan Action	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
20. Develop a new Housing Strategy and Action Plan for 2025-26.	↔	G
22. Develop policy to support the use of civil penalties with regard to private sector housing enforcement.	↔	A
23. Implement the government's new Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, review of supported exempt accommodation in the area and introduce licensing regulations.	↔	A
24. Maintain the level of new housing delivery, which meets the needs of Huntingdonshire residents, including the type of home and tenure (open market and social housing).	↔	A
25. Work in partnership to look at best practice and funding to improve housing conditions, including retrofit programmes in social and private housing.	↔	A
26. Work with Registered Providers to improve conditions in existing accommodation through regeneration schemes.	↓	A
27. Work with partners to address barriers to housing delivery and support housing delivery rates.	↔	A
28. Work with Health and Social Care Providers to explore future models of housing, support and care, enabling people to live independently for longer.	↔	G
29. Produce sustainable housing guidance for developers that encourages sustainable construction methods and new homes to be of high environmental standards.	↔	A

Corporate Plan Project/Programme	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
21. Continue to use surplus Council owned sites to deliver affordable housing (PROJECT).	↑	G

Operational Performance Indicator	Latest Status	Forecast Status
The net change in the number of homes with a council tax banding	A	A
The number of new affordable homes delivered	R	R
Percentage of planning applications process on target - Major (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
Percentage of planning applications process on target - Minor (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
Percentage of planning applications process on target - Household Extension (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
The number of planning applications over 16 weeks old where there is no current extension in place (total at the end of the month)	R	G

Outcome 5: Forward-thinking economic growth

We want our local economy to attract businesses that prioritise reducing their carbon footprint. A place where businesses choose to start up, grow and invest in high value jobs so they and our residents and high streets, can flourish and thrive. Local people should be able to develop their skills to take advantage of these opportunities, with businesses and education providers working more closely together to deliver an inclusive economy.

The Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan continue to progress this quarter. The Economic Growth Strategy has now been approved and has been published on the Invest in Huntingdonshire website for residents to view. The actions within the Strategy have been centralised to an action plan, which is now in the hands of officers, where work is underway to deliver these actions in partnership with key stakeholders and businesses.

Applications for the delivery of business grants within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund programme opened to businesses this quarter. A total of 41 applications are live between the two funds. The grants will aim to drive robust local engagement and will help to build capacity for growth and innovation within the local economy.

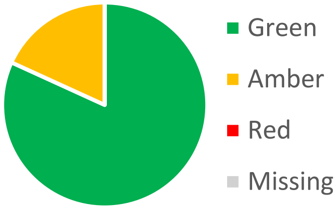
We continue to support our Market Towns and Town Centres as hubs of economic and social activity. We have begun to work with Business Improvement District Association (BIDA) to deliver a variety of UKSPF projects, including retail support for the 2025 festive period. An extension to footfall monitoring has also been committed to, as we are 1.9% ahead of target this year for this metric in our market towns.

The Development Management team continues to influence the delivery of infrastructure in the district. Engagement with the East-West Rail scheme is ongoing, including briefings and workshops on the design proposals. Specialist Officers are set to review the Fens Reservoir proposal in quarter three, including potential pipeline routes through the District. This work will help to ensure our residents have access to high-quality transport and infrastructure, locally and nationwide.

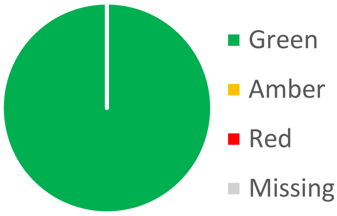
The Economic Development Team continued to engage with local and national businesses this quarter to promote Huntingdonshire as a place to invest, grow, and deliver economic growth. The team has engaged with 265 unique businesses this quarter, leading to strengthened local business networks, new opportunities for collaboration, and the
raised profile of Huntingdonshire as a supportive place to do business. This has been achieved by attending a developers forum (UKREiiF), delivering CEO breakfasts, and running Business Booster drop-in sessions in Ramsey. These consistent interactions with businesses help to strengthen local networks and create more opportunities for collaboration, driving greater investment within the district.

Performance Summary:

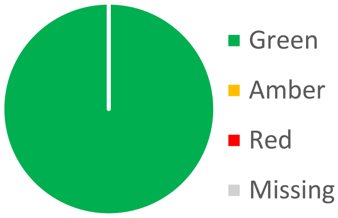
Status of Corporate Plan actions	Number	%
Green (on track)	9	82%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	2	18%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



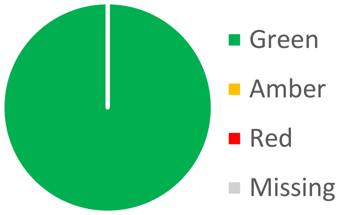
Status of Corporate Plan projects/programmes	Number	%
Green (progress on track)	1	100%
Amber (behind schedule, project may be recoverable)	0	0%
Red (significantly behind schedule, serious risk/issues)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI latest status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	2	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI year-end forecast status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	2	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Corporate Plan Action	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
30. Promote Huntingdonshire as a destination for high value inward investment, prioritising businesses that are proactively reducing their carbon emissions, and produce an annual report on activity.	↔	G
32. Establish the Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan.	↔	G
33. Delivery of the Market Town Programme and their High Street projects. Ensuring their promotion to drive additional economic and social activity.	↔	A
34. Continue the update to the Local Plan, including updating evidence bases in line with National Planning Policy, particularly where it relates to Economy, Environment and Housing.	↔	G
35. Support our market towns and town centres as hubs of economic and social activity.	↔	G
36. Support the visitor economy and culture sector including CPCA Local Visitor Economy Partnership.	↔	A
37. Work with the CPCA and partners to support skills development and opportunities.	↔	G
38. Work with partners to secure investment and growth in Huntingdonshire, maximising the opportunities presented through Local Government Reorganisation and additional devolved powers.	↔	G
39. Influence delivery of infrastructure including East West Rail, A428, A141 Strategic Outline Business Case and future Transport Strategies.	↔	G
40. Support and engage in the development of the Local Growth Plan as it is developed by the CPCA, highlighting the inward investment and growth priorities and opportunities for Huntingdonshire	↔	G
41. Run and attend a programme of events to promote the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to invest, grow and deliver economic growth.	↔	G

Corporate Plan Project/Programme	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
31. Deliver the business grants within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) programme.	↔	G

Operational Performance Indicator	Latest Status	Forecast Status
Cumulative footfall in our market towns (Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots & Ramsey) (monthly)	G	G
Total number of business engagements by the Economic Development team	G	G

Outcome 6: Lowering carbon emissions

We will take positive action to reduce carbon emissions and become a net zero carbon Council by 2040. We will enable and encourage local people and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity across Huntingdonshire.

To help maximise the decarbonisation of our fleet, and minimise the use of fossil fuels for energy, we have capitalised on opportunities to expand the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) this quarter, by implementing HVO vehicles across the entire operational fleet. This change will reduce CO2 emissions from the fleet by 82%. This quarter also saw our waste fleet continue to surpass its energy-efficient driving score target, helping to lower our CO2 emissions by targeting the greatest source in the district - transportation.

Our work to showcase and encourage community action to lower carbon emissions has also continued to progress well this quarter. Officers now form a Climate Champions group for quarterly Climate initiatives, and an annual climate conversation is due to take place in November. Additionally, Huntingdonshire Business Awards has received submissions, and they are to be announced in October. Recognising these businesses for decarbonisation initiatives will promote positive climate actions and strengthen the partnership between the local climate and the local economy.

The project to implement household food waste collections has progressed this quarter, with the rollout of the service on track to start the next financial year. The first of the additional vehicles have arrived, and the works surrounding the caddies has been finalised. We will continue communicating with our residents in quarter three as we prepare for the start of the additional collections.

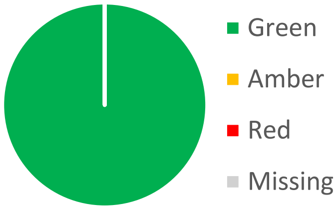
We continue to support community projects that reduce carbon emissions, with eight of eleven Net Zero Villages projects now completed. To continue this work, a bid has been submitted for the Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU), which will allow us to conduct a study to ascertain what would be needed to establish a heat network within the district.

The action to deliver climate awareness training across the council was completed in quarter two. All staff now have access to 30-minute online climate training, and this has been promoted through internal communications, leading to a strong initial uptake.

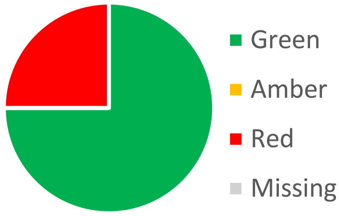
Our project to enable community action and engagement to achieve greater biodiversity has been reported as red this month, as there have been delays in completing the report for the St Ives project due to staffing changes. Additional resources have now been assigned to the project to prevent further delays. The natural flood defence project is on schedule, with two sites confirmed and a positive response from a third interested land-owner.

Performance Summary:

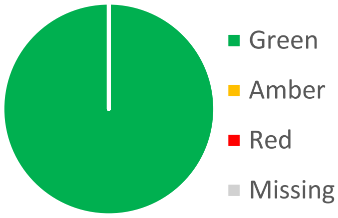
Status of Corporate Plan actions	Number	%
Green (on track)	8	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



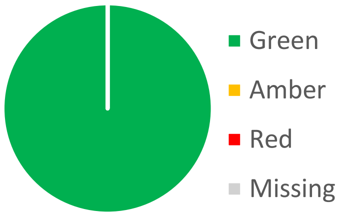
Status of Corporate Plan projects/programmes	Number	%
Green (progress on track)	3	75%
Amber (behind schedule, project may be recoverable)	0	0%
Red (significantly behind schedule, serious risk/issues)	1	25%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI latest status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	1	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI year-end forecast status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	1	100%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	0	0%
Red (below acceptable variance)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Corporate Plan Action	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
42. Maximise opportunities to expand the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Fuel where there is a business case to do so.	↔	G
43. Maximise decarbonisation of our fleet where there is a business case to do through a fleet strategy.	↔	G
44. Minimise use of fossil fuels for energy where there is a business case to do so.	↔	G
45. Showcase and encourage community action to lower carbon emissions.	↔	G
46. Identify emissions from HDC IT data centres to include in reporting and establish disposal methods for IT equipment to reduce environmental impact.	↔	G
47. Delivery of Climate Awareness Training across the Council.	↔	G
52. Develop the Council's procurement rules to further embed social and environmental value.	↔	G
53. Expand positive climate action support for local businesses, celebrating best practice and sharing knowledge.	↔	G

Corporate Plan Project/Programme	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
48. Maximise use of solar of Council operational buildings (PROJECT).	↔	G
49. Improve household recycling, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reducing food waste through implementation of household food waste collections (PROJECT).	↔	G
50. Support community projects that reduce carbon emissions. Net Zero Villages (PROJECT).	↔	G
51. Enabling community action and engagement to achieve greater biodiversity. Biodiversity4All extension to pilot urban nature corridors and natural flood prevention (PROJECT).	↓	R

Operational Performance Indicator	Latest Status	Forecast Status
Efficiency of vehicle fleet driving - Energy Efficient Driving Index score for the waste service	G	G

Outcome 7: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

Around 80% of our resources are aligned to business as usual (BAU) service delivery and this priority focuses on delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory functions. We will continue to provide a wide range of existing statutory and important services and seek to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

The Workforce Strategy Action Plan has continued to be delivered this quarter. Staff have engaged with health kiosks, blood pressure checks, and escape pain sessions, led by the Active Lifestyles team to promote wellbeing. These have allowed long-term sickness days lost to continue to reduce this quarter, allowing performance to exceed target. Additionally, staff received access to Local Government Pensions Scheme advisors, and the Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme has progressed to the launch phase.

Civil Parking Enforcement rolled out across the district this quarter, with warning notices issued in August and Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) from September onwards. A total of 914 PCNs have been issued since the scheme began, and work to deliver this service will continue in quarter three.

This quarter also saw the Customer Services improvement programme progress positively. The customer satisfaction survey and a new forecasting model have been established to align resources with customer needs. This progress allows staff to continuously improve and has resulted in both operational performance indicators for Customer Services exceeding targets every month this period.

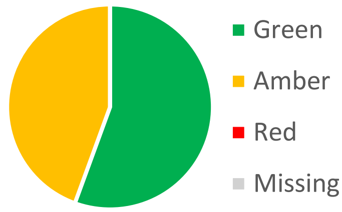
The number of missed bins has met its target this quarter, with a missed collection rate of 0.052% from a total of 1,471,471 total collections, remaining significantly below the national average of 0.076%. The percentage of household waste reused, recycled, or composted this quarter remains below the accepted tolerance. This is attributed to an exceptionally dry summer, with works continuing in the education of recycling to help drive improvements to our recycling rate.

Our street cleansing team excelled this quarter, with 611 of 614 inspections passing across 21 wards. Additionally, fly-tip reports remain ahead of target and improved by over 22% compared to the same period last year, leading to cleaner streets for residents

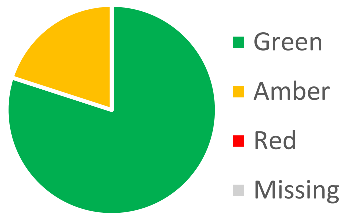
However, the average waiting time between referral and completion of jobs funded through the Disabled Facilities grants has improved by 4.4 weeks compared to last quarter, and by 9.4 weeks compared to the same period last year. The percentage of planning applications processed within 8 weeks or the agreed extension period for major, minor, and household extension applications has also consistently exceeded 95% or higher this quarter. Finally, the number of missed bins is on target, with a missed collection rate of 0.052% of the 1,471,471 bins collected.

Performance Summary:

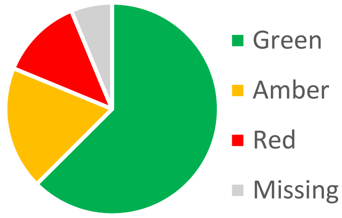
Status of Corporate Plan actions	Number	%
Green (on track)	5	56%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	4	44%
Red (behind schedule)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



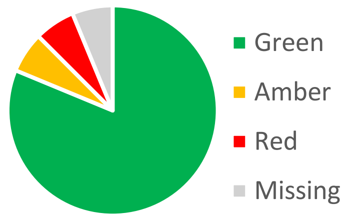
Status of Corporate Plan projects/programmes	Number	%
Green (progress on track)	4	80%
Amber (behind schedule, project may be recoverable)	1	20%
Red (significantly behind schedule, serious risk/issues)	0	0%
Missing	0	0%



Operational PI latest status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	10	63%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	3	19%
Red (below acceptable variance)	2	13%
Missing	1	6%



Operational PI year-end forecast status	Number	%
Green (achieved)	13	81%
Amber (within acceptable variance)	1	6%
Red (below acceptable variance)	1	6%
Missing	1	6%



Corporate Plan Action	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
54. Refresh our Commercial Investment Strategy to support informed and impactful investment.	↔	G
60. Implement the recommendations and suggestions made from the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, continuing to drive transparent continuous improvement.	↔	G
61. Extend the use of benchmarking data to identify opportunities for transformation.	↓	A
62. Expand the use of unit costing within priority service areas to demonstrate productivity and opportunities for transformation.	↓	A
63. Identify opportunities to use Artificial Intelligence in a targeted way to support transformation and efficiency in compliance with emergent legislation.	↓	A
64. Listen to local residents and respond to their input on service delivery.	↔	A
65. Engage proactively with Local Government Reorganisation to ensure the priorities, opportunities and efficiencies for our communities are maximised	↔	G
66. Enable our outstanding volunteers in our parks, nature reserves and elsewhere to continue to improve the quality of those spaces.	↔	G
67. Our well-run Council will act as a model for our peers.	↔	G

Corporate Plan Project/Programme	Direction of Travel	Latest Status
55. Delivery of the Workforce Strategy Action Plan equipping the workforce with skills for the future whilst attracting, retaining and nurturing talent (PROJECT).	↔	G
56. Continue our Customer Services improvement programme to ensure that our customers are always at the heart of what we do (PROJECT).	↔	G
57. Progress the Development Management Improvement programme informed by the Local Government Association Peer Review to deliver continued efficiency in the planning service (PROJECT).	↔	G
58. Progress delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement across the District to enforce on-street parking activity (PROJECT).	↔	G
59. Build the enhancements to visitor facilities at Hinchingbrooke Country Park (PROJECT).	↓	A

Operational Performance Indicator	Latest Status	Forecast Status
Percentage of household waste reused / recucled / composted	R	R
Collected household waste per person (kilograms)	G	G
Residual waste collected per household (kilograms)	A	G
Number of missed bins	G	G
The percentage of sampled areas which are clean or predominantly clean of litter, detritus, graffiti, flyposting or weed accumulations	G	G
The number of flytips reported (cumulative)	G	G
Sanctions against environmental crimes and anti-social behaviour	G	G

The number of programmed food safety inspections undertaken (cumulative)	G	G
Percentage of calls to the Contact Centre answered	G	G
Average wait time for customers calling the Contact Centre (seconds)	G	G
Customer Satisfaction (Contact Centre) [Collection Due to Commence in Q3]	0	0
Council Tax collection rate	A	G
Business Rates collection rate	A	G
Short-term staff sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling 12-month total)	R	A
Long-term sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling 12-month total)	G	G
Staff Turnover (per month)	G	G

Appendix B: Progress on Corporate Plan Actions

Outcome: Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

Activity type: Do

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
1. Deliver the approved Community Health & Wealth Strategy and go-live with funding mechanisms to invest in initiatives identified and chosen by our communities.	Cllr Ferguson	71 Expressions of Interest were received via the August pilot, with 20 groups then being asked to submit a full application. Two training workshops were delivered by the team alongside Support Cambs to those submitting applications. The window closed at the end of September, and 17 out of the 20 applicants invited have submitted full applications. The outcome will be determined by the first panel meeting that is being held at the end of October.	↔	G	This has been a hugely collaborative piece of work with the community and voluntary sector to get to this stage, which has clearly demonstrated the approach being taken by the Council to tackle the root cause of issues from the ground up.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
2. Refresh our Social Value Procurement Policy to ensure our spend benefits local communities and ensure our work complies with recent changes to the Procurement Act 2024.	Cllr Davenport-Ray	A Social Value framework and Social Value Policy have been drafted and circulated for comment. These were discussed at a meeting of the working group at the end of September.	↔	G	Demonstrable progress has been made toward delivering the overall objective of embedding Social Value into the procurement process to benefit local communities.
3. Improve our evaluation of how we make a difference to local people ensuring we become even better at demonstrating impact	Cllr Ferguson	To support the delivery of our ambition, we now have a software tool that allows us to capture and quantify the impact of our work on health and wealth building. It is being implemented and will be used to track the impact of grants given to the community in Q3.	↔	G	We will be able to measure, quantify, and track the impact we have, and demonstrate back to residents the impact of our work.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
4. Deliver continued improvements to the One Leisure offer, enhancing existing facilities, implementing recommendations of the One Leisure Long-Term Operating Model and other beneficial opportunities.	Cllr Howell	The One Leisure Website update went live at the start of Q3, with no major issues and only minor tweaks required for other issues. The Huntingdon Gym & Changing Rooms upgrade has been completed. Ramsey Gym investment projects are underway and will be completed by 27th November 25. Huntingdon Sports and Health Hub is progressing to RIBA (architectural stages) stage 3 & 4 if approved at Cabinet on Tuesday 14th October. Work is underway to secure funding for an additional 3G synthetic turf pitch at St Ives Outdoor Centre outcome of the CIL bid will be given at Cabinet on 14th October 25 . Active Lifestyles is continuing to deliver weight management programmes for inactive adults and frailty in older adults activities in partnership with the local Primary Care Network and integrated neighbourhoods.	↔	G	The upgrades will supply better facilities and services for our residents, as well as more activities and options will be available for residents. Additionally, an improved OL digital will be offered to our customers and staff. Attendances are up 30% year to date for Active Lifestyles, and One Leisure is 5% ahead of 24/25.

Outcome: Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

Activity type: Enable

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
5. Work with partners to further skills and employment opportunities in the District: including direct delivery of funded schemes.	Cllr Ferguson	A further 36 months of funding is secured for WorkWell, with a focus on bringing businesses on board to better manage sickness absence in the workplace. A Joint event is to be held with South Cambs for businesses to be held in October. A number of applications relating to skills and employment are being considered for the CHAWS pilot round, including supporting residents who are neurodivergent.	↔	G	The confidence that the scheme has continuity and that the support is available for residents with varying needs, and who otherwise may risk being long-term unemployed.
6. Work with other organisations and businesses to maximise the impact they can have on the health and wellbeing of local communities. Our focus will be on piloting new approaches that can be embedded in future years	Cllr Ferguson	Following a recruitment freeze within NWAFT, we have not been able to appoint to the role for this work. Instead, we put an alternative proposal that has the same intentions to the CPCA, and this has now been approved.	↔	G	The work on building relationships and employment skills, pathways, and opportunities for local residents has commenced and will be developed as a model for other organisations to replicate.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
7. Focus on maximising physical activity in the district, and work to promote this across local partners.	Cllr Howell	The Leisure Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies provide the framework to drive improvement to maximise physical activity in the district. Work is ongoing to implement the action plan from the two strategies, with a potential transformative project in Huntingdon being the first to be put into motion. Officers have been responding to planning applications, with a potential £1.6m being negotiated for formal sports provision. Work is also ongoing on a £800k capital grant to improve facilities in St Ives. The Active Lifestyles service has delivered 1,602 sessions in Q2 compared to 1,251 in the same period last year. The average for 2025/26 is 510 per month, compared to 409 for the same period last year. Active Lifestyles has attended seventeen events in Q2, leading to over 720 contacts with residents.	↔	G	Facility refurbishment and improvements at One Leisure Huntingdon have been completed in Quarter 2, helping One Leisure to strong performance in Q2. Also, £100k of S106 has been passported to community organisations, ensuring the spend was achieved within deadlines and not returned to developers. Additionally, there have been 18,290 attendances at Active Lifestyles delivered activities in Q2 compared to 13,725 in 2024/25 – 33% improvement like for like and 34% increase year to date.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
8. Maximise, and report on, the benefits of a targeted approach to support residents to improve their quality of life through the promotion and delivery of relevant services.	Cllr Ferguson	The Residents Advice and Information Team continues to provide day-to-day services, and so does the Active Lifestyles Team. In addition, the WorkWell programme is helping residents into work each month by supporting residents from sickness to working, and as one of 15 national pilots, the positive news of an extension of this funding for 3 years demonstrates success.	↔	G	This action enables us to ensure help is available to those who need it, improving our residents' quality of life.

Outcome: Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

Activity type: Influence

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
9. Continue to work with statutory partners to secure improvements to transport options for Huntingdonshire, including active travel.	Cllr Sanderson	We continue to engage with CCC and CPCA on active travel matters. A bid was submitted in Q2 for National Highways designated funds by CCC via CPCA for 4 projects - 3 are for active travel links from St. Neots to Wyboston Lakes, and 1 is to Phoenix Park and Wyboston Lakes. The St. Ives Local Improvements are nearing finalisation. This project aims to reduce congestion on the main A1123 and A1096 corridors, including the improvement of bus journey times. Separately, the A141 and St Ives improvements are going out for consultation in Q3 (October).	↔	G	Through our work with CCC and the CPCA, we can help influence the delivery of transport improvements within the district, improving the mobility and quality of life of our residents.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
10. Embed the priorities of Huntingdonshire Futures across the work of the Council and Partners whilst influencing and enabling communities to do the same.	Cllr Conboy	A project to determine the value of establishing a self-designated landscape in the Great Ouse Valley in Huntingdonshire, working in partnership with the Great Ouse Valley Trust, is now complete. A business case is being finalised, and project sponsors will then agree on options and next steps. Huntingdonshire Futures grants 2025 focused on fostering Pride in Place in Huntingdonshire, building on the success of the 2024 scheme. 35 applications were received before the scheme closed early due to demand. 19 organisations from across Huntingdonshire were awarded small grants of £500 - £2,500, totalling circa £40,000. Most projects are now complete.	↔	G	Grants have enabled 19 community groups, charities, and Town and Parish councils to deliver activities and events in their communities. The events support Pride in Place, celebrating what makes Huntingdonshire and its communities special. Feedback highlighted how activity made people feel connected to their community and brought people together, and attracted new visitors.

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

Activity type: Do

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
11. Report regularly on progress on the delivery of an integrated financial vulnerability model between HDC and partners (PROJECT).	Cllr Ferguson	First multi-agency group meetings of professionals held, with an agreed approach of response, implement, and resilience. This work is being supported by the Crisis Resilience Fund, and the aim is to move communities from poverty to resilience. We intend to grow what we already do via the RAI Team, as this is a tried and tested model. Performance management measures will be agreed and implemented to demonstrate value and impact.	↔	G	This work has set a clear position of where we are now and where we need to be. It is imperative that we move our model from reliance to resilience, and this work will enable that to happen.
12. Act on opportunities for early intervention and regularly report on learning and impact.	Cllr Ferguson	The Service Design review is now completed, involving multiple internal services that work with/alongside RAI and CAB. This is to be presented, and the next steps agreed upon.	↔	G	Enables clear direction and ensures duplication is avoided. Ultimately resulting in the best outcomes for our residents.

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

Activity type: Enable

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
13. Maximise, and report on, the benefits of a targeted approach to support residents at risk of experiencing crisis through the promotion and delivery of relevant services (e.g. improve data sharing with the police to inform a targeted on-the-ground door-knocking campaign to help prevent crime).	Cllr Ferguson	We are working with the Police on a potential expansion of the successful trial to share data and help tackle the risks of serious violence in the District. The portal goes live in Q3, a little later than forecast due to other prioities for all partners in setting this work up.	↓	A	Working with partners allows us to make a bigger impact on the quality of life of local people, and preventing the risk of serious crime occurring would be a welcome contribution.
14. Prevent the causes of homelessness wherever we can by our own efforts but also by working with other partners to tackle the root causes where we can	Cllr Ferguson	The vulnerable young people pathway review has been completed, including sign-off by the Cambs Safeguarding Board. Roll-out is happening through a series of joint webinars. Reviews of the Care Leavers and prison leavers pathways have commenced and will be completed later in the year.	↔	G	Ensuring all pathways are up to date and effectively rolled out between partners will maximise early intervention opportunities, which contribute to homelessness prevention.

Outcome: Helping people in crisis

Activity type: Do

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
15. Continue to support refugees and other guests, seeking to support good community relations and smooth transition into long-term residency or return home.	Cllr Ferguson	Schemes continue to operate successfully. We continue to have only met 21 of our 120 target bed spaces for asylum seekers, and no properties have been procured by MOD for Afghan Resettlement. We continue to offer and provide support where requested.	↔	G	Through effective management of the refugee cohorts, we have seen a reduced rate of use of Temporary Accomodation. This means no negative impact on budgets, but also no community tensions.
16. Deliver the recommendations of the review into Disabled Facilities Grants undertaken by Officers and Members in 2024/25.	Cllr Ferguson	A national consultation has now been completed, which provided an opportunity to highlight the issues brought forward as part of the review.	↔	G	To ensure that our funding is being used optimally.

Outcome: Helping people in crisis

Activity type: Enable

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
17. Maximise, and report on, the benefits of a targeted approach to support residents experiencing crisis through the promotion and delivery of relevant services (e.g. identifying individuals who could benefit from support offered by the Resident Advice and Information team and reporting on outcomes).	Cllr Ferguson	We are collaborating with the Police on a potential expansion of the successful data-sharing trial aimed at addressing the risks of serious violence within the District. Although the portal is now scheduled to go live in Q3—slightly later than initially forecast—this delay reflects the need to balance priorities across all partners involved in establishing the initiative.	↔	G	Ensuring that the organisation is working with other partners will allow us to improve the quality of life of our residents to an even greater extent.

Outcome: Helping people in crisis

Activity type: Influence

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
18. Lobby, and support campaigns, for improvements to the living conditions of local residents.	Cllr Conboy	Through the County bringing together partners, discussions are underway to identify what is already happening across the district to tackle the recommendations from the commission. We have highlighted that the Crisis Resilience Fund should not be used to create lots of new projects, but use what is already in place and working, and replicate this elsewhere.	↔	G	Ensuring that those most in need are aware of the support available to them and how to access it. Focusing on prevention, recognising that being reactive reduces the chances of positive outcomes for residents.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
19. Be an active partner working with others within health and social care to make sure projects and new initiatives are delivered within Huntingdonshire and maximise the positive impact felt locally	Cllr Ferguson	HDC is a key partner within the integrated care board and the North West Care Board. In Q2, a successful bid was made to the Government to be involved in the national pilots of local neighbourhood services based in GP areas. HDC also presented to the Board on the Community Health & Wealth Fund, and we are working with partners to deliver (and possibly fund) the strategy Alongside this, working with local GPs in neighbourhoods has progressed with impacts from Active Lifestyles and the Workwell Programme, leading to strong partnership working.	↔	G	Influencing key partners for the benefit of Huntingdonshire is a key approach in the Corporate Plan - and with an ageing population, it is vital we maximise the full benefit of the public health system.

Outcome: Improving housing

Activity type: Do

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
20. Develop a new Housing Strategy and Action Plan for 2025-26.	Cllr Wakeford	We now have the completed Housing Needs Assessment, which is part of the evidence for the review of the Local Plan. This will enable us to conclude the data gathering for the new strategy and provide an advanced draft by the end of Q3.	↔	G	This will enable the Council to have a Housing Strategy based on the most up-to-date information for the district and support the Council's Corporate Plan outcome of Improving Housing. At a practical level, it will enable the Council to have accurate information on the level and type of demand for housing.
21. Continue to use surplus Council owned sites to deliver affordable housing (PROJECT).	Cllr Wakeford	A planning application was submitted for the first site in Warboys. It is anticipated that this should go to DMC in December 2025.	↑	G	This action will have the ability to support the Council's Corporate Plan outcome of Improving Housing within the District. The use of surplus Council-owned sites to deliver much-needed affordable housing is an important element of the plan and the Council's Housing Strategy.
22. Develop policy to support the use of civil penalties with regard to private sector housing enforcement.	Cllr Ferguson	The organisation is still waiting for information from the government to allow the policy to be developed.	↔	A	Once actioned, this policy will help drive better conditions in private sector housing, improving the living conditions of our residents.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
23. Implement the government's new Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, review of supported exempt accommodation in the area and introduce licensing regulations.	Cllr Ferguson	We are still awaiting further guidance on the Act to enable us to implement the scheme.	↔	A	This action will support creating a better Huntingdonshire for Future generations by improving housing conditions.

Outcome: Improving housing

Activity type: Enable

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
24. Maintain the level of new housing delivery, which meets the needs of Huntingdonshire residents, including the type of home and tenure (open market and social housing).	Cllr Wakeford	The Council continues to work with partner Housing Associations and Developers to deliver new housing, including affordable homes. Most construction tends to take place over the spring/summer months, and we therefore tend to achieve higher numbers of units in the last two quarters of the year. Officers are also looking to bring forward innovative opportunities to increase supply when the opportunity is available.	↔	A	This action will have the ability to support the Council's Corporate Plan with Improving Housing in the District. The delivery of new housing across all tenures is an important element of the plan and the Council's Housing Strategy.
25. Work in partnership to look at best practice and funding to improve housing conditions, including retrofit programmes in social and private housing.	Cllr Wakeford	As and when opportunities occur, the Council's Housing and Climate teams work in partnership to ensure there is take-up on retrofit and other housing programmes to enable the improvement of housing in the district.	↔	A	The continual improvement of housing within the district not only aligns with our Corporate Plan Outcome of Improving Housing, but also allows our residents to live in safer and higher-quality homes.

Outcome: Improving housing

Activity type: Influence

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
26. Work with Registered Providers to improve conditions in existing accommodation through regeneration schemes.	Cllr Wakeford	The Council is working with Places for People (P4P) on a regeneration project in Huntingdon. Residents have now been made aware, and discussions have commenced with Planning colleagues as part of a PPA. Regular quarterly meetings are now taking place with P4P to address issues that are identified by the Corporate Team. Awaab's Law comes into effect in October 2025 in relation to hazards around damp/mould and all emergency hazards, with further elements over the next 2 years. This will give greater ability by the Regulator of Social Housing and Environmental Health Teams to take action.	↓	A	Not only does this project ensure we are complying with statutory law, but it also ensures that our residents are living in homes that are safer and higher quality.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
27. Work with partners to address barriers to housing delivery and support housing delivery rates.	Cllr Wakeford	The Council is working with partner Housing Associations and Developers to deliver new housing, including affordable homes, in a timely manner. The housing and planning teams work closely together to ensure barriers to the delivery of sites with planning permission are considered and supported as soon as they occur.	↔	A	This action supports the Council's Corporate Plan Action in Improving Housing.
28. Work with Health and Social Care Providers to explore future models of housing, support and care, enabling people to live independently for longer.	Cllr Wakeford	The completion of the Housing Needs Assessment alongside the data from the County Council is informing the completion of the Housing Strategy, which will be used to shape future provision of housing across the District.	↔	G	Enabling people to live independently for longer improves the wellbeing of our residents.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
29. Produce sustainable housing guidance for developers that encourages sustainable construction methods and new homes to be of high environmental standards.	Cllr Wakeford	This work will centre on low-carbon construction, including off-site fabrication to align with Part L(2025), including improved insulation, triple glazing, solar PV, and heat pumps, and ensure compliance with Future Homes Standard (2025) for net zero-ready homes. It will also include the use of low VOC and prioritise lifecycle carbon assessments and sustainable transport integration, and aim for BREEAM excellent or Passivhaus opportunities.	↔	A	This action will support creating a better Huntingdonshire for Future generations by lowering carbon emissions and providing good quality housing.

Outcome: Forward-thinking economic growth

Activity type: Do

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
30. Promote Huntingdonshire as a destination for high value inward investment, prioritising businesses that are proactively reducing their carbon emissions, and produce an annual report on activity.	Cllr Wakeford	In Q2, the team continued to promote Huntingdonshire as a destination for high-value inward investment, prioritising businesses committed to reducing carbon emissions, in line with the Economic Growth Strategy 2025–2030's focus on sustainable economic growth and protecting natural assets.	↔	G	These efforts have strengthened Huntingdonshire's reputation as a sustainable, high-value investment destination, attracting interest from businesses committed to reducing carbon emissions and supporting long-term economic growth.
31. Deliver the business grants within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) programme.	Cllr Wakeford	The team now has Digital Grants and REPF Grants open for businesses to apply. So far, we have approved two Digital Grants, with 21 applications currently live. Additionally, there are 20 live applications for the Rural Grants awaiting review and recommendation.	↔	G	So far, the grants have supported businesses with funding, driven strong engagement, and are helping build capacity for growth and innovation in the local economy.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
32. Establish the Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan.	Cllr Wakeford	The EGS has now been approved and is available on the Invest in Huntingdonshire website. Actions have been allocated to team members based on their roles and expertise, and work is underway to deliver these in partnership with key stakeholders and businesses.	↔	G	As a result, delivery of the EGS is now progressing in a more focused and coordinated way, ensuring clear accountability and stronger collaboration with partners and businesses.
33. Delivery of the Market Town Programme and their High Street projects. Ensuring their promotion to drive additional economic and social activity.	Cllr Wakeford	In St Neots, work continues on the Priory Centre and is proceeding well, and we continue to support the owner of the Old Falcon to bring forward the planning application that was considered earlier in the year. Projects in Ramsey are progressing well in partnership with the Town Council. Although this is slightly behind schedule, it is expected that the first element of the project will be delivered early in 2026, commencing with the car park. Other projects within the programme are progressing well across all Market Towns.	↔	A	The Market Towns Programme supports the aim in the Corporate Plan of Forward Thinking Economic Growth.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
34. Continue the update to the Local Plan, including updating evidence bases in line with National Planning Policy, particularly where it relates to Economy, Environment and Housing.	Cllr Sanderson	In terms of the Local Plan, the Preferred Options version will be presented to Cabinet on the 21st October, and the papers will be circulated on the 14th October. The Local Plan is still on target for delivery.	↔	G	Work is well underway to complete the local plan and is informed by our public consultations. The evidence base is growing and being published online.

Outcome: Forward-thinking economic growth

Activity type: Enable

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
35. Support our market towns and town centres as hubs of economic and social activity.	Cllr Wakeford	We have committed to extending the town centre footfall monitoring contract for a further two years. Alongside this, we have been working with BIDA to deliver a number of UKSPF projects, including a local gift card initiative and retail support for Christmas 2025. In addition, we have wrapped another empty shop on St Ives High Street. All of these activities have been promoted through our Discover Huntingdonshire website and Instagram page.	↔	G	As a result, we are supporting town centre vitality, helping local retailers attract more visitors and spend, while strengthening the visibility of Huntingdonshire's high streets through coordinated promotion.
36. Support the visitor economy and culture sector including CPCA Local Visitor Economy Partnership.	Cllr Wakeford	As a part of the LVEP application submission process, HDC and others have been asked to demonstrate staffing capacity and financial resilience. CPCA are meeting with Visit England next Wednesday in October, and they would like to see some parts of the LVEP application.	↔	A	It is positive that conversations are being held; however, we are still unclear about the role the district will play and how this will align with the timelines in place.

Outcome: Forward-thinking economic growth

Activity type: Influence

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
37. Work with the CPCA and partners to support skills development and opportunities.	Cllr Wakeford	The team is supporting the council with an apprenticeship event in Q3 2026 during Apprenticeship Week. They are also working with Form the Future to explore two additional programs with local schools and CRC, utilising UKSPF-related funds.	↔	G	This will help provide tailored support to local schools and, in turn, to local children, with the goal of encouraging them to seek employment locally or pursue careers that are in demand within the community.
38. Work with partners to secure investment and growth in Huntingdonshire, maximising the opportunities presented through Local Government Reorganisation and additional devolved powers.	Cllr Wakeford	During Q2, we have continued to position Huntingdonshire as a prime location for investment and growth. Following UKREiiF, we engaged with several key businesses to promote opportunities within the district	↔	G	As a result of this activity, we have strengthened relationships with investors and raised the profile of Huntingdonshire – particularly Alconbury Weald – as a key site for growth and long-term economic opportunities

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
39. Influence delivery of infrastructure including East West Rail, A428, A141 Strategic Outline Business Case and future Transport Strategies.	Cllr Wakeford	Engagement with officers for the East West Rail scheme is ongoing, including briefings and workshops on the latest design proposals following the third non-statutory consultation in November 2024. For the A428 project, National Highways is providing officers with regular updates as construction progresses. The third non-statutory consultation for the Fens Reservoir launches in October (Q3) and will run until 10th December 2025. Specialist Officers are reviewing the latest design proposals, which include more detail on the potential pipeline routes through the District. For the East Park Solar scheme, the NSIP has now been formally submitted to PINs. If accepted, the project will enter the pre-examination. A141 consultation underway in Q3.	↔	G	The planning team has been helping with business cases and has been influencing the development of these key infrastructure developments, helping to ensure our residents have access to high-quality transport infrastructure.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
40. Support and engage in the development of the Local Growth Plan as it is developed by the CPCA, highlighting the inward investment and growth priorities and opportunities for Huntingdonshire	Cllr Wakeford	The Economic Development team has contributed to multiple drafts of the CPCA Local Growth Plan, ensuring Huntingdonshire is recognised as a key growth area and that major developments are positioned as gateways into sector-specific opportunities.	↔	G	As a result, Huntingdonshire's strengths and strategic sites are better reflected in regional planning, increasing visibility with investors and partners.
41. Run and attend a programme of events to promote the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to invest, grow and deliver economic growth.	Cllr Wakeford	We delivered a sold-out CEO Breakfast at the start of September, attended by over 50 businesses who networked with the wider team. We are working with the Chamber of Commerce to host a joint event in the new year and continue to attend local networking meetings in St Ives and St Neots. In addition, we are running Business Booster drop-in sessions in Ramsey in partnership with the Town Council.	↔	G	As a result, we have strengthened local business networks, created new opportunities for collaboration, and raised the profile of Huntingdonshire as a supportive place to do business.

Outcome: Lowering carbon emissions

Activity type: Do

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
42. Maximise opportunities to expand the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Fuel where there is a business case to do so.	Cllr Kerr	HVO implementation across the entire HDC fleet is now fully rolled out, the CO2 emissions will be reduced by around 82%, aligning with our corporate goals and climate strategy aspirations of net zero by 2040.	↔	G	CO2 emitted from HDC vehicles will be reduced by 82%, allowing our residents to live in a district which is low in emissions.
43. Maximise decarbonisation of our fleet where there is a business case to do through a fleet strategy.	Cllr Kerr	To ensure that our fleet emits as little carbon as possible, it is being decarbonised to use HVO fuels. This project is completed. Additionally, drivers share best practices to try to drive as efficiently as possible.	↔	G	An 82% reduction in CO_2 emissions from HDC vehicles will help create a healthier, low-emission district for our community
44. Minimise use of fossil fuels for energy where there is a business case to do so.	Cllr Kerr	The project to implement HVO across the HDC fleet is now completed. Only some machinery, such as strimmers, and specialist machinery, are still using fossil fuels.	↔	G	This will significantly reduce the emissions from the HDC fleet, improving the quality of air for our residents and helping us become a greener authority.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
45. Showcase and encourage community action to lower carbon emissions.	Cllr Howell	An internal HDC Climate Champions group has been formed for quarterly Climate initiatives, an annual climate conversation taking place in November, partnership with Citizens Advice to examine the partnership with HDC's 5 thermal imaging cameras. Submissions for Huntingdonshire Business Awards are completed and shall be announced on 20th October.	↔	G	Climate initiatives will promote and encourage behaviour and consideration to lower carbon footprints. Annual climate conversation has 65 attendees registered and 15 stallholders covering businesses, Council's local plan and regeneration, and community groups. Recognising businesses for carbon initiatives will allow promote positive Climate action within the industry and strengthen the partnership between Climate and the local economy.
46. Identify emissions from HDC IT data centres to include in reporting and establish disposal methods for IT equipment to reduce environmental impact.	Cllr Conboy	The action regarding identifying emissions from HDC IT data centres was completed in early 2025.	↔	G	The action regarding identifying emissions from HDC IT data centres was completed in early 2025.
47. Delivery of Climate Awareness Training across the Council.	Cllr Howell	This action is now completed. All staff have access to online climate training through the Learning and Development Portal.	↔	G	Awareness of the Climate training has been promoted through internal communications. This training is 30 minutes long, which is a huge time saving compared to being out for a day through carbon literacy training.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
48. Maximise use of solar of Council operational buildings (PROJECT).	Cllr Howell	The action to maximise the use of solar of Council operational buildings was completed in Q1	↔	G	The action to maximise the use of solar of Council operational buildings was completed in Q1
49. Improve household recycling, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reducing food waste through implementation of household food waste collections (PROJECT).	Cllr Kerr	The project is on track with the rollout of the service still planned for April 26. The additional vehicles have started to arrive on site and communications began to residents during Q2.	↔	G	This project will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will help to reduce food waste, reducing the amount we send to landfills each year.

Outcome: Lowering carbon emissions

Activity type: Enable

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
50. Support community projects that reduce carbon emissions. Net Zero Villages (PROJECT).	Cllr Howell	Bid for HNDU Funding Round 15 submitted. 8 out of 11 of the Net Zero Villages projects are now completed. 3 press releases surrounding the project have been completed, plus social media posts to show updates were completed during Q2.	↔	G	If successful, this will allow £70-90K consultant fees to conduct a study to ascertain what would be needed to establish a heat network in Huntingdon. Letters of support have been received from the Director of Finance at the ACES Trust, the Director of Finance at Cambridgeshire Police, and the Director of the NHS NWAFT Trust. Warboys Parish Council, recipient of the Net Zero Villages grant, is giving a keynote speech at the annual climate conversation.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
51. Enabling community action and engagement to achieve greater biodiversity. Biodiversity4All extension to pilot urban nature corridors and natural flood prevention (PROJECT).	Cllr Howell	The St Ives Project - The Graduate Ecologists were unable to complete the report before their contract ended. The Project Manager has informed the CPCA that there will be a delay and that they will look to complete the report. The Natural Flood Defence Project - Two sites confirmed and a positive response from a land owner. The next step is to commission a Hydrological survey for Spring Common and conduct a site visit for the Potential Riparian Buffer Zone north of St Ives.	↓	R	The impact is that the Project Manager will have to devote attention and time to completing the report, but does might not have the relevant skills to be able to deliver everything that was hoped for with the project.

Outcome: Lowering carbon emissions

Activity type: Influence

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
52. Develop the Council's procurement rules to further embed social and environmental value.	Cllr Davenport-Ray	A Social Value framework and Social Value Policy have been drafted and circulated for comment. These were discussed at a meeting of the working group towards the end of Q2.	↔	G	The proposed framework and policy will introduce requirements to include social and environmental value in tender processes to an extent that is proportionate and relevant to the subject matter of the contract.
53. Expand positive climate action support for local businesses, celebrating best practice and sharing knowledge.	Cllr Howell	The organisation is a key partner of the Huntingdonshire Business Awards, including 3 awards that focus on sustainability.	↔	G	This will improve visibility and exposure for businesses addressing their carbon footprint, which will signal to the general public that HDC is strongly committed to decarbonisation, but emphasising the point that businesses need to be successful to benefit them and their residents, to then allow carbon reduction considerations

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

Activity type: Do

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
54. Refresh our Commercial Investment Strategy to support informed and impactful investment.	Cllr Mickelburgh	The Refresh to our Commercial Investment Strategy was completed in Q2 and has now been approved by Cabinet.	↔	G	This will work to ensure our investments are both impactful and ethical, enabling us to better help our residents.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
55. Delivery of the Workforce Strategy Action Plan equipping the workforce with skills for the future whilst attracting, retaining and nurturing talent (PROJECT).	Cllr Davenport-Ray	The Leadership Development programme continues. The Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme is in the launch phase, with two suppliers selected. Free Health Kiosks, Escape Pain sessions, and blood pressure checks were available in Q2. Pensions Awareness Week saw an LGPS advisor support 32 staff, and communications were shared outlining available support. Incremental progression forms were finalised and shared following staff feedback. Succession planning proposals are being drafted, and the MHFA group has been reviewed and closed, with alternative support groups and a new staff benefits and wellbeing page promoted. The Hybrid Project Group has issued manager surveys and is awaiting final feedback. An ED&I paper has agreed on the formation of a dedicated group, and the staff survey has been launched.	↔	G	The sickness absence overall trend has been going down since the project started. In Q2 2024, 9 days were lost per FTE, compared to Q1 2025, where this number was 8.4 per FTE. Additionally, stress is no longer the number one reason for sickness

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
56. Continue our Customer Services improvement programme to ensure that our customers are always at the heart of what we do (PROJECT).	Cllr Ferguson	The telephony channel customer satisfaction survey has now been established. We are working on data accuracy of Survey and refining the setup. We would like to start reporting on results in Q4. A new forecasting model has been established to align resourcing with customer needs.	↔	G	Customer satisfaction survey will now gives the team an opportunity to continuously improve customer service based on customer feedback. Additionally, demand-led resourcing resulted in 3% reduction in the call abandonment rate compared to the same Quarter last year.
57. Progress the Development Management Improvement programme informed by the Local Government Association Peer Review to deliver continued efficiency in the planning service (PROJECT).	Cllr Sanderson	Development Management staffing levels have now returned to full capacity. A review of the case management software is underway, supported by consultancy from the provider to ensure optimal efficiency and full utilisation of all licensed modules. As this work progresses, a comprehensive process review will also be conducted. Bespoke training delivered by the software provider will build in-house expertise, enabling the removal of reliance on a 3rd party contractor. This will reduce costs and strengthen service resilience by minimising single points of failure. Additionally, Power BI dashboards are being developed.	↔	G	The impact of staffing levels means the DM service can run at full capacity.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
58. Progress delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement across the District to enforce on-street parking activity (PROJECT).	Cllr Kerr	Civil Parking Enforcement commenced August 2025 following designation by Department for Transport	↔	G	In the 4-week warning period in August, 111 Off-Street Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and 806 On-street Warning Notices were issued. September saw the move from Warning Notices to PCNs, with 218 Off-Street PCNs and 696 on-street PCNs issued.
59. Build the enhancements to visitor facilities at Hinchingbrooke Country Park (PROJECT).	Cllr Howell	RFQ is now complete, and two submissions have been received, both in the process of scoring, with a decision to be made by 13th October. Both contractors have suggested a longer timeline for completion, with interviews to be held in Q2. We will have a clearer view of the completion date once a contractor has been selected. Meetings with key stakeholders have been held, and the stakeholder e-letter has been drafted and is ready to send once the contractor is selected.	↓	A	Key Stakeholders have been informed, and the team is working towards a solution on procurement to ensure delivery is on budget and timely.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
60. Implement the recommendations and suggestions made from the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, continuing to drive transparent continuous improvement.	Cllr Ferguson	To date, 33 out of 37 actions have been completed with the evidence base reported to Overview & Scrutiny in September. Of the remaining four, which are still in progress, two are reporting as within target, and two are within tolerance of the targets. The Q2 update is currently going through the governance cycle and will be reported to Overview & Scrutiny in November.	↔	G	The Corporate Peer Challenge supports Priority 3 of the Corporate Plan - Doing our Core Work Well. It ensures the council focuses on key learning and development areas identified through external peer review. Outcomes include: - A continuous improvement programme informed by peer review - A strengthened approach to engagement - A renewed approach to governance, compliance, and risk
61. Extend the use of benchmarking data to identify opportunities for transformation.	Cllr Ferguson	This quarter has seen the launch of the Transformation Data Analysis Tool to Heads of Services and Directors. Once the tool is endorsed and feedback is implemented, it will be launched across the Council in Q3 as part of the mid-year Service Planning review for 2026/27. This project has been slightly delayed, and is now back on track for delivery.	↓	A	Once endorsed, this tool will be used to identify deeper analysis of bechmarking results and transformation opportunities.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
62. Expand the use of unit costing within priority service areas to demonstrate productivity and opportunities for transformation.	Cllr Ferguson	This projects has been slightly delayed due to the development of the Transformation Framework due to be presented to scrutiny members early Nov 25. The available unit cost information is now being collated and recorded in a Unit Costing Library ready for applying in Q3.	↓	A	The unit costs information will be used as a key set of data for identifying transformation opportunities as part of the Service Planning review process, due to be completed in Q3.
63. Identify opportunities to use Artificial Intelligence in a targeted way to support transformation and efficiency in compliance with emergent legislation.	Cllr Ferguson	Staff continue to use AI to help deliver day-to-day services. Examples include summarising meetings or drafting documents. We are intending piloting the AI to summarise conversations with customers in the Call Centre to reduce 'wrap-time' for advisors in Q3. In addition, the arrival of the CDIO in 3C ICT has introduced a stronger level of input into our approach and strategy - especially in ensuring compliance within a complex and changing technical environment.	↓	A	Using technology effectively will make the Council more efficient, but this must be done safely and securely to ensure data is used appropriately.
64. Listen to local residents and respond to their input on service delivery.	Cllr Conboy	Council has supported the joint countywide engagement activity for LGR.	↔	A	The feedback from the engagement activity will be an insight for the development of relevant LGR business cases.

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
65. Engage proactively with Local Government Reorganisation to ensure the priorities, opportunities and efficiencies for our communities are maximised	Cllr Ferguson	Proposals for submission have been developed at pace within the team and are on track for decision-making in November. Regular stand-ups and workstream meetings are held to ensure that Officers from across the Councl are engaged with the content. HDC has been proactive in sharing information with neighbouring councils, and there are regular catch-ups set up with partner councils to align timelines. Members have been engaged with regulary to ensure information is shared in a timely manner.	↔	G	The actions to set up various workstreams across the Council have been positive and have allowed content to be reviewed by Officers on time and updated swiftly. Member engagement has had a positive impact, with regular updates on progress and new information as the proposals have progressed. The project is on track to deliver a finalised submission for the 28th of November.

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

Activity type: Enable

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
66. Enable our outstanding volunteers in our parks, nature reserves and elsewhere to continue to improve the quality of those spaces.	Cllr Howell	Friends Groups are encouraged as they help us to manage sites and to attract more volunteers. The Friends of Paxton Pits Nature Reserve are funding an Apprentice Ranger to work with volunteers at Paxton Pits.	↔	G	Priory Park Friends Group is helping by training up additional site checker volunteers. The Apprentice Ranger has started at Paxton Pits and, once trained up, will enable even more volunteers to be recruited.

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

Activity type: Influence

2025/26 Actions/Projects	Portfolio Holder	Progress Update at Quarter 2	Direction of Travel	Latest Status	Impact as a Result of Action
67. Our well-run Council will act as a model for our peers.	Cllr Conboy	We continue to show good delivery of services with multiple demonstrations of this in Q1 - the launch of Health and Wealth Fund, LGA Review Challenge update, delivering an event focused on water use, and many other events and positive service delivery demonstrate this. Q2 has also seen HDC officers working to support LGR, and many case studies from HDC will be used in all possible submissions to the Government.	↔	G	Demonstrating our impact will enhance our reputation with residents, businesses, and other key partners.

Appendix C: Operational Performance Measures Graphs, Quarter 2 2025/26

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

	Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents	Latest RAG	Forecast
1	The number of attendances at One Leisure Active Lifestyles and Sports Development Programmes	G	G
2	The number of One Leisure Facilities Admissions - swimming, Impressions and fitness classes, sports hall and pitches (excluding Burgess Hall and sc...	G	G

	Keeping people out of crisis	Latest RAG	Forecast
3	The number of residents enabled to live safely at home and prevented from requiring care or a prolongued stay at hospital due to a Disabled Faciliti...	G	G
4	The average time (weeks) between date of referral and practical completion of jobs funded through Disabled Facilities Grants	G	A
5	The average number of days to process new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support	G	G
6	The average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefits and Council Tax support	G	G
7	The number of homelessness preventions achieved	G	A
8	The number of households housed through the Housing Register and Home-Link Scheme	R	R

	Helping people in crisis	Latest RAG	Forecast
9	The number of households in temporary accommodation	G	G

	Improving Housing	Latest RAG	Forecast
10	The net change in the number of homes with a council tax banding	A	A
11	The number of new affordable homes delivered	R	R
12	Percentage of planning applications process on target - Major (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
13	Percentage of planning applications process on target - Minor (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
14	Percentage of planning applications process on target - Household Extension (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
15	The number of planning applications over 16 weeks old where there is no current extension in place (total at the end of the month)	R	G

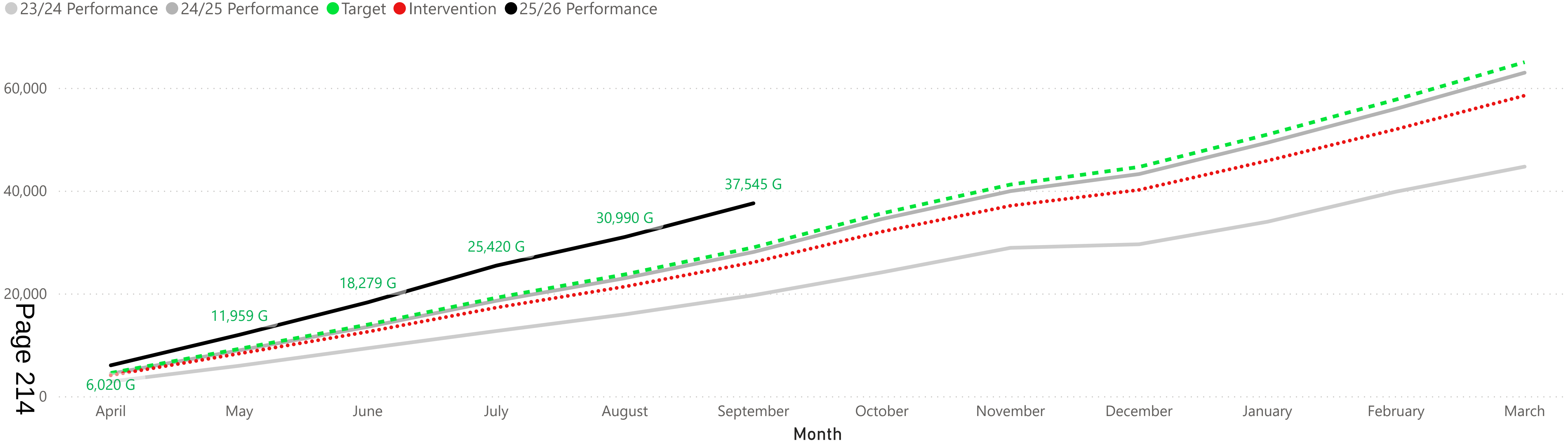
	Forward thinking economic growth	Latest RAG	Forecast
16	Cumulative footfall in our market towns (Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots & Ramsey) (monthly)	G	G
17	Total number of business engagements by the Economic Development team	G	G

	Lowering carbon emissions	Latest RAG	Forecast
18	Efficiency of vehicle fleet driving - Energy Efficient Driving Index score for the waste service	G	G

	Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services	Latest RAG	Forecast
19	Percentage of household waste reused / recucled / composted	R	R
20	Collected household waste per person (kilograms)	G	G
21	Residual waste collected per household (kilograms)	A	G
22	Number of missed bins	G	G
23	The percentage of sampled areas which are clean or predominantly clean of litter, detritus, graffiti, flyposting or weed accumulations	G	G
24	The number of flytips reported (cumulative)	G	G
25	Sanctions against environmental crimes and anti-social behaviour	G	G
26	The number of programmed food safety inspections undertaken (cumulative)	G	G
27	Percentage of calls to the Contact Centre answered	G	G
28	Average wait time for customers calling the Contact Centre (seconds)	G	G
29	Customer Satisfaction (Contact Centre) [Collection Due to Commence in Q3]	0	0
30	Council Tax collection rate	A	G
31	Business Rates collection rate	A	G
32	Short-term staff sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling 12-month total)	R	A
33	Long-term sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling 12-month total)	G	G
34	Staff Turnover (per month)	G	G
35	Average length of staff service (years)	G	G

Outcome: Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

PI 1: Attendances at Active Lifestyles & Sports Development Activities



Latest Commentary from Service:

Attendances in September were ~6,500 - the second-best month of the year. 'Pay As You Go' attendances were 3,720 - 77% ahead of September last year and 72% ahead year to date. Commissioned services (which are where Active Lifestyles are paid to deliver services, and not grants) are up 96.4% year to date (9,233 vs 4,701), ensuring sustainable income growth for the service and reducing reliance on grants further.

Latest year-end forecast:

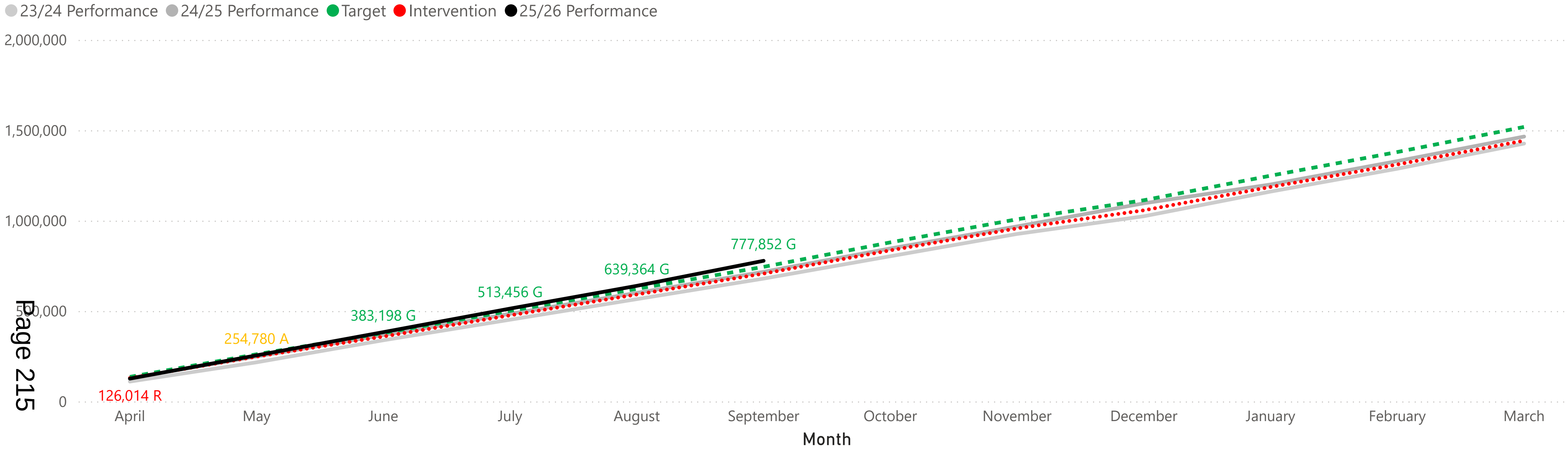
70,000

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

PI 2: Number of One Leisure Facilities admissions - swimming, Impressions, fitness classes, sports hall and pitches (Exc Burgess Hall & school admissions)



Latest Commentary from Service:

Performance across all One Leisure Centres continues to exceed both the target and last years performance. September attendances were 138,488, which is ~16,000 higher than target and ~22,000 higher than the performance of September last year. Year to date performance is ~33,000 ahead of target and ~60,000 ahead of last year. The main drivers of positive performance are the Gym, Group Exercise, and Swimming.

Latest year-end forecast:

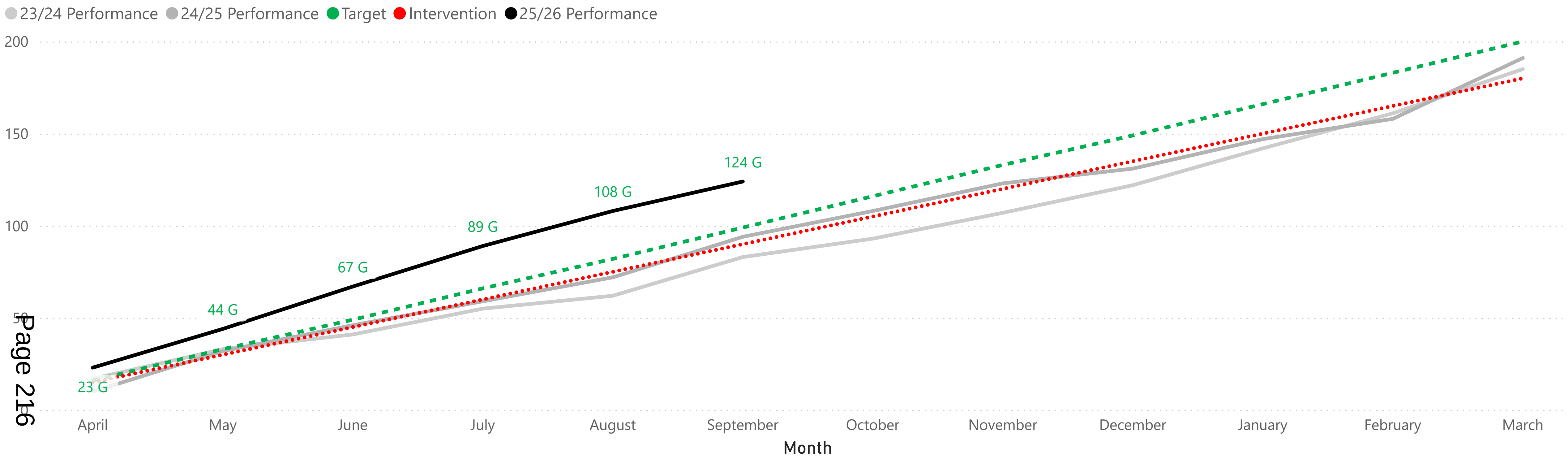
1,551,571

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 3: The number of residents enabled to live safely at home and prevented from requiring care or a prolonged stay in hospital due to a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)



Latest Commentary from Service:

An additional 30 residents have been supported by the Disabled Facilities Grant through September compared to last year. Some delays still persist relating to Places for People approving cases; however, these delays continue to improve.

Latest year-end forecast:

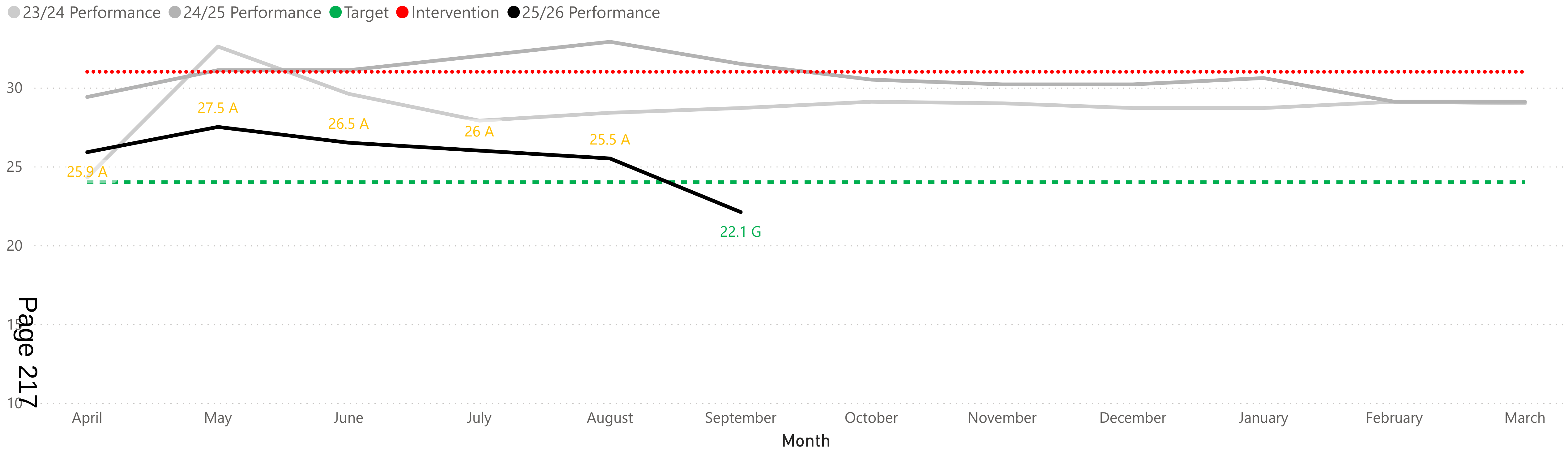
225

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 4: Average time (weeks) between referral and completion of jobs funded through Disabled Facilities Grants



Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of weeks between referral and completion of jobs funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant is now 22.1 weeks, a 9.4 week improvement from September 2024, and a 6.6 week improvement from September 2025. The performance has been positively impacted by fewer complex cases being submitted. These types of work significantly increase the time taken for Disabled Facilities Grants, as well as more resources becoming available to facilitate household extensions.

Latest year-end forecast:

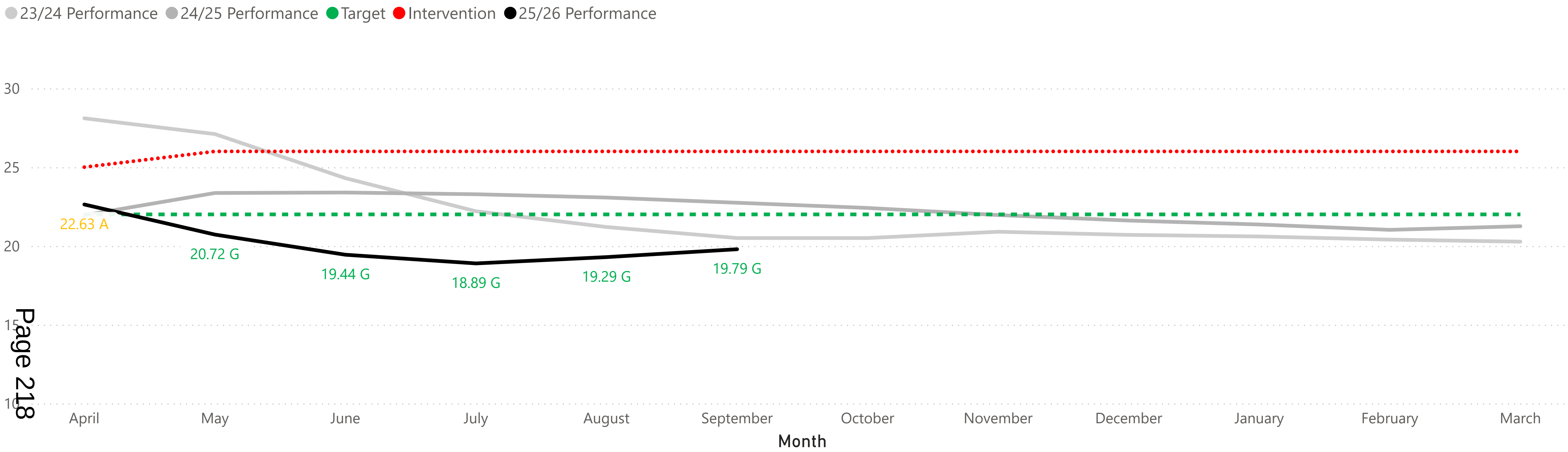
25

Latest projected outturn status:

A

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 5: Average number of days to process new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax support



Latest Commentary from Service:

At the end of September, the average number of days was 2.21 days ahead of target and 2.95 days faster than September 2024. This improvement reflects the positive impact of changes made to the Council Tax Support Scheme. The final outturn remains unchanged.

Latest year-end forecast:

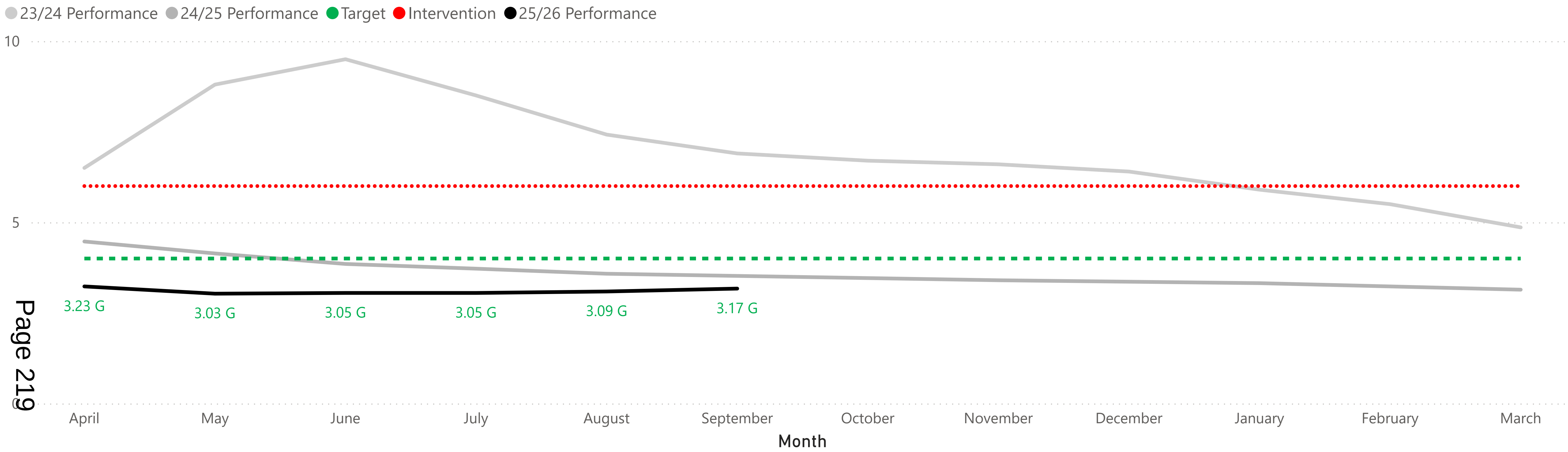
22

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 6: Average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefits and Council Tax support



Latest Commentary from Service:

The average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefits and Council Tax support was 0.35 days faster than in September last year. This is despite a significant increase in the volume of changes processed. This positive performance has been achieved through automation of the process, brought about by the implementation of the new Council Tax Support Scheme.

Latest year-end forecast:

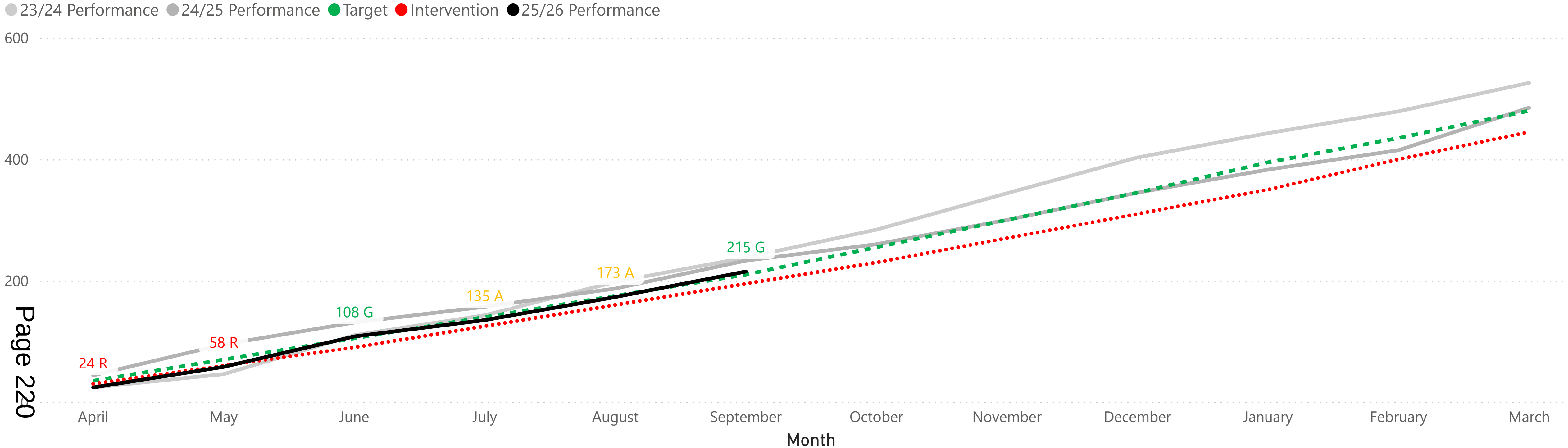
4

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 7: The number of homelessness preventions achieved



Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of successful homelessness preventions fluctuates throughout the year, depending on the rate of homelessness presentations and the opportunity to intervene in a timely way. Since April, 215 successful preventions have been recorded - down from 233 during the same period last year. This decrease is largely due to the number of properties becoming available for letting through the Home-Link scheme over this period, as this is one of the main ways in which prevention is achieved (PI 8). The current end-of-year projection stands at 460, though this will continue to be reviewed as the year progresses. When evaluating this PI, it is important to consider whether there has been an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation (PI 9), and this figure is currently ahead of target.

Latest year-end forecast:

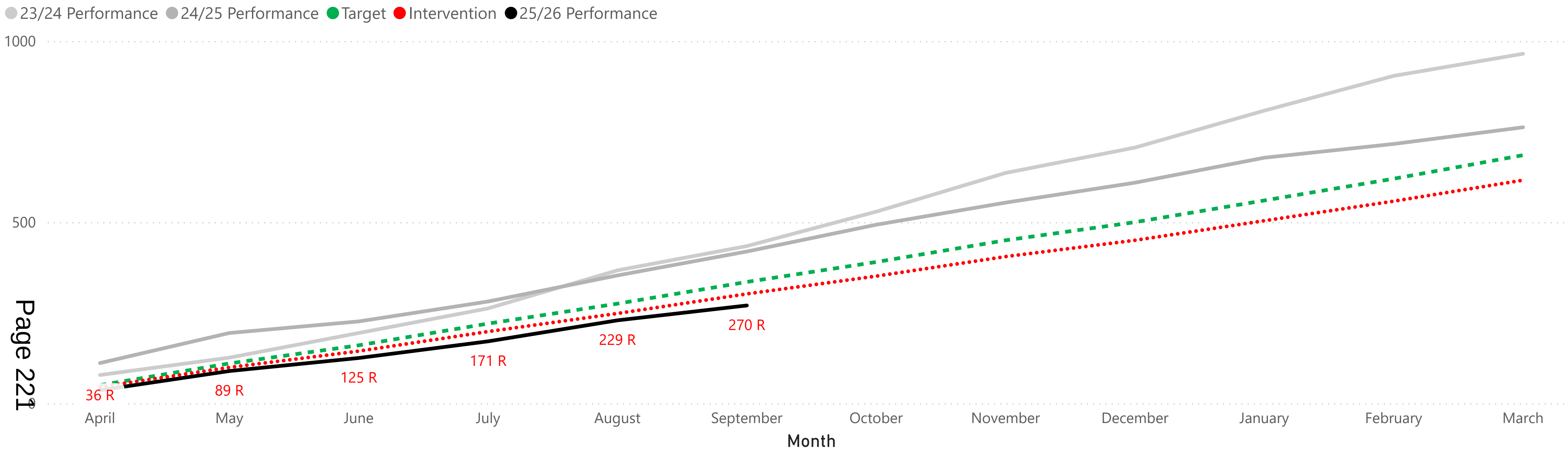
460

Latest projected outturn status:

A

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 8: The number of households housed through the Housing Register and Home-Link scheme



Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of households housed varies each month depending on the number of vacancies within the existing social rented stock, plus any additional units delivered through the new build programme. Since the start of the year, 270 households have been housed, down from 419 through the same period in 2024/25. This decrease is due to the lower number of new-build completions compared to last year. Although we anticipate these will increase later in the year, we have adjusted the year end forecast figure from 660 to 600. Officers have escalated questions regarding the new build delivery programme to Registered Provider partners to ensure the programme will still deliver the projected number of homes this year.

Latest year-end forecast:

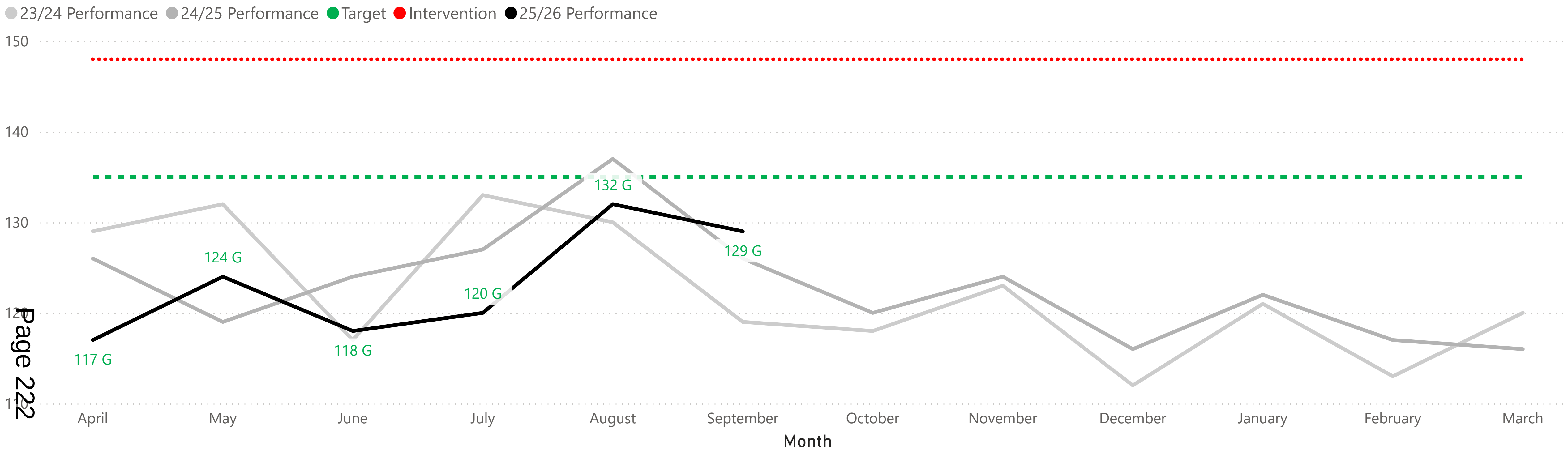
600

Latest projected outturn status:

R

Outcome: Helping people in crisis

PI 9: The number of households in temporary accommodation



Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) at any one time will depend upon the number of homelessness presentations to the council, how successful officers are at preventing homelessness wherever possible, and the ability to move households through TA into settled housing promptly. The figure at the end of September was 129, which compares to 126 at the same point last year.

Latest year-end forecast:

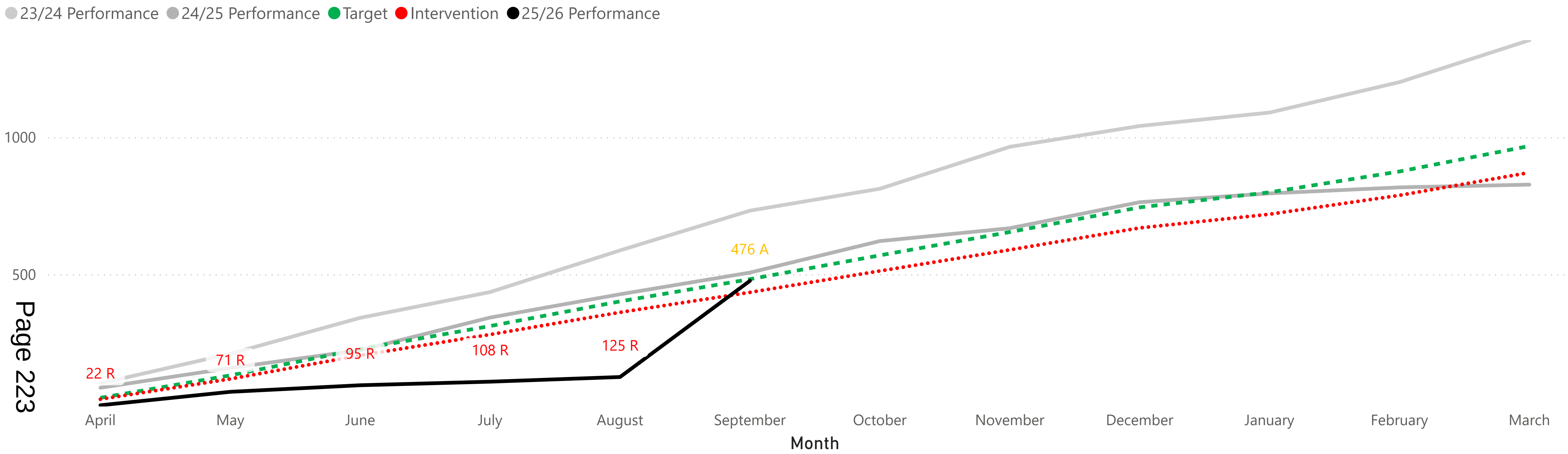
135

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 10: Net change in the number of homes with a council tax banding



Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of new dwellings with a Council Tax band has been challenging to monitor for the initial part of the year, as changes to IT systems at the Valuation Office Agency led to significant service disruption. The VOA have been working hard to restore service, which now appears to be largely resolved as 351 new dwellings have been banded in September. The position will continue to be monitored via engagement with the VOA.

Latest year-end forecast:

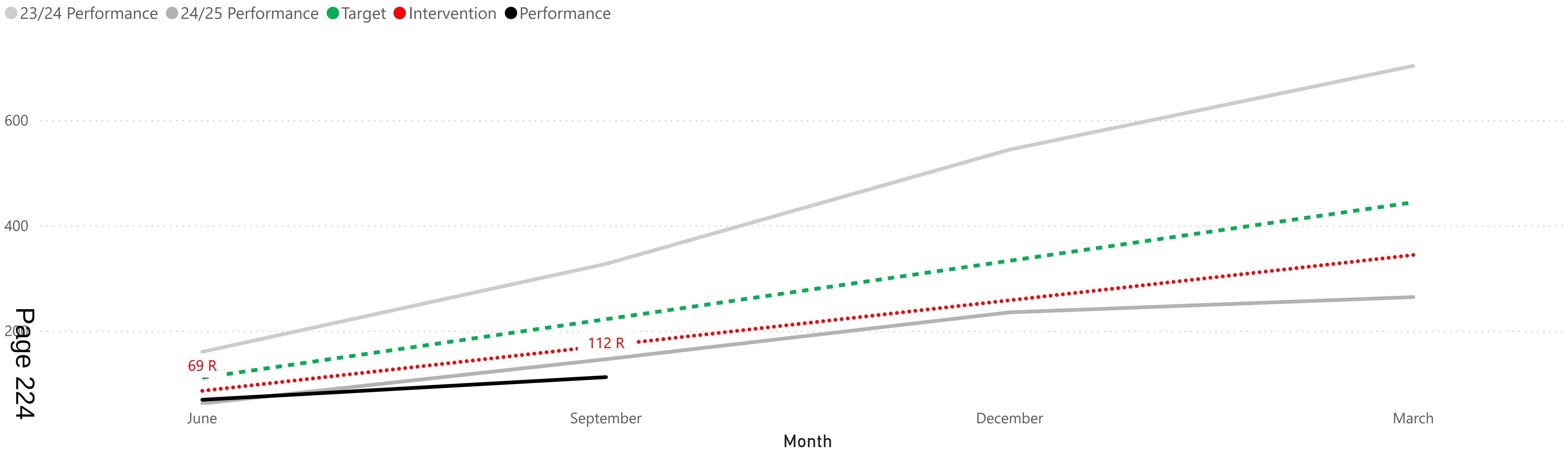
875

Latest projected outturn status:

A

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 11: The number of affordable houses delivered



Latest Commentary from Service:

There are concerns surrounding the large delivery of homes towards the end of the year are still present at the end of Q2. Revised forecasting indicates that almost half of all completions will be in Q4, with any slipping into next year being delayed and not lost.
The current forecast of 340 is remaining the same as Q1. Also, as reported in Q1, this year's performance is to be measured against the needs identified across the whole District. In common with most Local Authorities, the target is rarely met.
The Council now has a new Empty Homes Officer who joined at the beginning of September, their first tasks will be to contact all empty home owners to understand why their properties are empty and develop a strategy that can be used to take action against long term empty properties. It is hoped that this will encourage existing empty homes being brought into use therefore supporting the availability of housing in the area.

Latest year-end forecast:

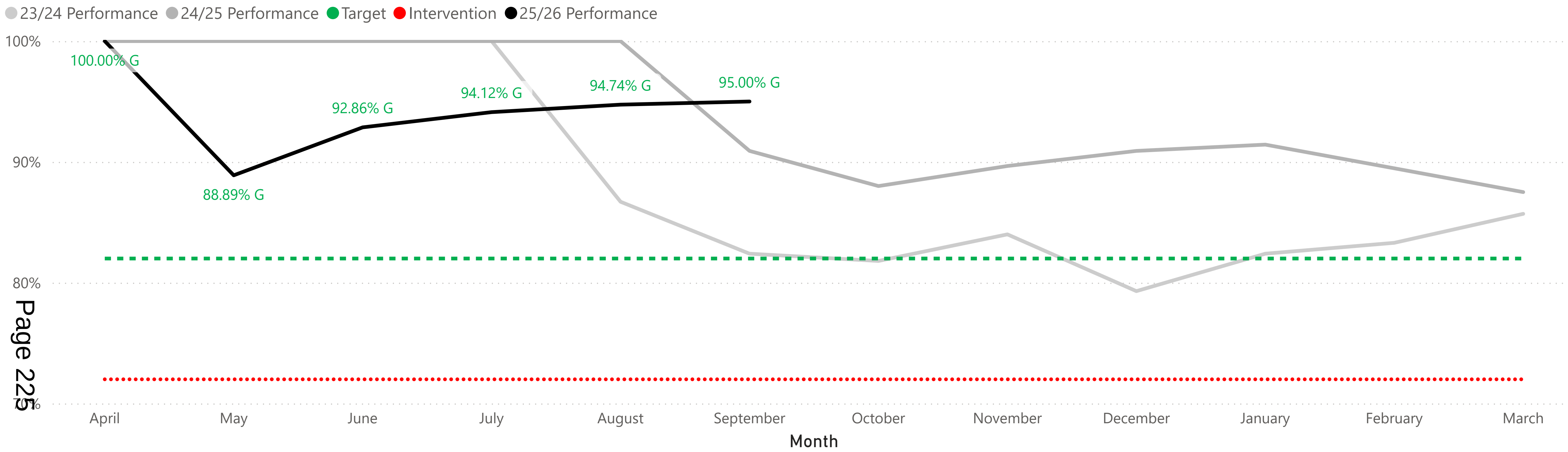
340

Latest projected outturn status:

R

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 12: Percentage of planning applications processed on target - Major (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)



Latest Commentary from Service:

Major planning application performance remains strong, with 1 major application being determined in September, and this was completed on time. In total, 19 out of 20 Major planning applications have been determined on time this year. The Forecast has been raised to 92% to match the strong performance.

Latest year-end forecast:

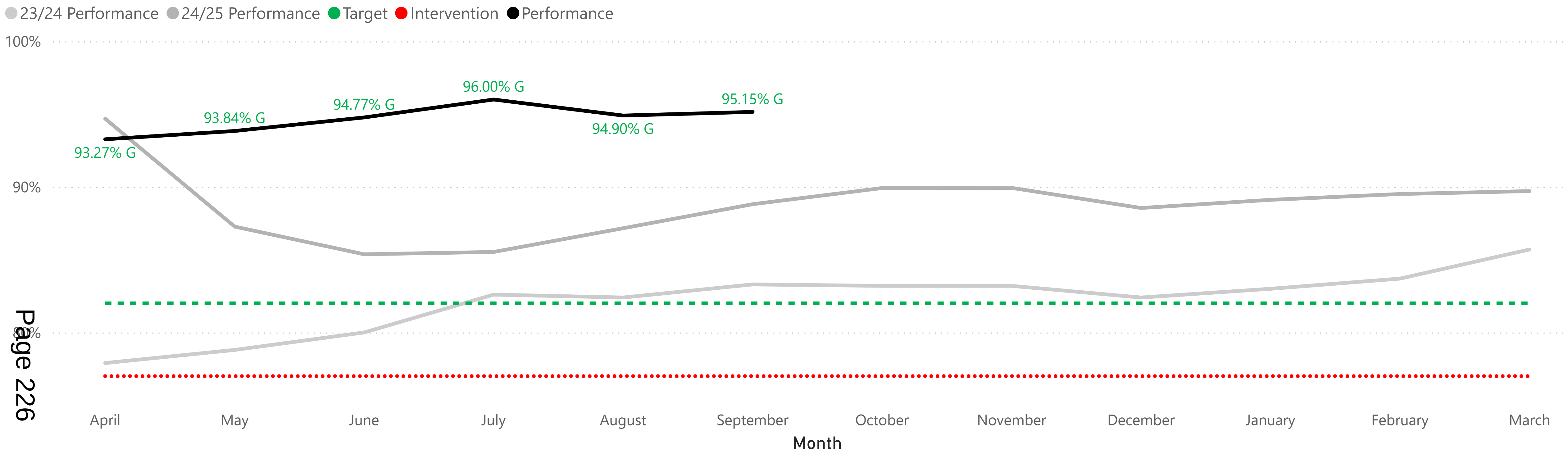
92%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 13: Percentage of planning applications processed on time - Minor (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)



Latest Commentary from Service:

82 out of 85 Minor & Other applications were determined in September within the 8-week time frame. Year to date, 510 out of 536 applications have been determined within their timeframe. Performance has recovered from the decrease last month, and the forecast has been raised to 92%.

Latest year-end forecast:

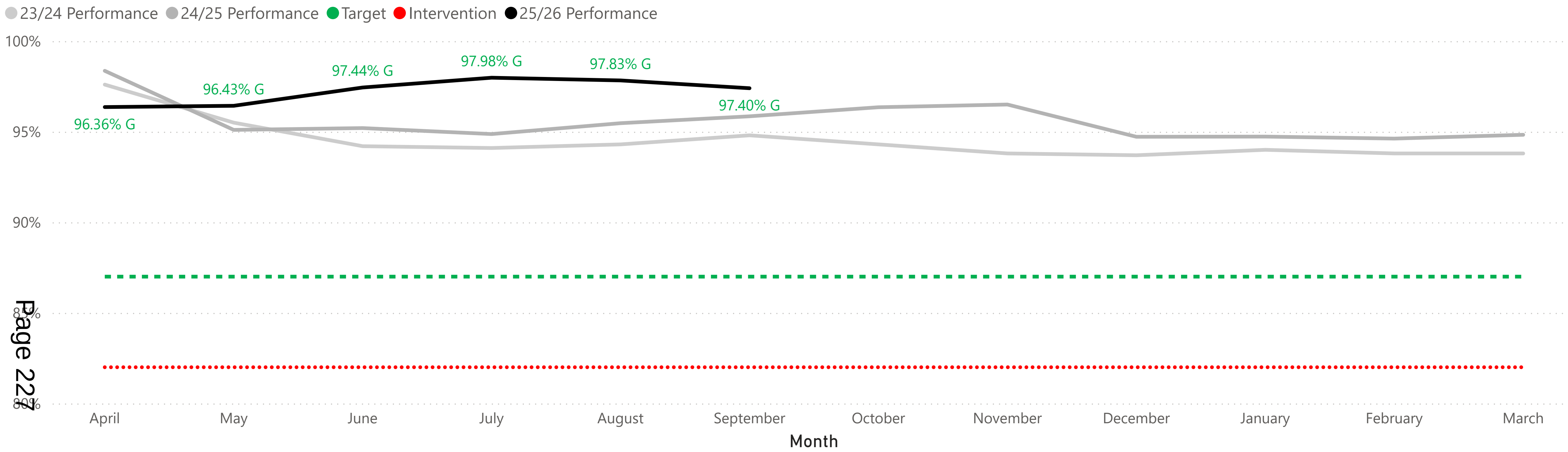
92%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 14: Percentage of planning applications processed on target - Household Extension (within 8 weeks or agreed extension period)



Latest Commentary from Service:

37 out of 39 Household extension applications were determined within the 8-week timeframe this month. Year to date, 262 out of 269 Householder applications have been completed within time. Performance continues to remain strong.

Latest year-end forecast:

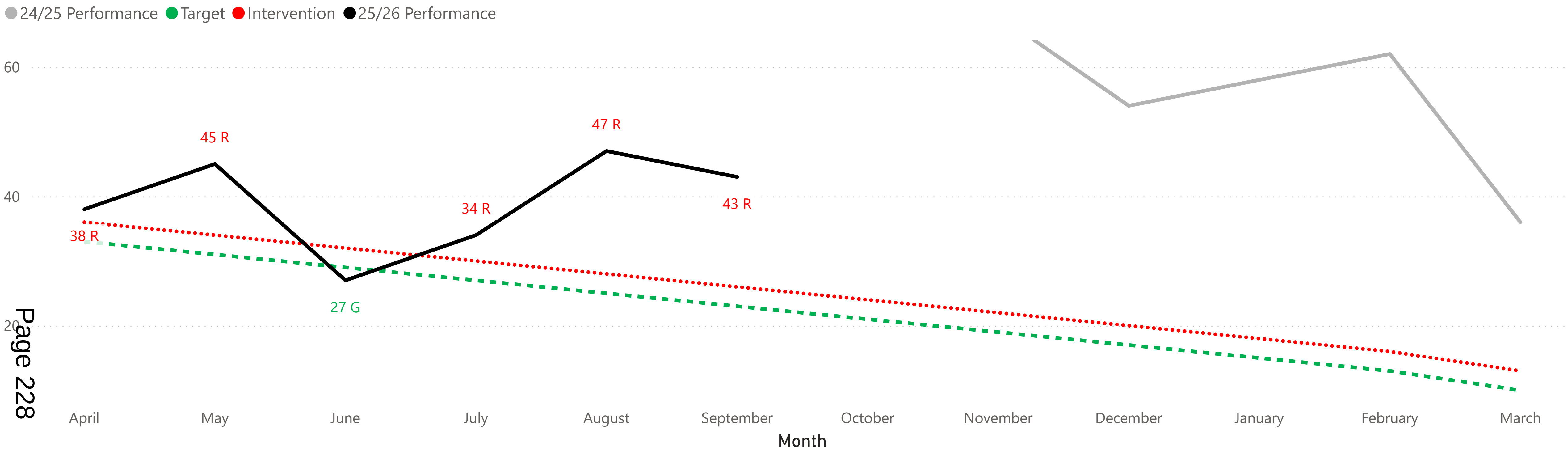
93%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 15: The number of planning applications over 16 weeks old where there is no current extension in place.



Latest Commentary from Service:

Additional resources arrived in the department towards the end of Q2. The backlog applications are to be prioritised to resolve the issue. Sensitive sites remain as further work needs to take place to resolve and they are still expected to be resolved within Q3. Whilst the target is not being met, this is a significant improvement against the position in September 2024, where backlog numbers were at 79 over 16 weeks old.

Latest year-end forecast:

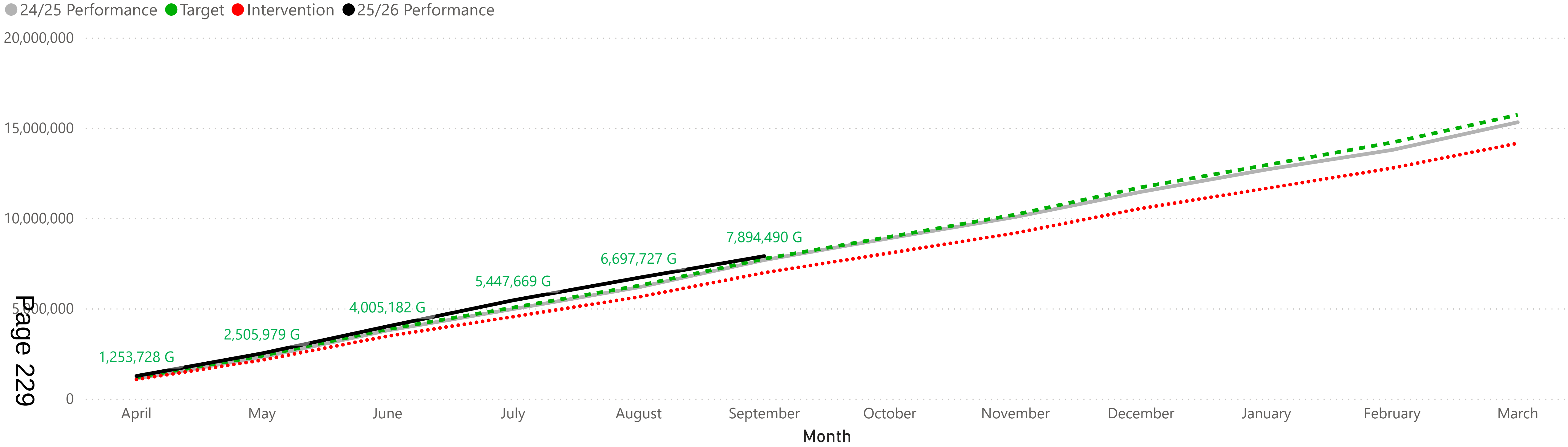
5

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Forward Thinking Economic Growth

PI 16: Cumulative footfall in our market towns



Latest Commentary from Service:

Huntingdon footfall in September was 512,267, with one of the best performing days coinciding with the Heritage Open Day Town Hall Tours and our Saturday Market day.
Ramsey had an increase in footfall in September, with a final figure of 9,998. Ramsey embraced the September Heritage open day campaign, which contributed to rising footfall.
St Ives had a September footfall of 341,254, with the highest footfall week coinciding with the Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival.
St Neots September footfall was 333,244, with one of the highest footfall days supported by the St Neots Farm and Craft Market.

Latest year-end forecast:

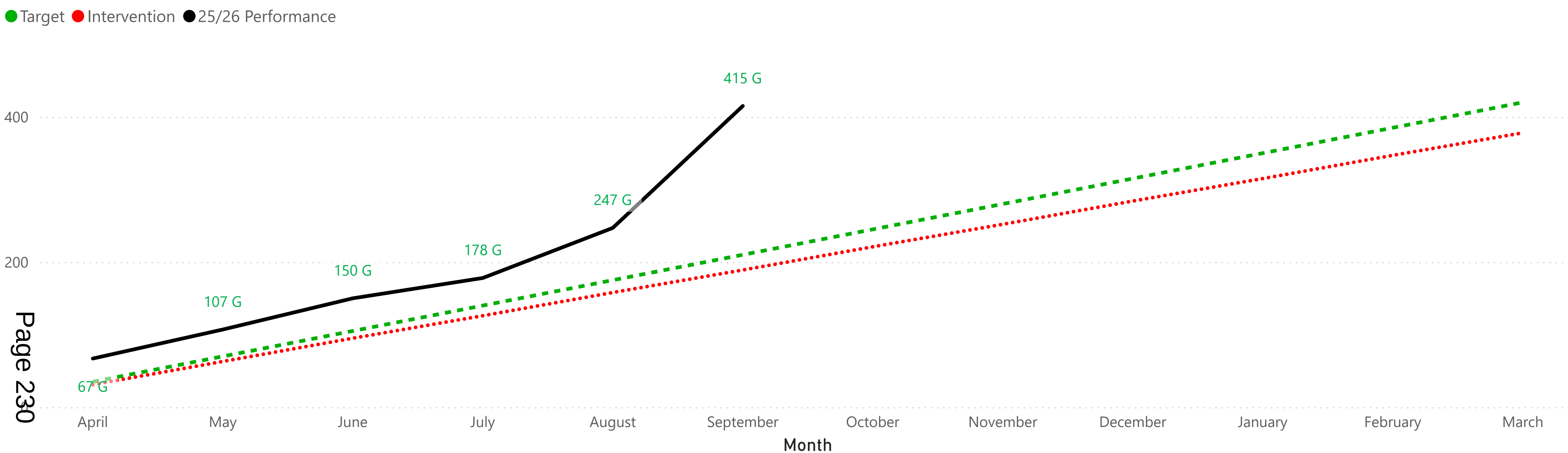
15,719,143

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Forward Thinking Economic Growth

PI 17: Total Number of business engagements by the Economic Development Team



Latest Commentary from Service:

The organisation has received a large amount of interest for the Digital Manufacturing Grant. In total, 21 applications were sent out to businesses. 2 of these were processed and resulted in the businesses receiving financial resources. The orgnaisation is also in talks about providing booster sessions in both St Ives and Alconbury, with these sessions to start in Q3. Ramsey booster appointments are being made with businesses where support is required for new businesses to find new premises for stability and growth. Additionally, a CIC was given guidance on business rates, and they have now taken on a shop on Ramsey High Street. Liason with CPCA has been conducted this month, with follow up support provided to businesses by a business advisor. Other areas of business engagement in September have involved advice on renewing overseas patents, which again led to referral to CPCA.

Latest year-end forecast:

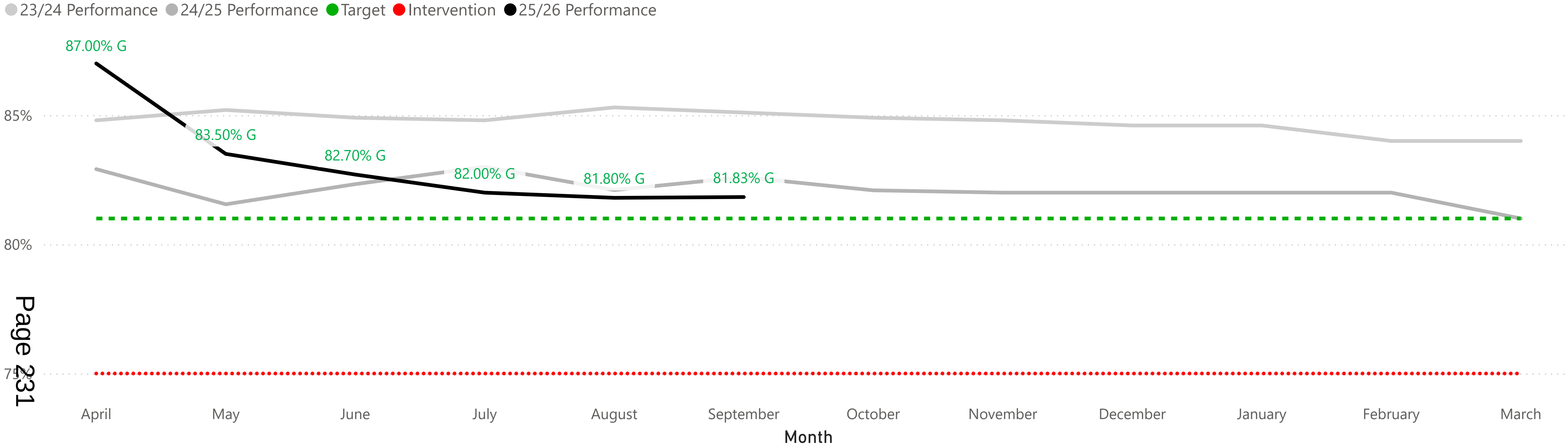
600

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Lowering Carbon Emissions

PI 18: Efficiency of vehicle fleet driving - Energy Efficient Driving Index Score for the waste service



Latest Commentary from Service:

The waste service has achieved a cumulative fleet driving efficiency (EEDI) score of 81.83%, exceeding the set target. Continued monitoring and the sharing of best practices will help ensure this high level of efficiency is sustained throughout the year.

Latest year-end forecast:

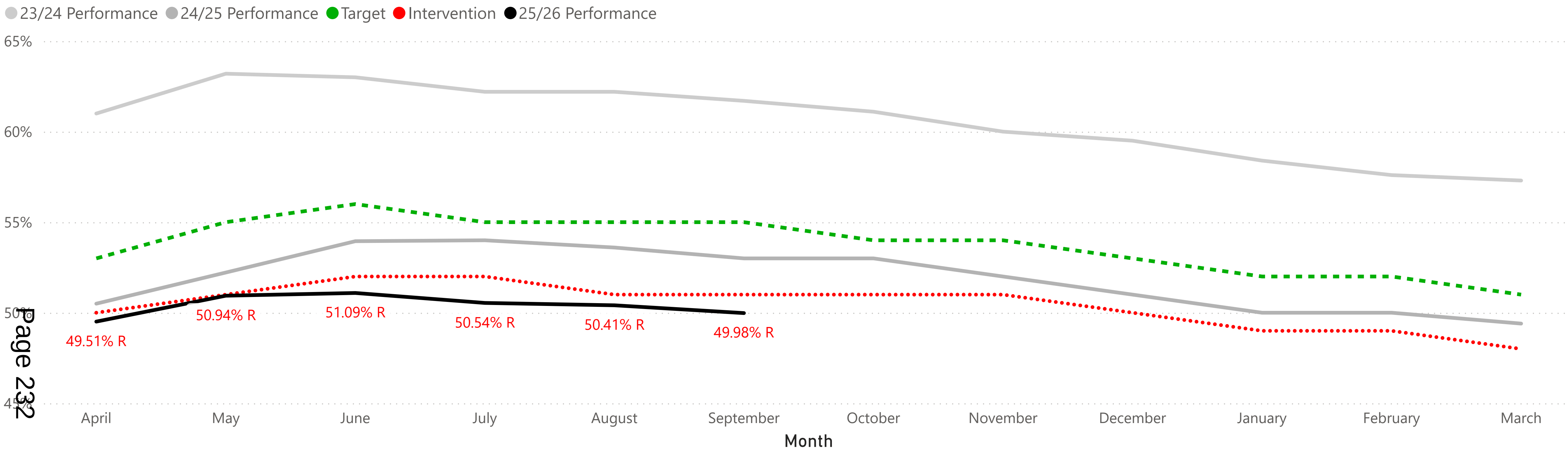
81%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 19: Percentage of household waste reused / recycled / composted



Latest Commentary from Service:

In September, a total of 5240.06 tonnes of waste were collected from domestic properties across the district, with 48% of this either recycled or composted.

Year to date, the recycling and composting rate stands at 49.98%, a 3% decrease from this time last year.

Although the number of garden waste subscriptions is higher for the 2025/26 period, the amount of garden waste being collected has reduced, mainly due to the exceptional dry period we are experiencing. Year to date, we have collected 19% less garden waste than we did for the same period last year.

Year to date, the overall collected waste tonnage has decreased by 6% (1878.95 tonnes) compared to the same period in 2024/25.

The forecast outturn has been revised to 45%, reflecting last year's result of 49% (the first year of the garden waste subscriptions) and allowing for a further reduction due to this year's lower levels of garden waste caused by dry weather conditions.

Latest year-end forecast:

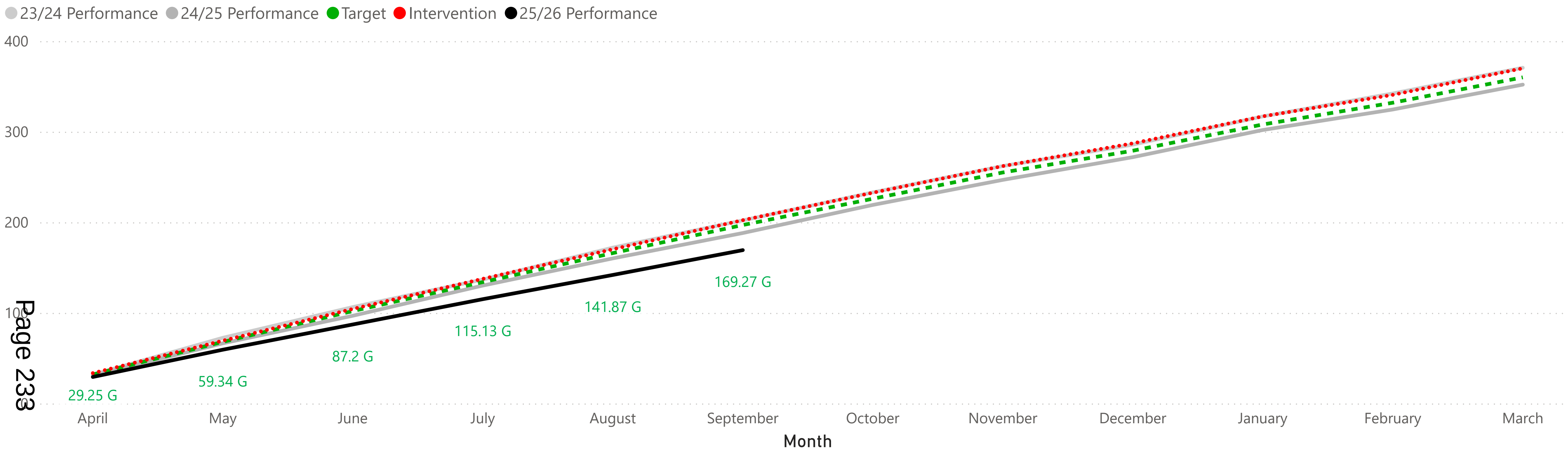
45%

Latest projected outturn status:

R

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 20: Collected household waste per person (Kilograms)



Latest Commentary from Service:

Household waste generation per person remains lower than the same period last year, with 27.39 kg collected per person in September, below the UK monthly average of 34 kg.
This continued downward trend is largely attributed to reduced garden waste tonnage in previous months, and although the garden waste tonnage has picked up, there was a 6% reduction in September compared to the same time last year.

Latest year-end forecast:

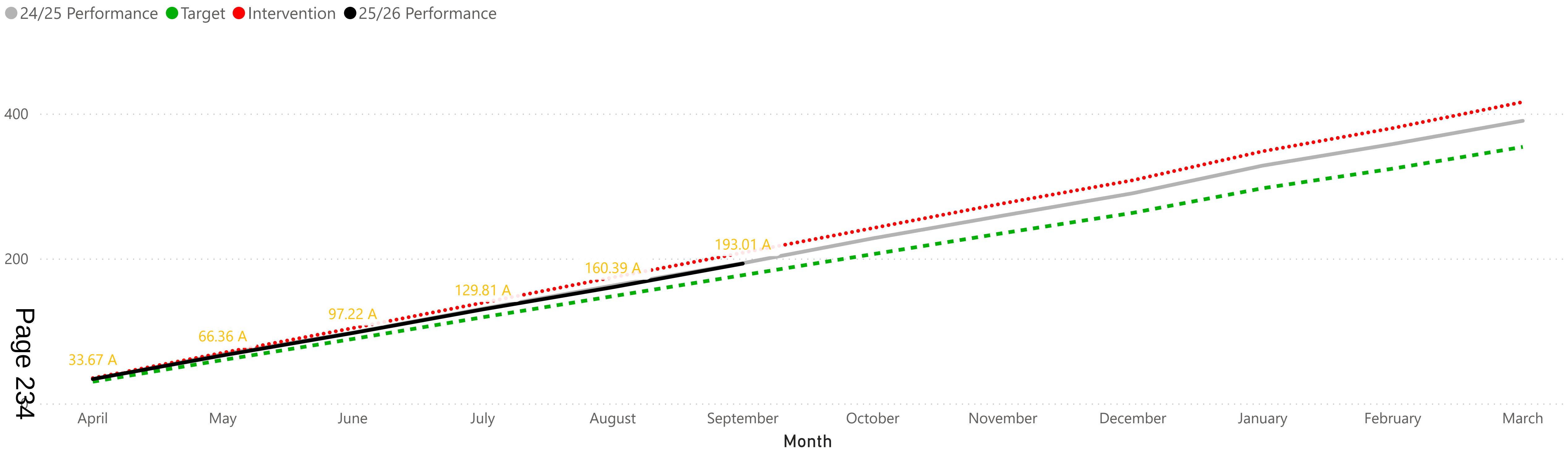
360

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 21: Residual waste collected per household (kilograms)



Latest Commentary from Service:

Residual waste collected per household currently exceeds our cumulative target and sits at 193.01kg year to date. Encouragingly, we continue to outperform the UK average of 74 kg per household per month, with September sitting at 32.62kg per household.

Looking ahead, preparations are underway for the introduction of a weekly food waste collection service starting in April 2026. The team are currently developing a resident-focused behaviour change campaign to help reduce the amount of food waste being disposed of.

Latest year-end forecast:

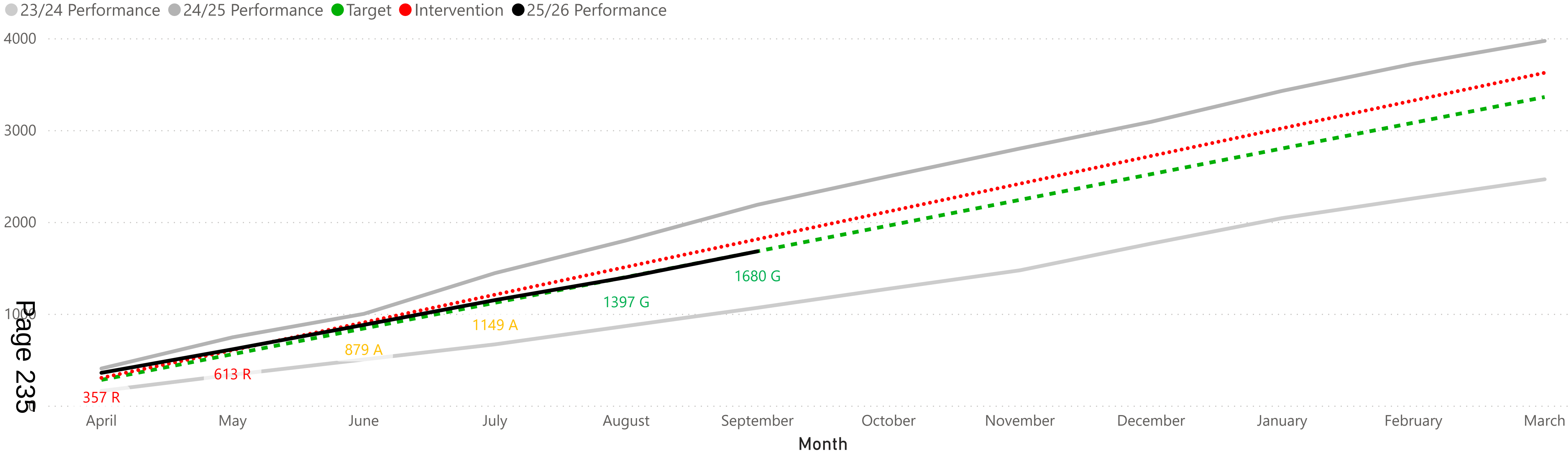
352

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 22: Number of missed bins



Latest Commentary from Service:

In September, a total of 487,423 waste collections were completed, with 253 missed collections reported, resulting in a missed collection rate of just 0.052%. This remains below the APSE benchmark average of 0.076%.

Latest year-end forecast:

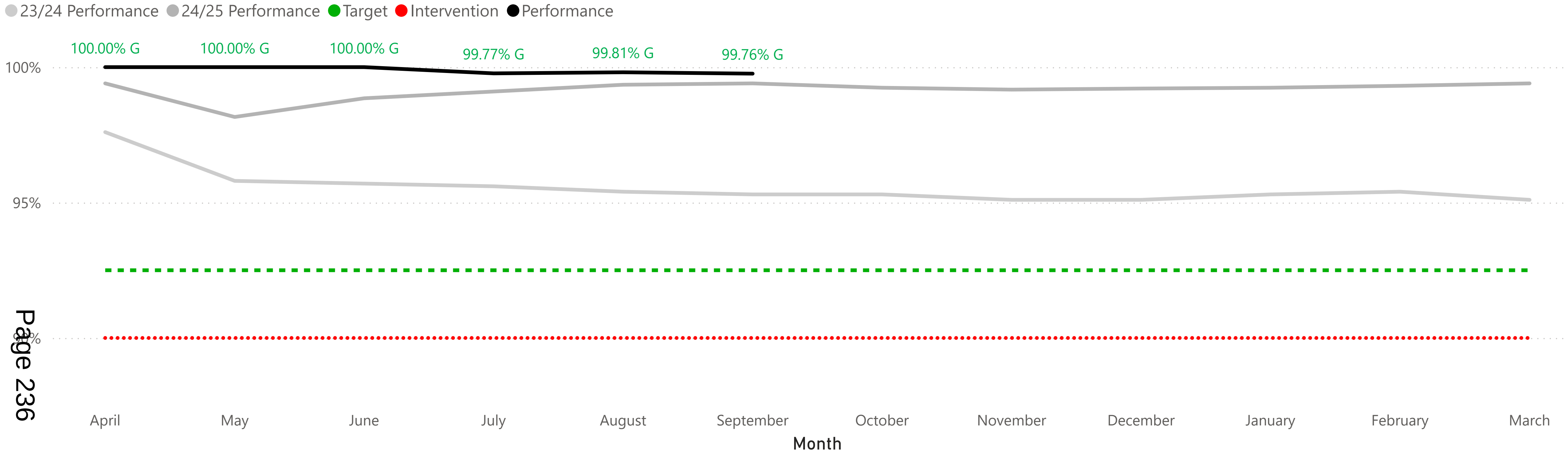
3360

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 23: The percentage of sampled areas which were clean or predominantly clean of litter, detritus, graffiti, flyposting or weed accumulations



Latest Commentary from Service:

A total of 206 inspections were completed across 10 wards in September, exceeding the monthly target of 175 inspections, ensuring full ward coverage.
Of these, 205 inspections achieved a pass grade (A or B). The single failure was due to detritus, which has since been rectified.

Latest year-end forecast:

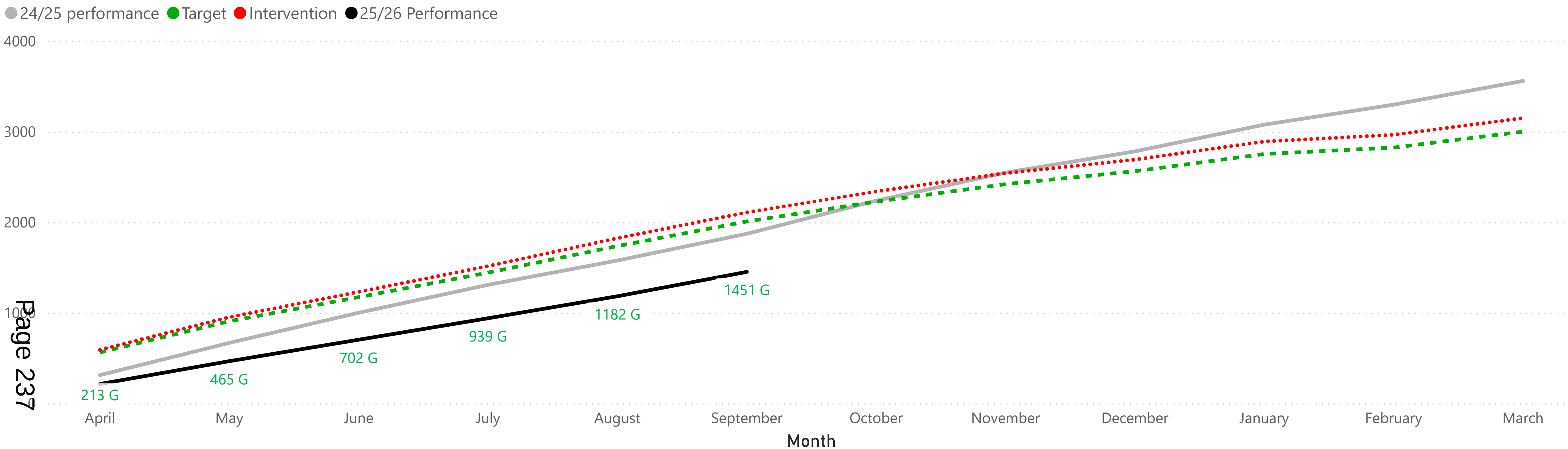
95%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 24: The number of flytips reported



Latest Commentary from Service:

A total of 269 fly-tips were recorded in September, a slight increase from August, but still a 9% reduction compared to September 2024. Of these, 13 incidents involved garden waste, all limited to single bags.
The forecasted annual outturn has been decreased, as we have recorded 400 fewer fly-tips than at the same point last year. Based on the current monthly average, the full year total is projected to be around 3,000 incidents.

Latest year-end forecast:

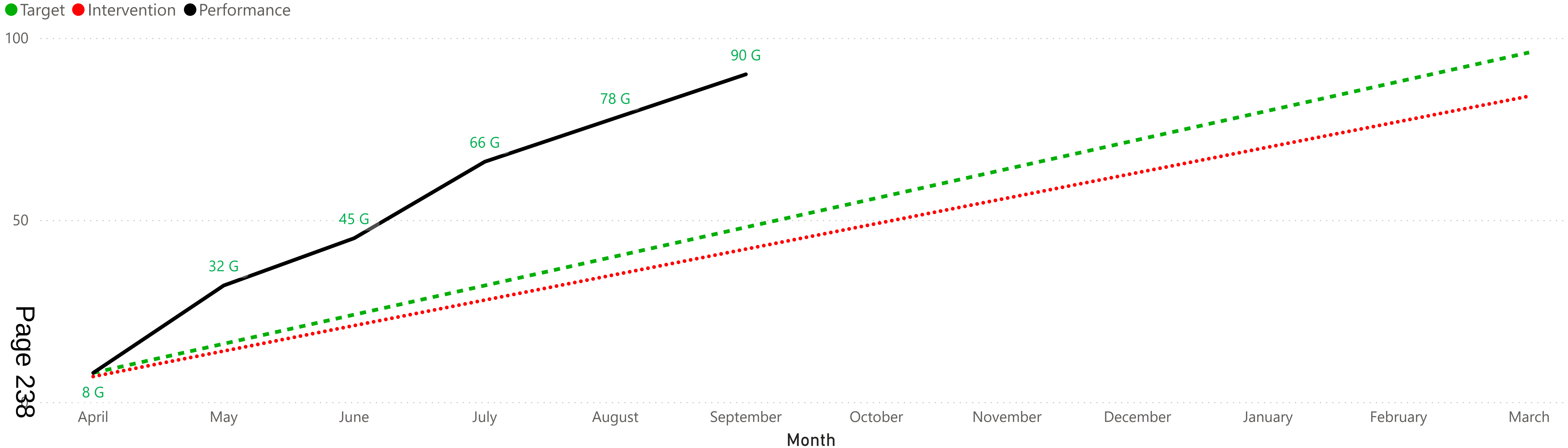
3000

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 25: Sanctions against environmental crimes and anti-social behaviour



Latest Commentary from Service:

45 total sanctions were issued during Q2 by the Community Action Team. These are:
Section 46 sanctions issued in relation to Bin receptacles (9)
Section 47 sanctions issued to Commercial Businesses (2)
CPW to residential properties in relation to Fly Tipping. (7)
CPW issued with regards to Cannabis smoking. Under Anti-Social Behaviour legislation. (3)
CPW issued to a Dog Owner for Dog related issues. (7)
Sanctions issued after Vehicle lift from locations in district that are deemed abandoned. (11)
Fixed Penalty Notices issued (5) - Fly Tip (1, £400.00), Commercial Fly Tip (2, £1,000.00), Littering (1, £150.00), Breach of PSPO (1, £100.00)
Additionally, there was one successful prosecution in relation to a Company operating as a waste clearance business failing to produce Licenses. A guilty verdict was concluded, with awards of a£660.00 Fine, £264.00 Costs , £2126.14 Victim Surcharge. This totals as £3,050.14 awarded by the Court

Latest year-end forecast:

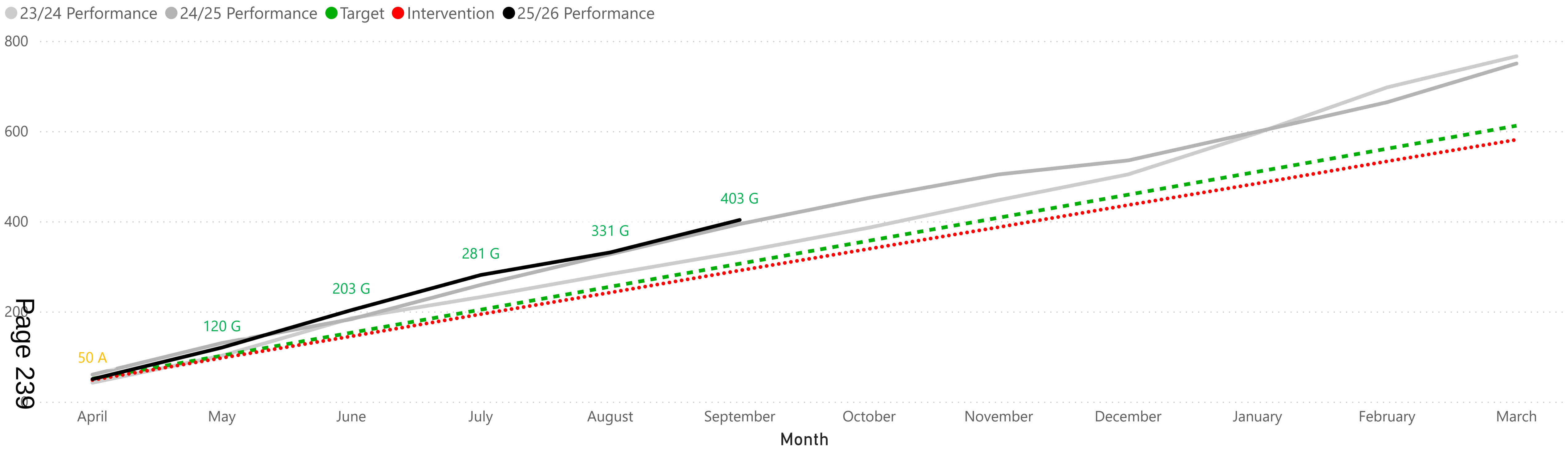
120

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 26: The number of programmed food safety inspections undertaken (cumulative)



Latest Commentary from Service:

A total of 72 inspections were completed in September. This exceeds the target of 51 per month despite the service not being fully resourced.

Latest year-end forecast:

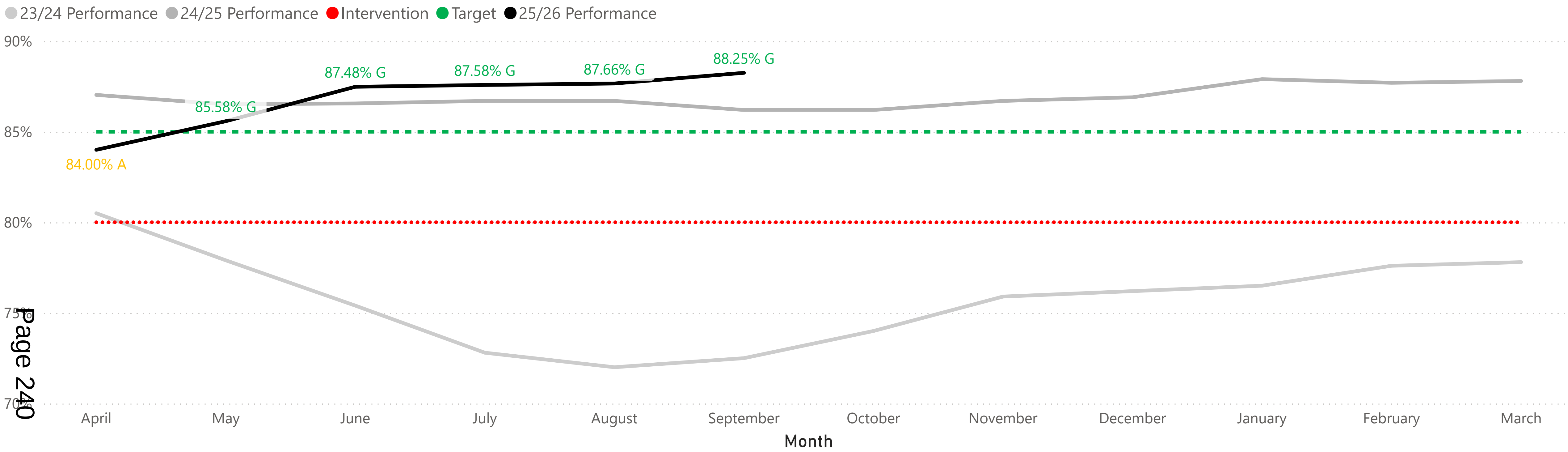
806

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 27: Percentage of calls to the Contact Centre answered



Latest Commentary from Service:

The cumulative Calls Answered performance for September has increased to 88.25% from 87.66% in August. The team is within the 85% answered target, which is attributed to low staff turnover and an experienced team contributing to performance.

Latest year-end forecast:

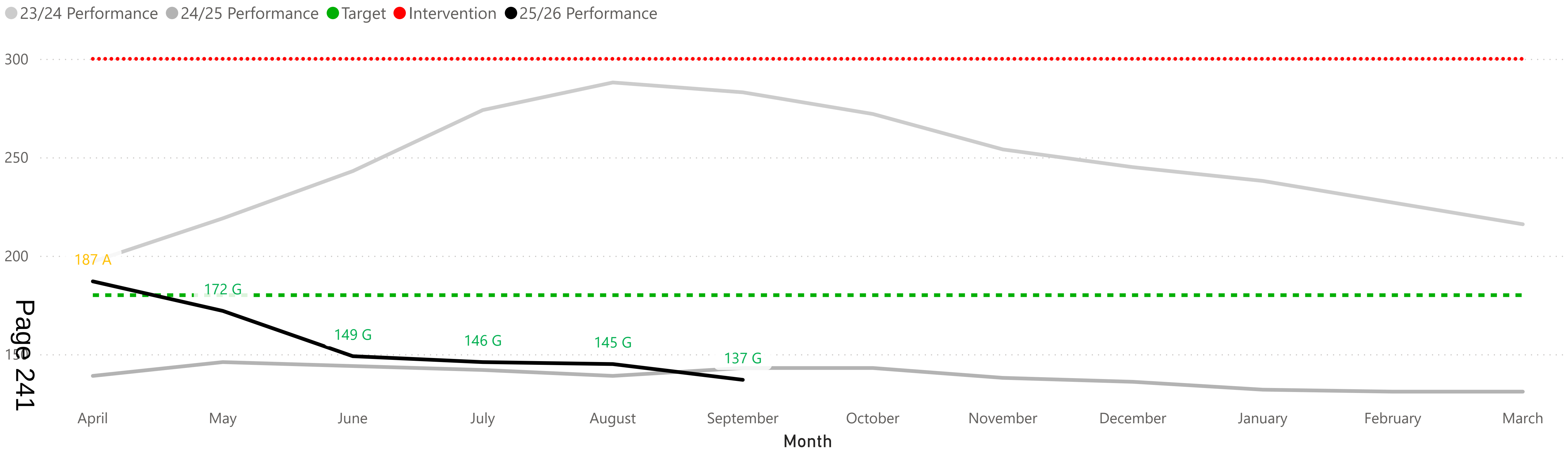
87%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 28: Average wait time for customers calling the Contact Centre (seconds)



Latest Commentary from Service:

The cumulative average wait time improved by 8 seconds in September, resulting in the team performing at 43 seconds ahead of target. The excellent performance is attributed to low staff turnover and an experienced team.

Latest year-end forecast:

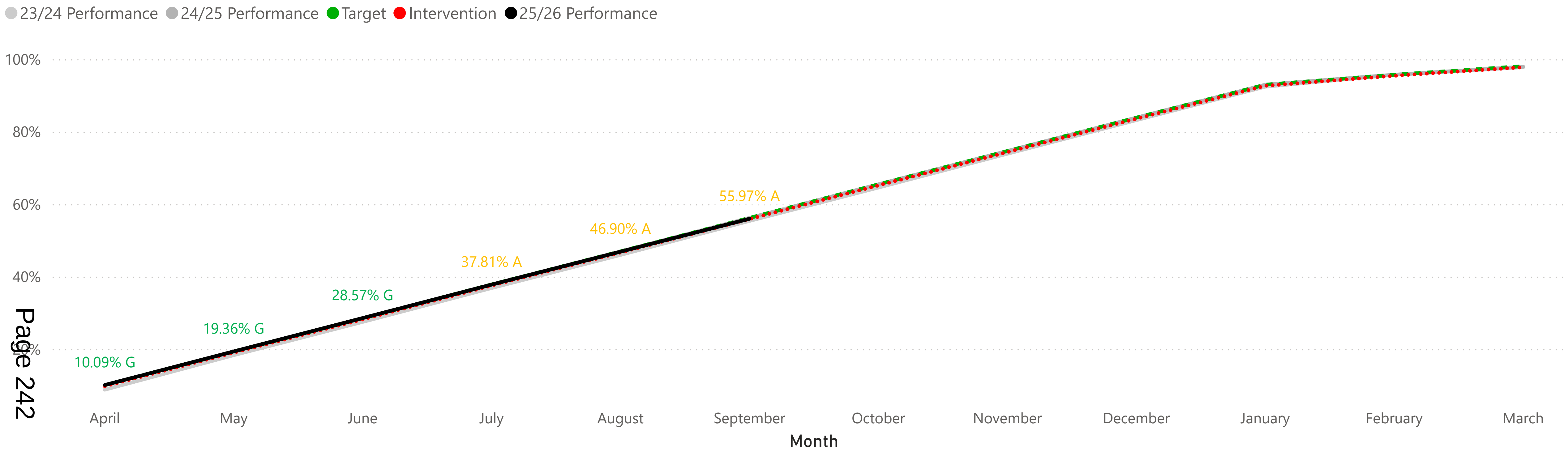
145

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 30: Council Tax collection rate



Latest Commentary from Service:

Council tax collection was 0.23% below its performance target in September, reflecting the reprofiling of instalments rather than non-payment. While the final forecast remains unchanged, performance will continue to be monitored closely.

Latest year-end forecast:

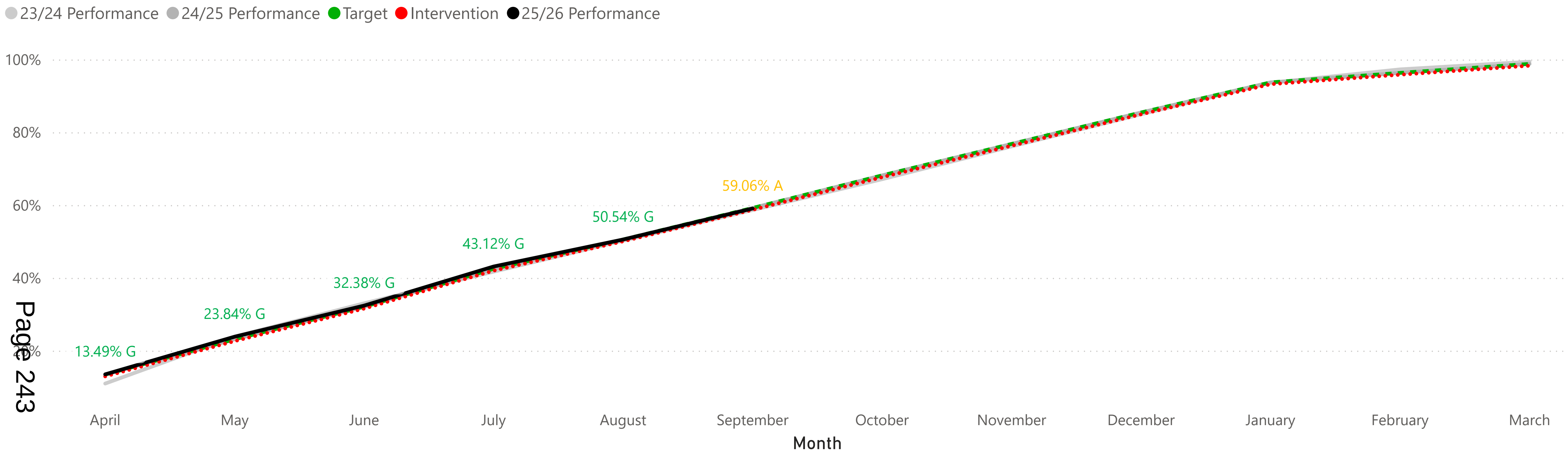
98.09%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 31: Business Rate collection rate



Latest Commentary from Service:

September collection of Business Rates was 0.14% below target. There is one large credit of ~£300,000, which is the result of a rateable value reduction, which has negatively impacted the performance of this metric. The final outturn forecast remains unchanged at 98.79%.

Latest year-end forecast:

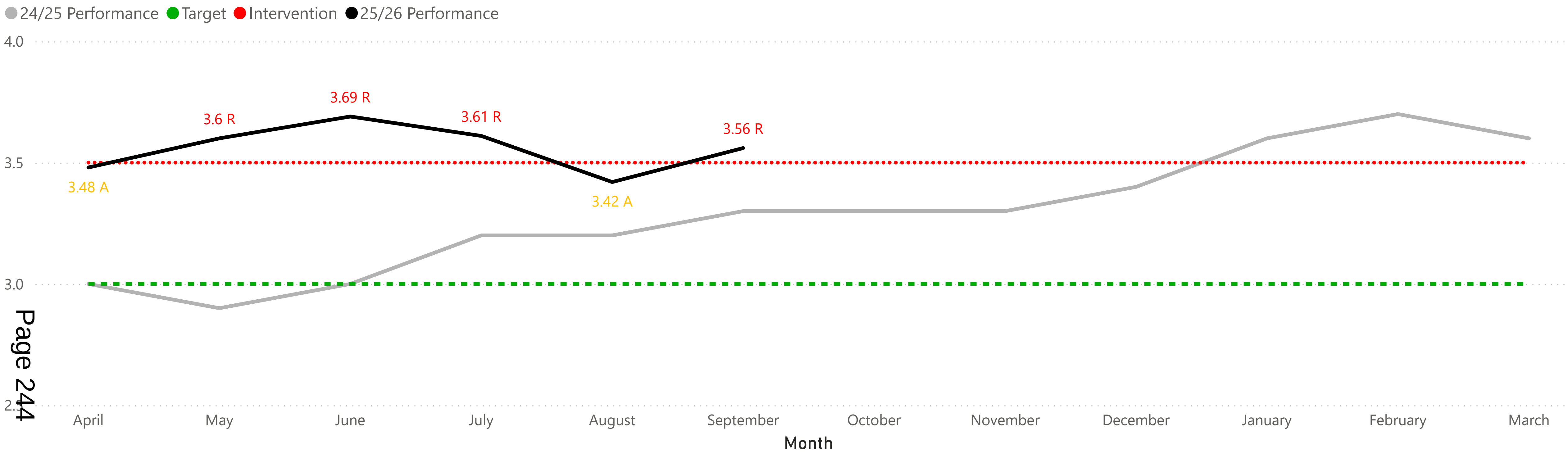
98.79%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 32: Short-term staff sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling)



Latest Commentary from Service:

We have seen an increase this month in the target days for short term absence. We have lost 92 days (51 days to coughs/colds and 41 to gastro) to coughs/colds and gastrointestinal illnesses in September. We have been promoting the flu jab scheme but take has been low this year. A reminder is to be sent out at the start of quarter 2.

Latest year-end forecast:

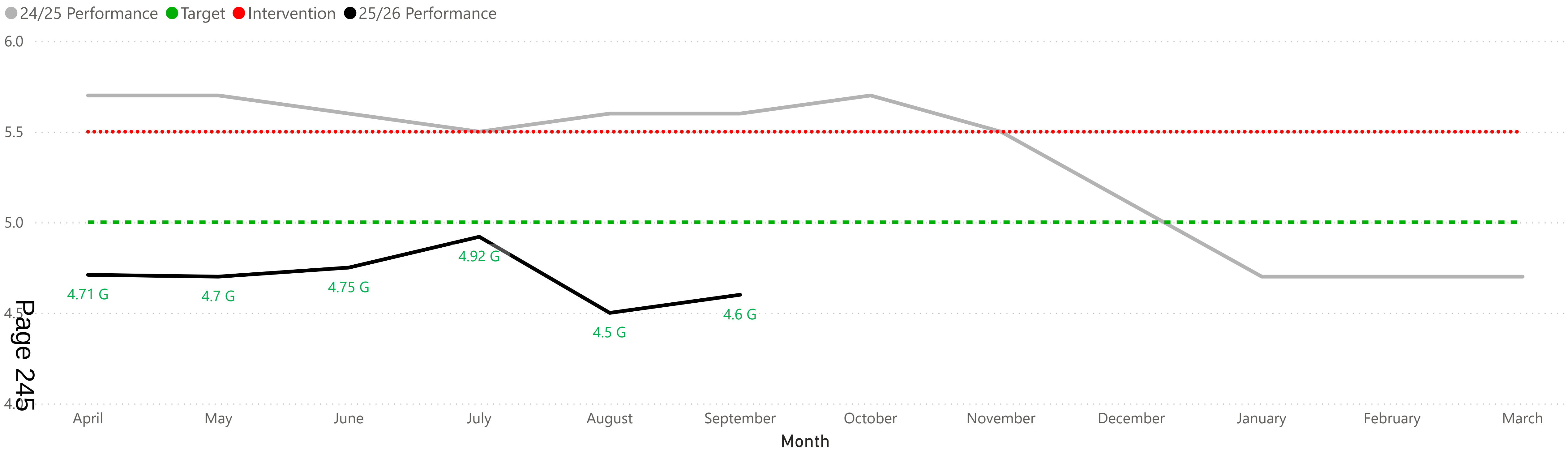
3.5

Latest projected outturn status:

A

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 33: Long-term sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling)



Latest Commentary from Service:

Long-term sickness days per FTE remains stable, with only one new case.

Latest year-end forecast:

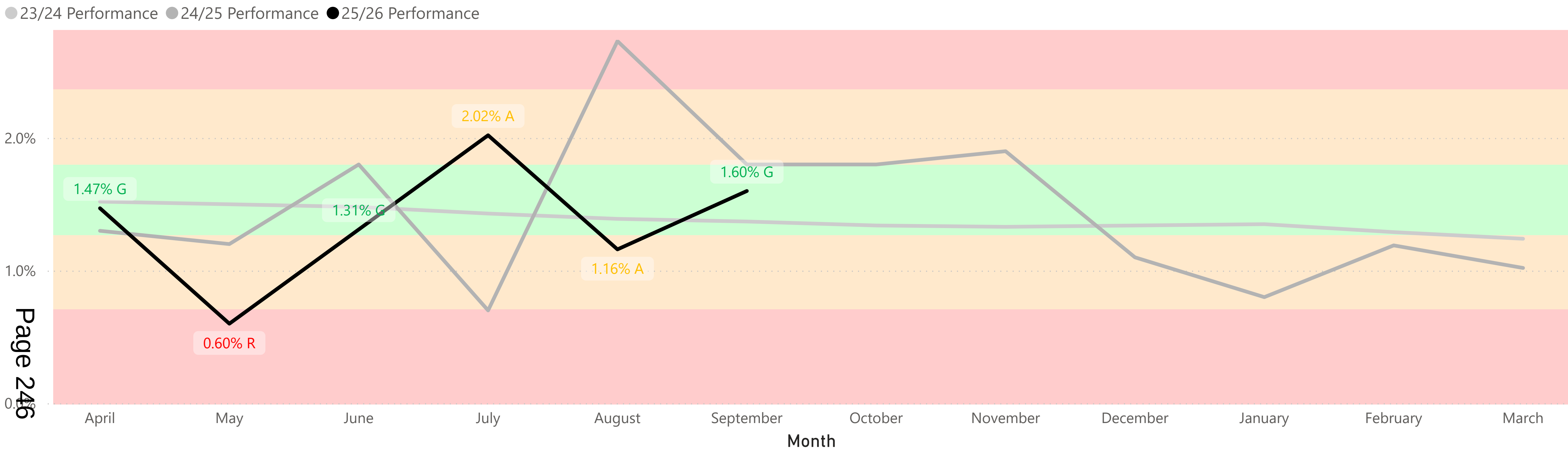
5

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 34: Staff Turnover (per month)



Latest Commentary from Service:

September saw a total of 11 leavers within the organisation, which is 1.6% of the workforce.

Latest year-end forecast:

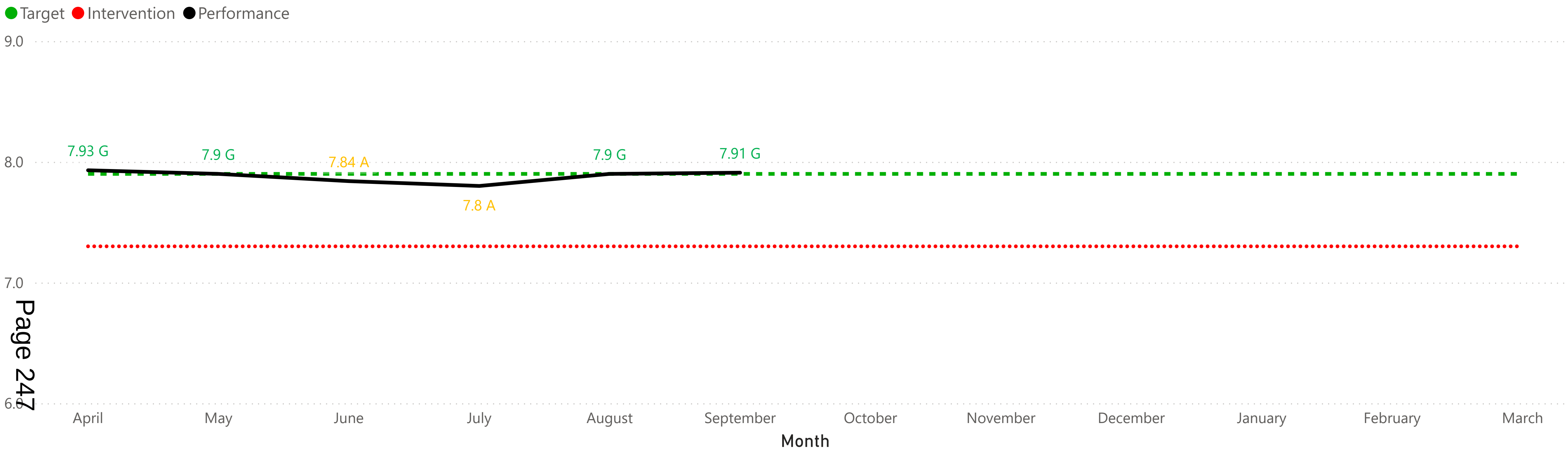
1.50%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 35: Average length of staff service (years)



Latest Commentary from Service:

The average length of service slightly increased this month to 7.91 years. The average length of service for the 11 leavers was ~4 years. The HR team will continue to monitor the average length of leavers to ensure retention of newer employees does not become a major issue.

Latest year-end forecast:

7.9

Latest projected outturn status:

G

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Appendix D: Operational Performance Measures Graphs, Quarter 2 2025/26

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

	Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents	Latest RAG	Forecast
1	The number of attendances at One Leisure Active Lifestyles and Sports Development Programmes	G	G
2	The number of One Leisure Facilities Admissions - swimming, Impressions and fitness classes, sports hall and pitches (excluding Burgess Hall and sc...	G	G

	Keeping people out of crisis	Latest RAG	Forecast
3	The number of residents enabled to live safely at home and prevented from requiring care or a prolongued stay at hospital due to a Disabled Faciliti...	G	G
4	The average time (weeks) between date of referral and practical completion of jobs funded through Disabled Facilities Grants	G	A
5	The average number of days to process new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support	G	G
6	The average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefits and Council Tax support	G	G
7	The number of homelessness preventions achieved	G	A
8	The number of households housed through the Housing Register and Home-Link Scheme	R	R

	Helping people in crisis	Latest RAG	Forecast
9	The number of households in temporary accommodation	G	G

	Improving Housing	Latest RAG	Forecast
10	The net change in the number of homes with a council tax banding	A	A
11	The number of new affordable homes delivered	R	R
12	Percentage of planning applications process on target - Major (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
13	Percentage of planning applications process on target - Minor (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
14	Percentage of planning applications process on target - Household Extension (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)	G	G
15	The number of planning applications over 16 weeks old where there is no current extension in place (total at the end of the month)	R	G

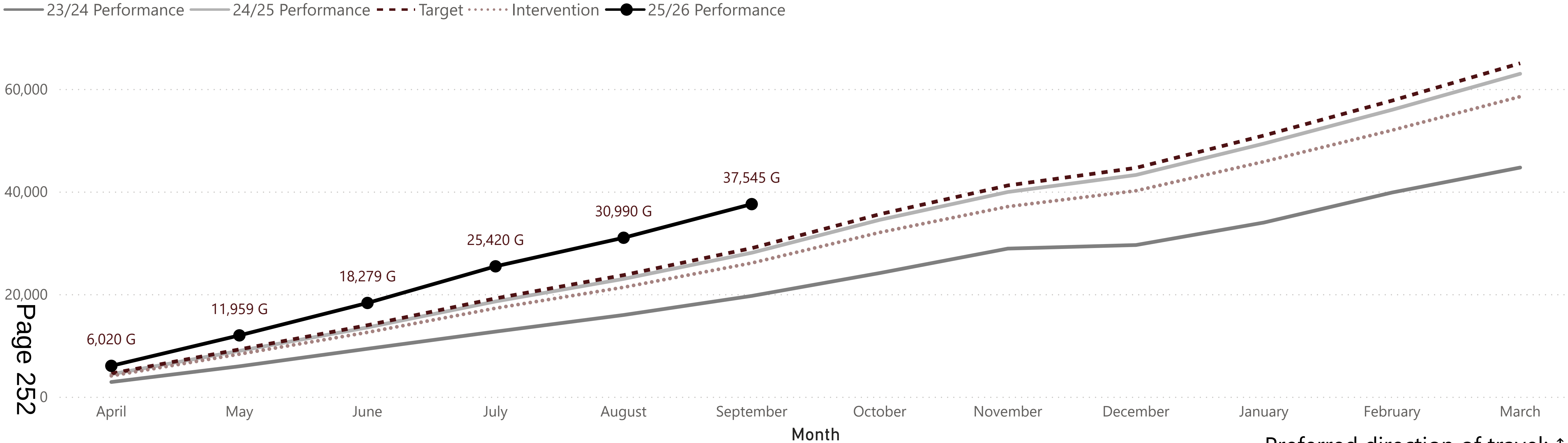
	Forward thinking economic growth	Latest RAG	Forecast
16	Cumulative footfall in our market towns (Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots & Ramsey) (monthly)	G	G
17	Total number of business engagements by the Economic Development team	G	G

	Lowering carbon emissions	Latest RAG	Forecast
18	Efficiency of vehicle fleet driving - Energy Efficient Driving Index score for the waste service	G	G

	Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services	Latest RAG	Forecast
19	Percentage of household waste reused / recucled / composted	R	R
20	Collected household waste per person (kilograms)	G	G
21	Residual waste collected per household (kilograms)	A	G
22	Number of missed bins	G	G
23	The percentage of sampled areas which are clean or predominantly clean of litter, detritus, graffiti, flyposting or weed accumulations	G	G
24	The number of flytips reported (cumulative)	G	G
25	Sanctions against environmental crimes and anti-social behaviour	G	G
26	The number of programmed food safety inspections undertaken (cumulative)	G	G
27	Percentage of calls to the Contact Centre answered	G	G
28	Average wait time for customers calling the Contact Centre (seconds)	G	G
29	Customer Satisfaction (Contact Centre) [Collection Due to Commence in Q3]	0	0
30	Council Tax collection rate	A	G
31	Business Rates collection rate	A	G
32	Short-term staff sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling 12-month total)	R	A
33	Long-term sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling 12-month total)	G	G
34	Staff Turnover (per month)	G	G
35	Average length of staff service (years)	G	G

Outcome: Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

PI 1: Attendances at Active Lifestyles & Sports Development Activities



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

Attendances in September were ~6,500 - the second-best month of the year. 'Pay As You Go' attendances were 3,720 - 77% ahead of September last year and 72% ahead year to date. Commissioned services (which are where Active Lifestyles are paid to deliver services, and not grants) are up 96.4% year to date (9,233 vs 4,701), ensuring sustainable income growth for the service and reducing reliance on grants further.

Latest year-end forecast:

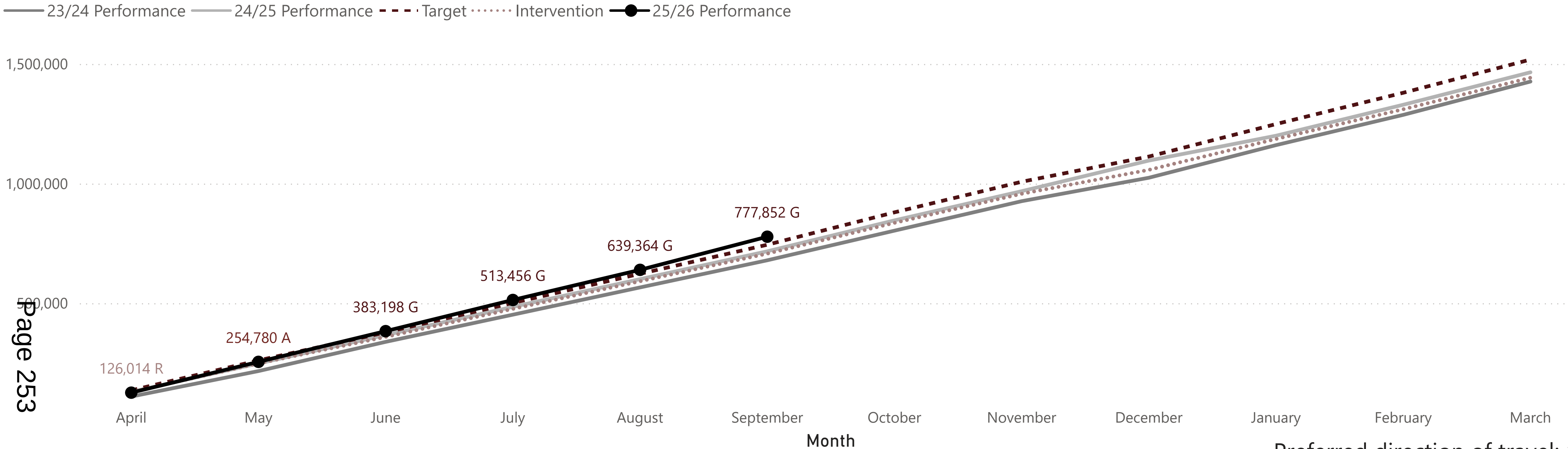
70,000

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

PI 2: Number of One Leisure Facilities admissions - swimming, Impressions, fitness classes, sports hall and pitches (Exc Burgess Hall & school admissions)



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

Performance across all One Leisure Centres continues to exceed both the target and last years performance. September attendances were 138,488, which is ~16,000 higher than target and ~22,000 higher than the performance of September last year. Year to date performance is ~33,000 ahead of target and ~60,000 ahead of last year. The main drivers of positive performance are the Gym, Group Exercise, and Swimming.

Latest year-end forecast:

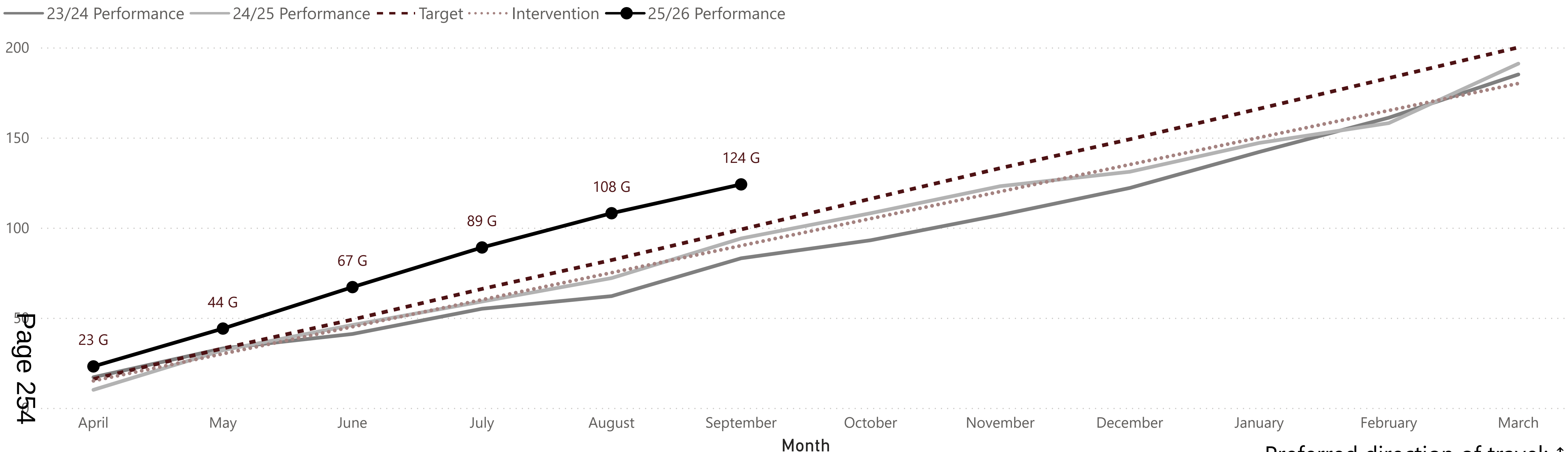
1,551,571

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 3: The number of residents enabled to live safely at home and prevented from requiring care or a prolonged stay in hospital due to a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

An additional 30 residents have been supported by the Disabled Facilities Grant through September compared to last year. Some delays still persist relating to Places for People approving cases; however, these delays continue to improve.

Latest year-end forecast:

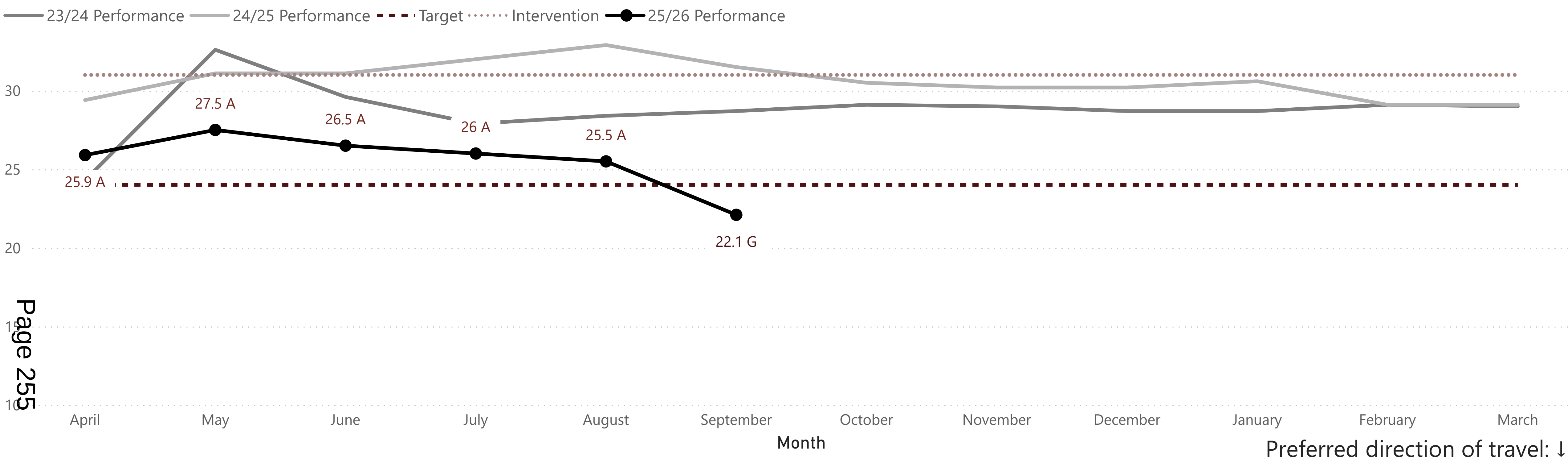
225

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 4: Average time (weeks) between referral and completion of jobs funded through Disabled Facilities Grants



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of weeks between referral and completion of jobs funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant is now 22.1 weeks, a 9.4 week improvement from September 2024, and a 6.6 week improvement from September 2025. The performance has been positively impacted by fewer complex cases being submitted. These types of work significantly increase the time taken for Disabled Facilities Grants, as well as more resources becoming available to facilitate household extensions.

Latest year-end forecast:

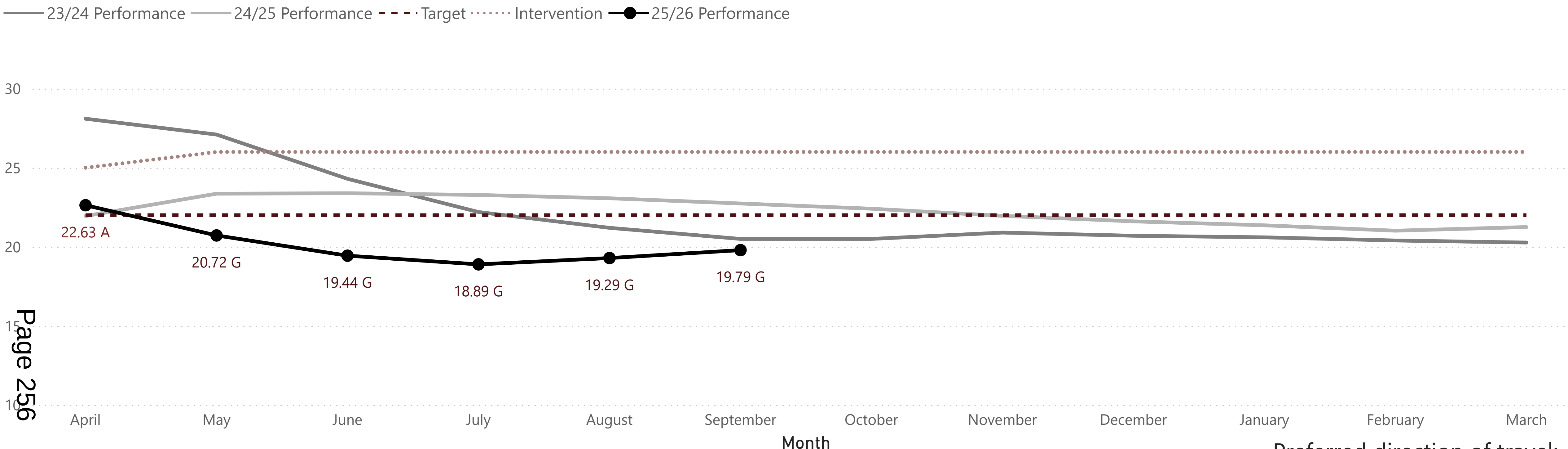
25

Latest projected outturn status:

A

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 5: Average number of days to process new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax support



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

At the end of September, the average number of days was 2.21 days ahead of target and 2.95 days faster than September 2024. This improvement reflects the positive impact of changes made to the Council Tax Support Scheme. The final outturn remains unchanged.

Latest year-end forecast:

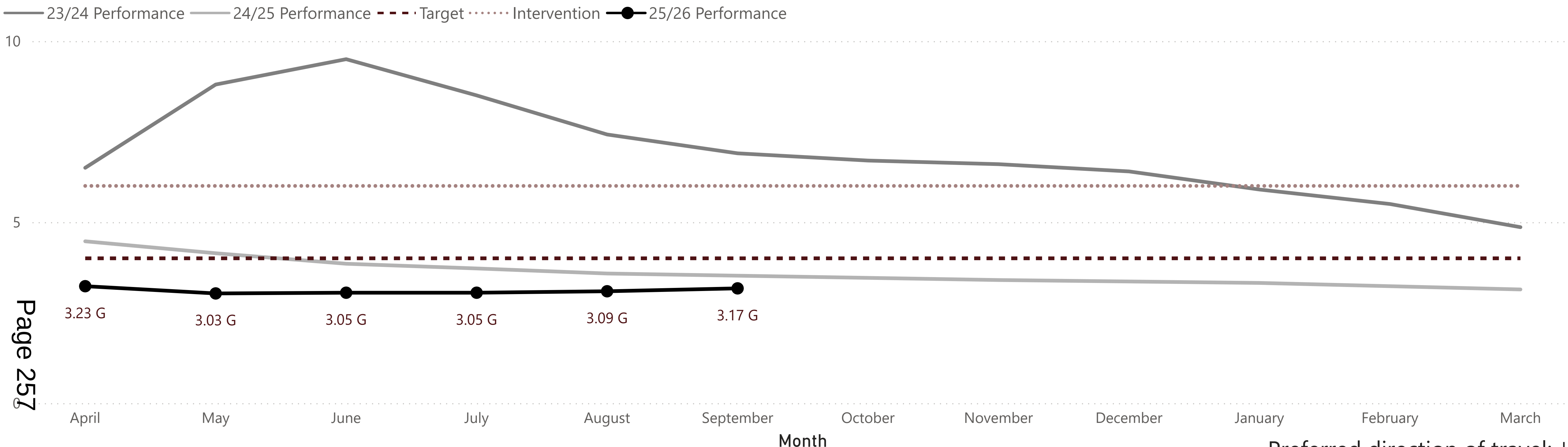
22

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 6: Average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefits and Council Tax support



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

The average number of days to process changes of circumstances for Housing Benefits and Council Tax support was 0.35 days faster than in September last year. This is despite a significant increase in the volume of changes processed. This positive performance has been achieved through automation of the process, brought about by the implementation of the new Council Tax Support Scheme.

Latest year-end forecast:

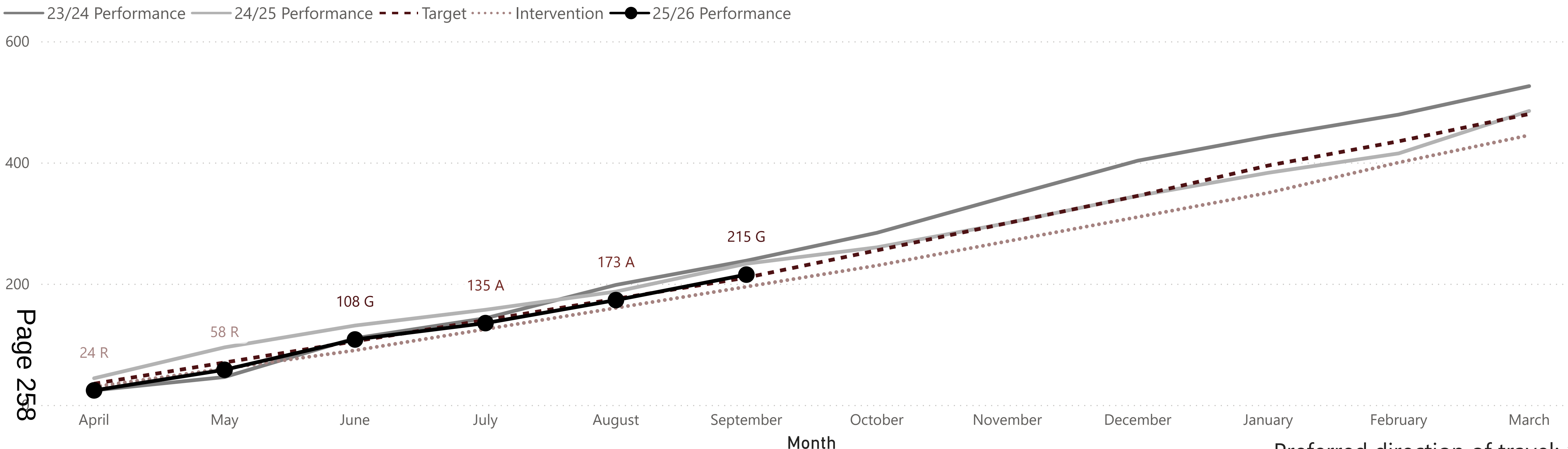
4

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 7: The number of homelessness preventions achieved



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of successful homelessness preventions fluctuates throughout the year, depending on the rate of homelessness presentations and the opportunity to intervene in a timely way. Since April, 215 successful preventions have been recorded - down from 233 during the same period last year. This decrease is largely due to the number of properties becoming available for letting through the Home-Link scheme over this period, as this is one of the main ways in which prevention is achieved (PI 8). The current end-of-year projection stands at 460, though this will continue to be reviewed as the year progresses. When evaluating this PI, it is important to consider whether there has been an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation (PI 9), and this figure is currently ahead of target.

Latest year-end forecast:

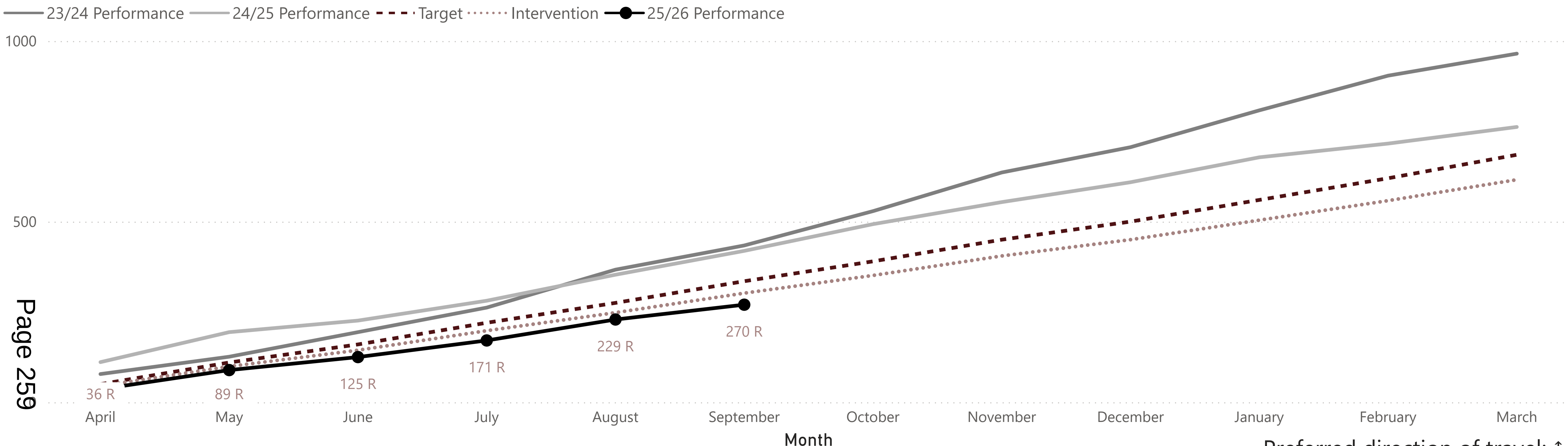
460

Latest projected outturn status:

A

Outcome: Keeping people out of crisis

PI 8: The number of households housed through the Housing Register and Home-Link scheme



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of households housed varies each month depending on the number of vacancies within the existing social rented stock, plus any additional units delivered through the new build programme. Since the start of the year, 270 households have been housed, down from 419 through the same period in 2024/25. This decrease is due to the lower number of new-build completions compared to last year. Although we anticipate these will increase later in the year, we have adjusted the year end forecast figure from 660 to 600. Officers have escalated questions regarding the new build delivery programme to Registered Provider partners to ensure the programme will still deliver the projected number of homes this year.

Latest year-end forecast:

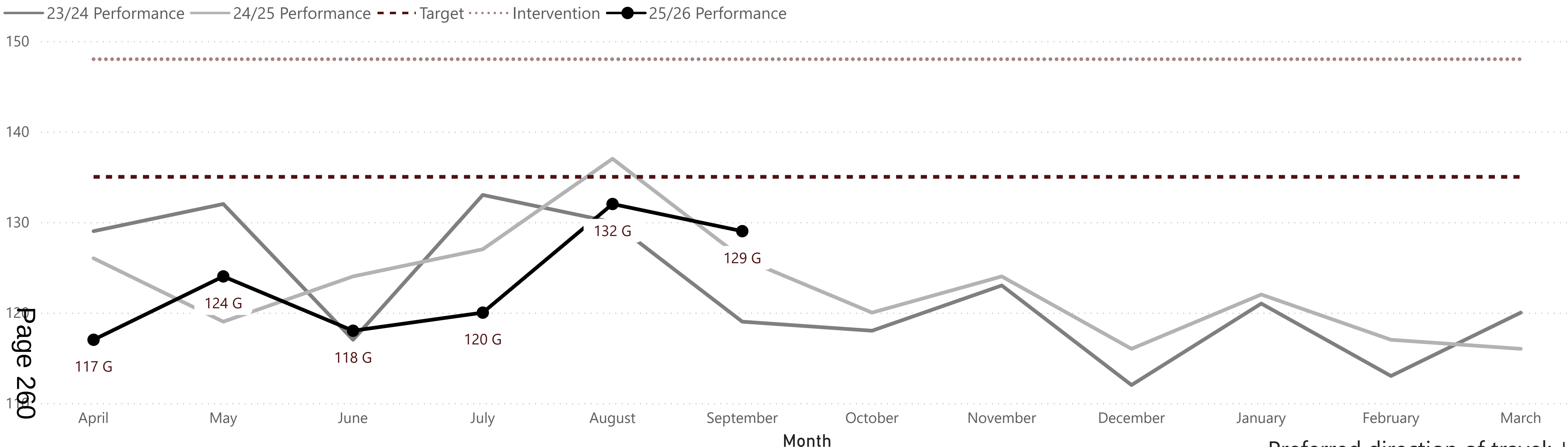
600

Latest projected outturn status:

R

Outcome: Helping people in crisis

PI 9: The number of households in temporary accommodation



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) at any one time will depend upon the number of homelessness presentations to the council, how successful officers are at preventing homelessness wherever possible, and the ability to move households through TA into settled housing promptly. The figure at the end of September was 129, which compares to 126 at the same point last year.

Latest year-end forecast:

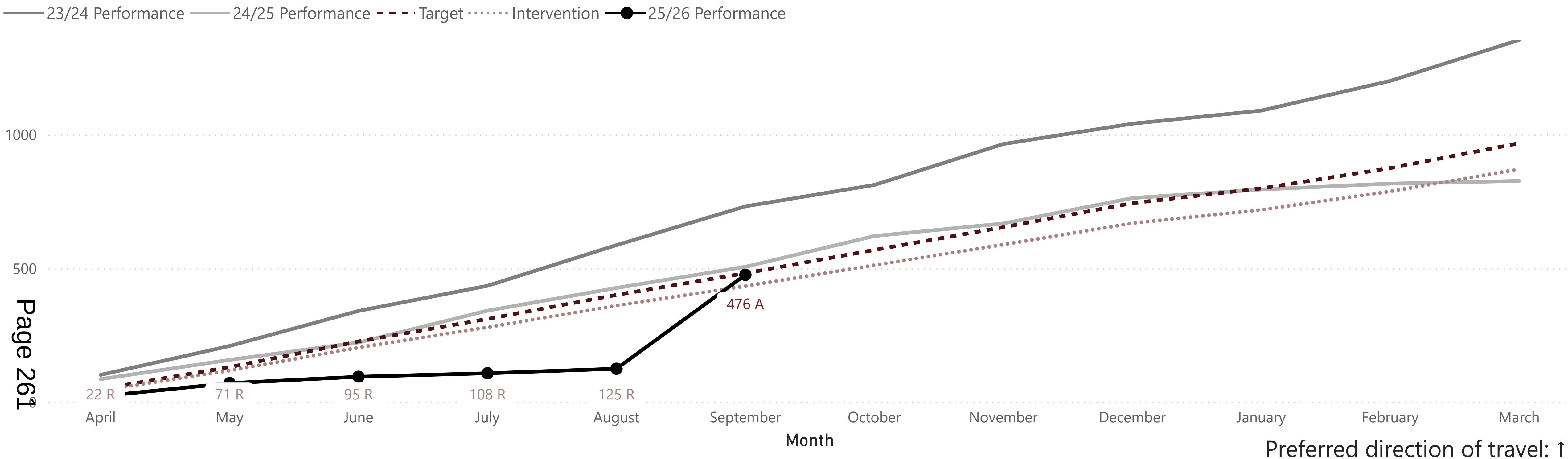
135

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 10: Net change in the number of homes with a council tax banding



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

The number of new dwellings with a Council Tax band has been challenging to monitor for the initial part of the year, as changes to IT systems at the Valuation Office Agency led to significant service disruption. The VOA have been working hard to restore service, which now appears to be largely resolved as 351 new dwellings have been banded in September. The position will continue to be monitored via engagement with the VOA.

Latest year-end forecast:

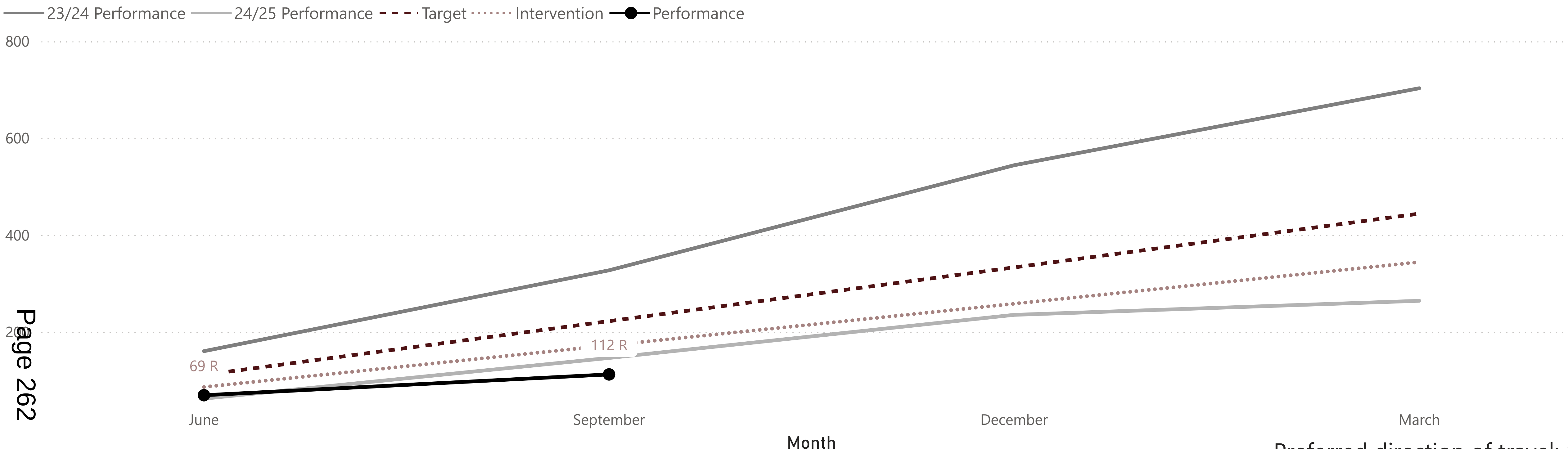
875

Latest projected outturn status:

A

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 11: The number of affordable houses delivered



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

There are concerns surrounding the large delivery of homes towards the end of the year are still present at the end of Q2. Revised forecasting indicates that almost half of all completions will be in Q4, with any slipping into next year being delayed and not lost.
The current forecast of 340 is remaining the same as Q1. Also, as reported in Q1, this year's performance is to be measured against the needs identified across the whole District. In common with most Local Authorities, the target is rarely met.
The Council now has a new Empty Homes Officer who joined at the beginning of September, their first tasks will be to contact all empty home owners to understand why their properties are empty and develop a strategy that can be used to take action against long term empty properties. It is hoped that this will encourage existing empty homes being brought into use therefore supporting the availability of housing in the area.

Latest year-end forecast:

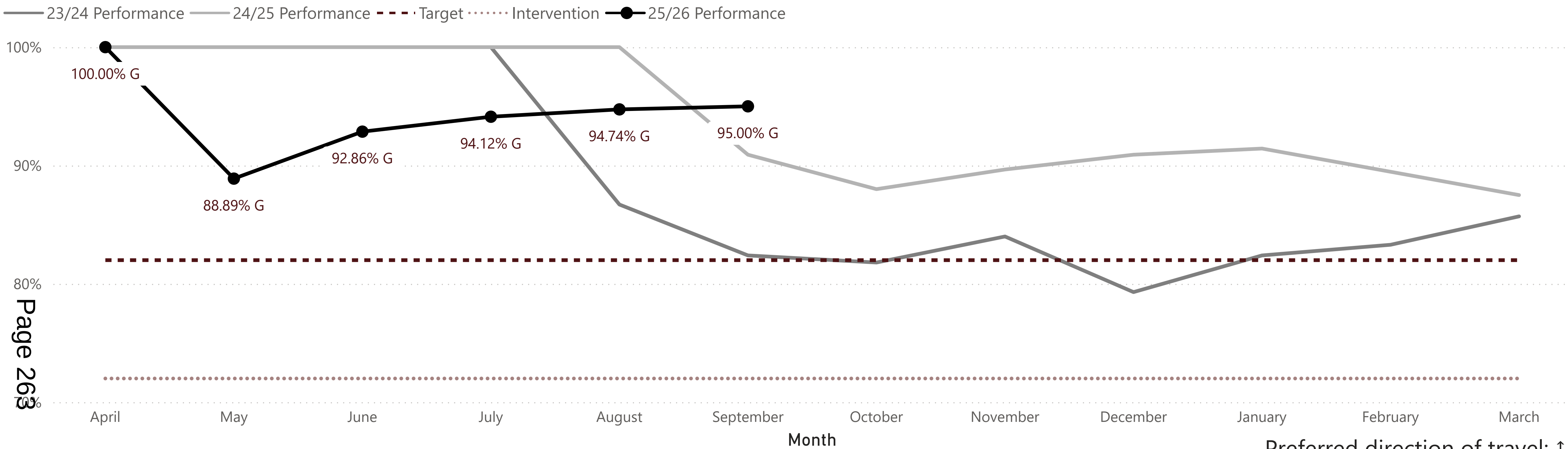
340

Latest projected outturn status:

R

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 12: Percentage of planning applications processed on target - Major (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

Major planning application performance remains strong, with 1 major application being determined in September, and this was completed on time. In total, 19 out of 20 Major planning applications have been determined on time this year. The Forecast has been raised to 92% to match the strong performance.

Latest year-end forecast:

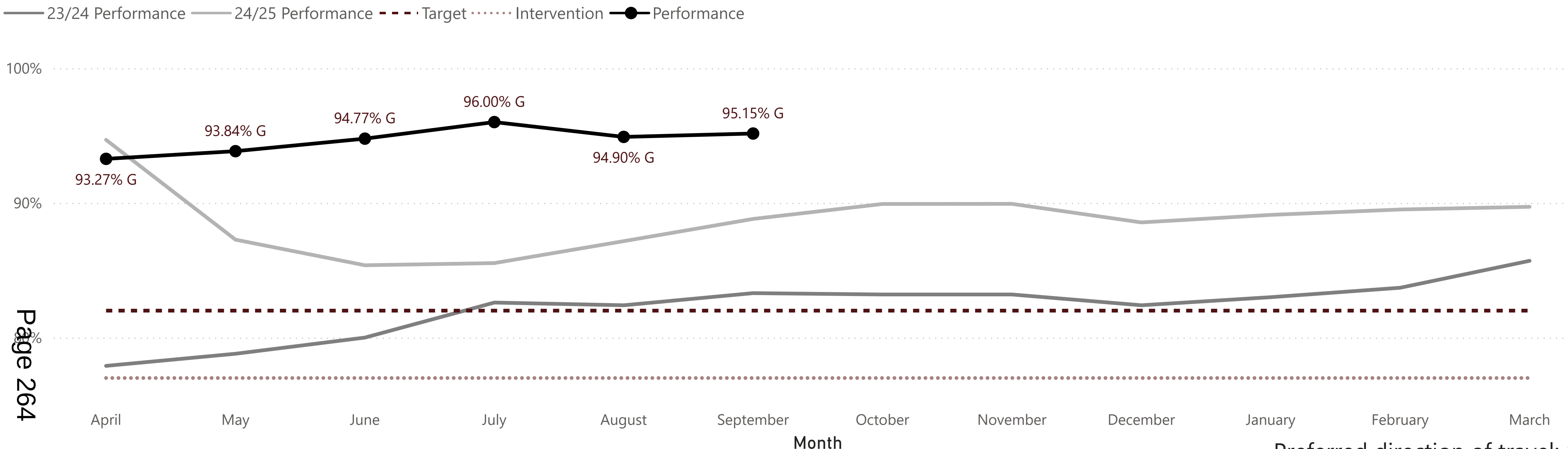
92%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 13: Percentage of planning applications processed on time - Minor (within 8 weeks or agreed extended period)



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

82 out of 85 Minor & Other applications were determined in September within the 8-week time frame. Year to date, 510 out of 536 applications have been determined within their timeframe. Performance has recovered from the decrease last month, and the forecast has been raised to 92%.

Latest year-end forecast:

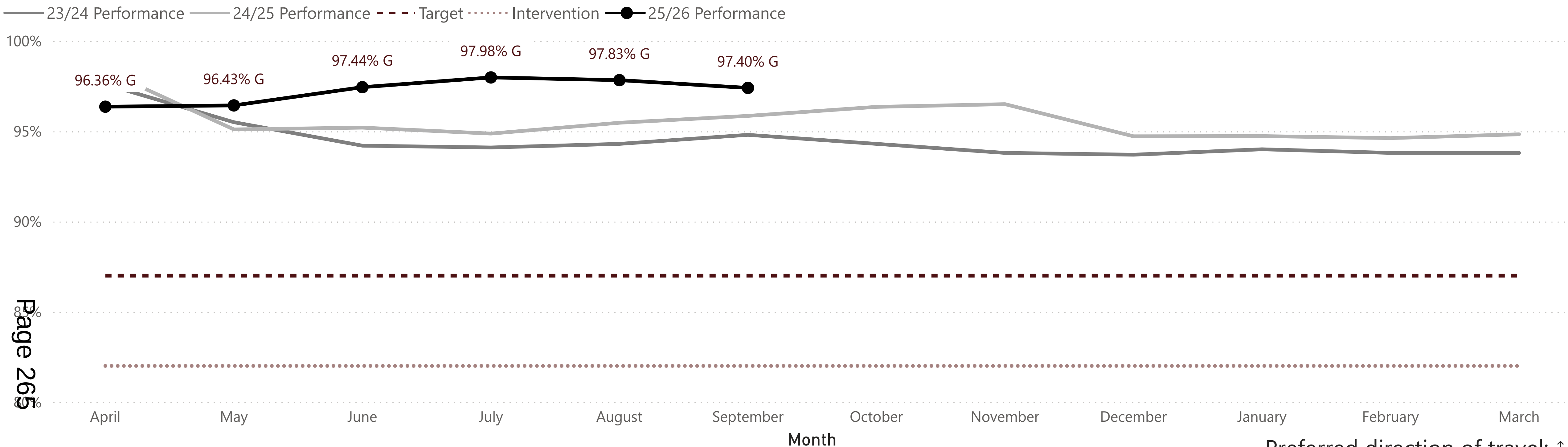
92%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 14: Percentage of planning applications processed on target - Household Extension (within 8 weeks or agreed extension period)



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

37 out of 39 Household extension applications were determined within the 8-week timeframe this month. Year to date, 262 out of 269 Householder applications have been completed within time. Performance continues to remain strong.

Latest year-end forecast:

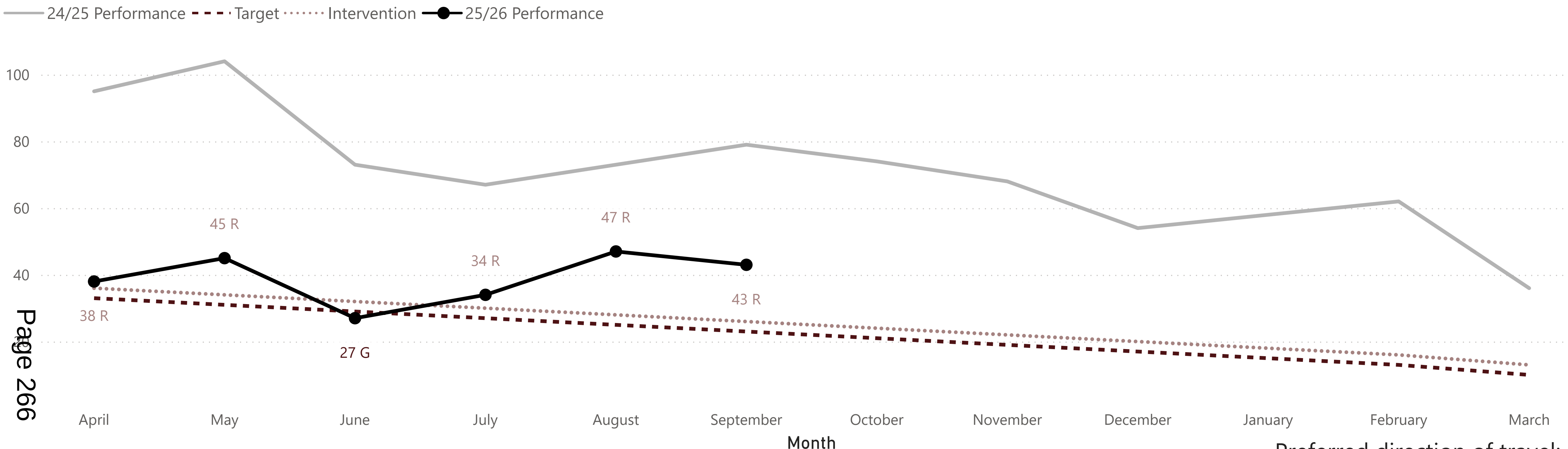
93%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Improving Housing

PI 15: The number of planning applications over 16 weeks old where there is no current extension in place.



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

Additional resources arrived in the department towards the end of Q2. The backlog applications are to be prioritised to resolve the issue. Sensitive sites remain as further work needs to take place to resolve and they are still expected to be resolved within Q3. Whilst the target is not being met, this is a significant improvement against the position in September 2024, where backlog numbers were at 79 over 16 weeks old.

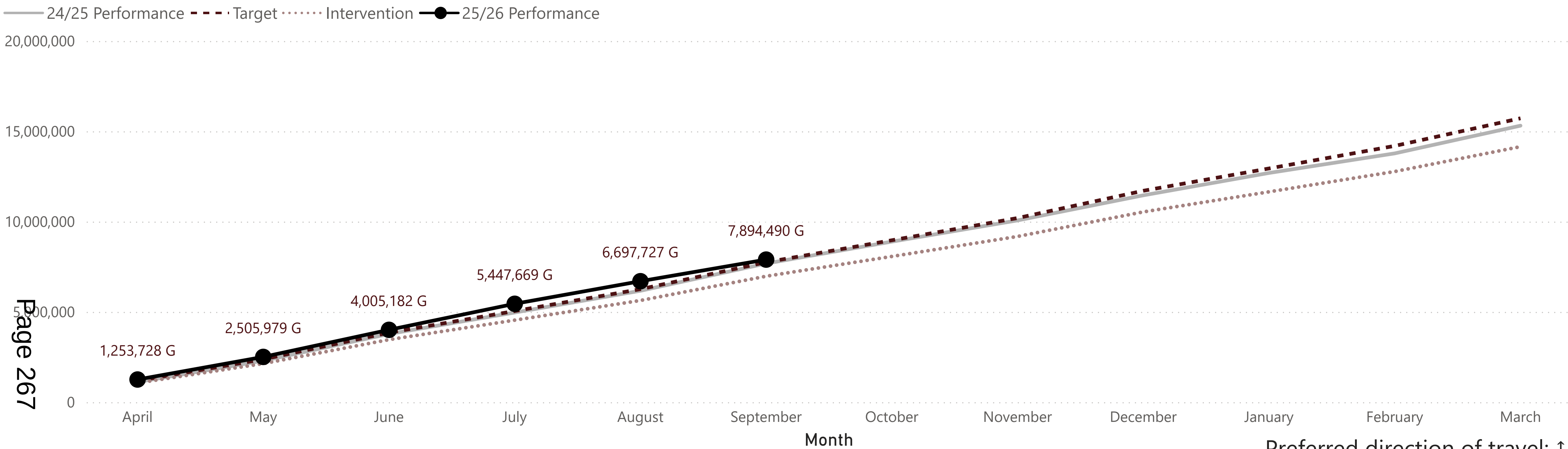
Latest year-end forecast:

5

Latest projected outturn status:

G

PI 16: Cumulative footfall in our market towns



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

Huntingdon footfall in September was 512,267, with one of the best performing days coinciding with the Heritage Open Day Town Hall Tours and our Saturday Market day.

Ramsey had an increase in footfall in September, with a final figure of 9,998. Ramsey embraced the September Heritage open day campaign, which contributed to rising footfall.

St Ives had a September footfall of 341,254, with the highest footfall week coinciding with the Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival.

St Neots September footfall was 333,244, with one of the highest footfall days supported by the St Neots Farm and Craft Market.

Latest year-end forecast:

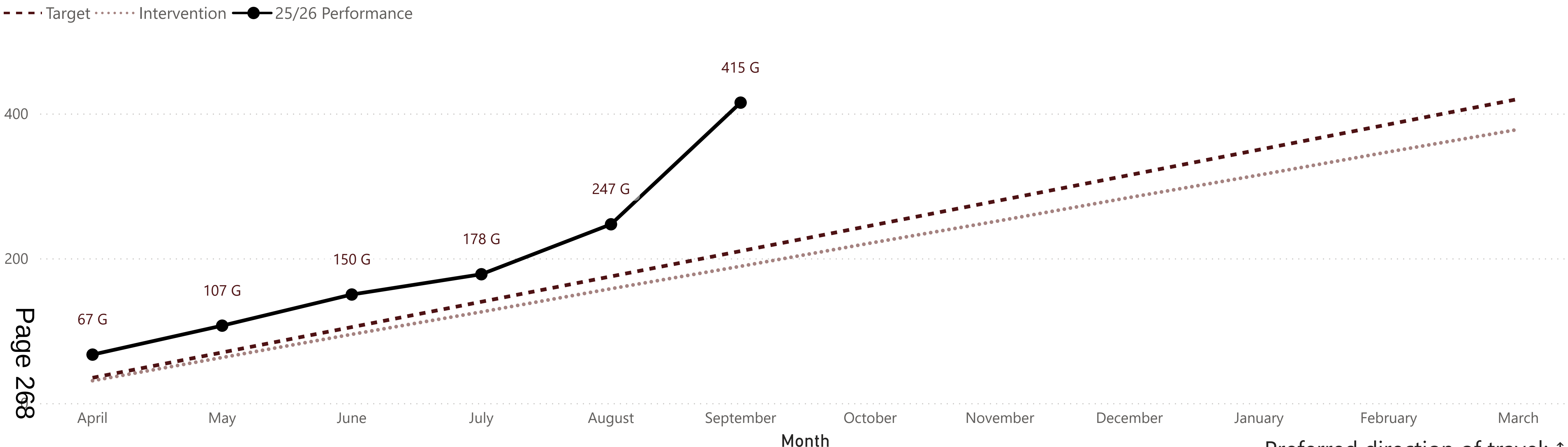
15,719,143

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Forward Thinking Economic Growth

PI 17: Total Number of business engagements by the Economic Development Team



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

The organisation has received a large amount of interest for the Digital Manufacturing Grant. In total, 21 applications were sent out to businesses. 2 of these were processed and resulted in the businesses receiving financial resources. The orgnaisation is also in talks about providing booster sessions in both St Ives and Alconbury, with these sessions to start in Q3. Ramsey booster appointments are being made with businesses where support is required for new businesses to find new premises for stability and growth. Additionally, a CIC was given guidance on business rates, and they have now taken on a shop on Ramsey High Street. Liason with CPCA has been conducted this month, with follow up support provided to businesses by a business advisor. Other areas of business engagement in September have involved advice on renewing overseas patents, which again led to referral to CPCA.

Latest year-end forecast:

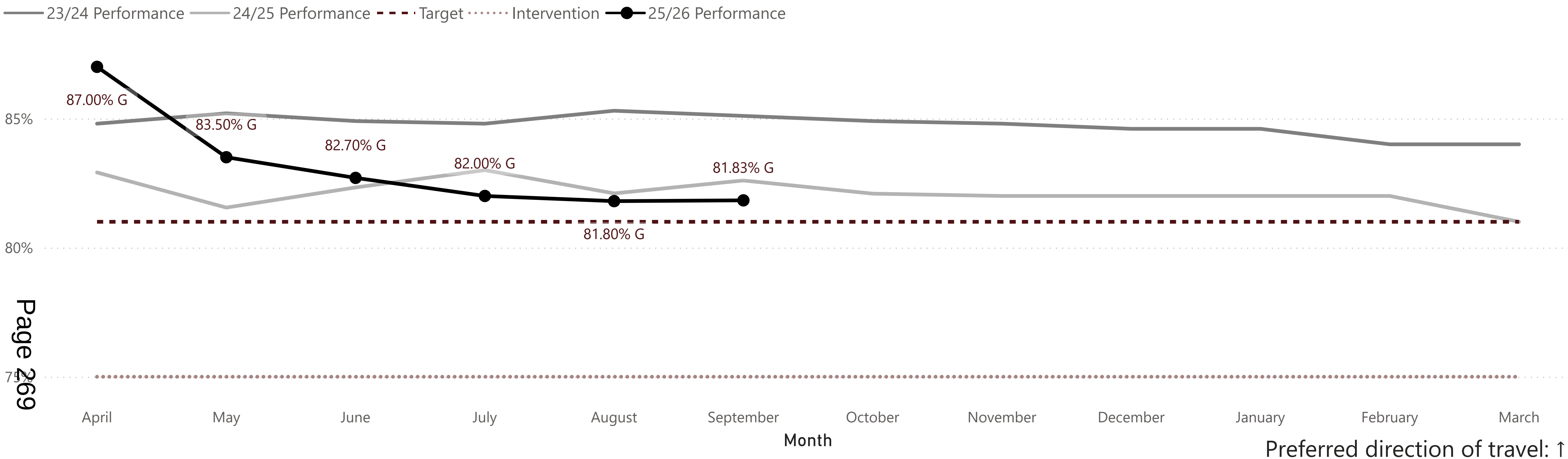
600

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Lowering Carbon Emissions

PI 18: Efficiency of vehicle fleet driving - Energy Efficient Driving Index Score for the waste service



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

The waste service has achieved a cumulative fleet driving efficiency (EEDI) score of 81.83%, exceeding the set target. Continued monitoring and the sharing of best practices will help ensure this high level of efficiency is sustained throughout the year.

Latest year-end forecast:

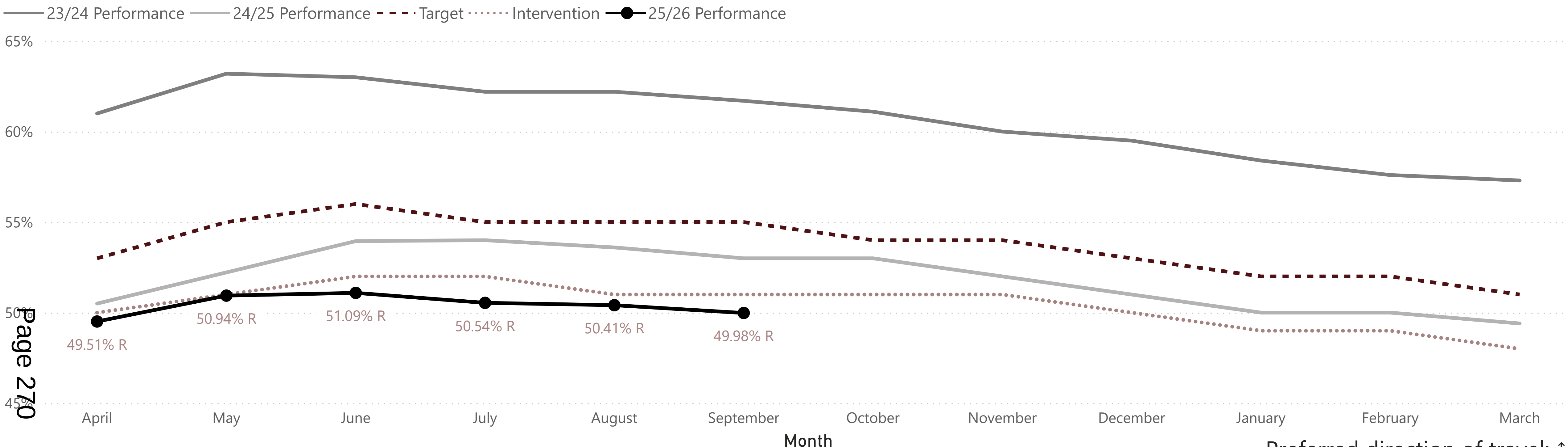
81%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 19: Percentage of household waste reused / recycled / composted



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

In September, a total of 5240.06 tonnes of waste were collected from domestic properties across the district, with 48% of this either recycled or composted.

Year to date, the recycling and composting rate stands at 49.98%, a 3% decrease from this time last year.

Although the number of garden waste subscriptions is higher for the 2025/26 period, the amount of garden waste being collected has reduced, mainly due to the exceptional dry period we are experiencing. Year to date, we have collected 19% less garden waste than we did for the same period last year.

Year to date, the overall collected waste tonnage has decreased by 6% (1878.95 tonnes) compared to the same period in 2024/25.

The forecast outturn has been revised to 45%, reflecting last year's result of 49% (the first year of the garden waste subscriptions) and allowing for a further reduction due to this year's lower levels of garden waste caused by dry weather conditions.

Latest year-end forecast:

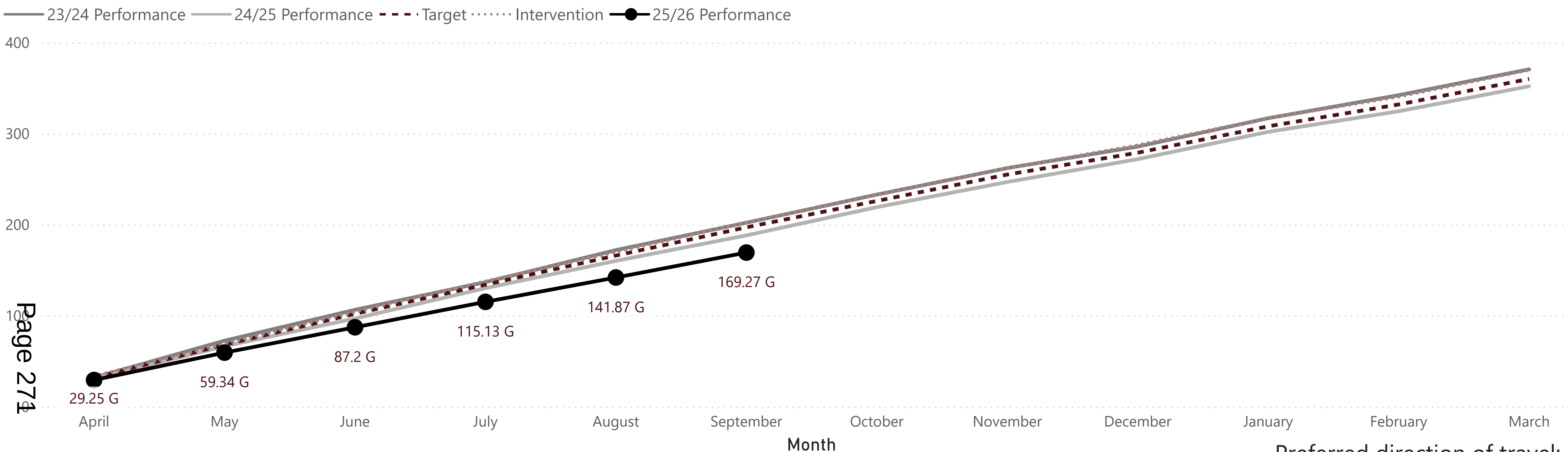
45%

Latest projected outturn status:

R

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 20: Collected household waste per person (Kilograms)



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

Household waste generation per person remains lower than the same period last year, with 27.39 kg collected per person in September, below the UK monthly average of 34 kg.
This continued downward trend is largely attributed to reduced garden waste tonnage in previous months, and although the garden waste tonnage has picked up, there was a 6% reduction in September compared to the same time last year.

Latest year-end forecast:

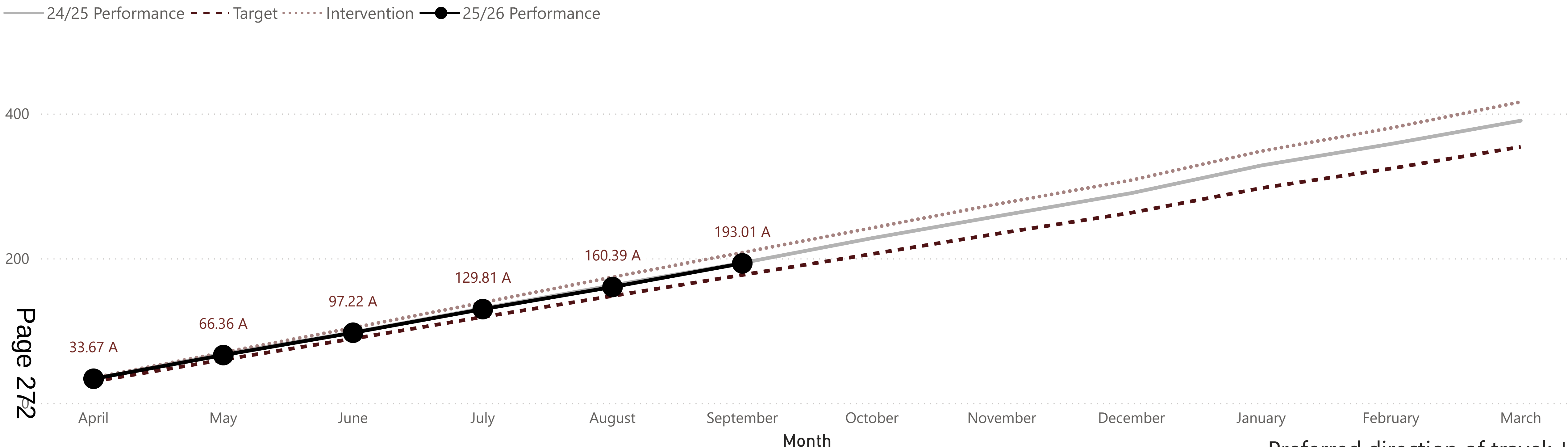
360

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 21: Residual waste collected per household (kilograms)



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

Residual waste collected per household currently exceeds our cumulative target and sits at 193.01kg year to date. Encouragingly, we continue to outperform the UK average of 74 kg per household per month, with September sitting at 32.62kg per household.

Looking ahead, preparations are underway for the introduction of a weekly food waste collection service starting in April 2026. The team are currently developing a resident-focused behaviour change campaign to help reduce the amount of food waste being disposed of.

Latest year-end forecast:

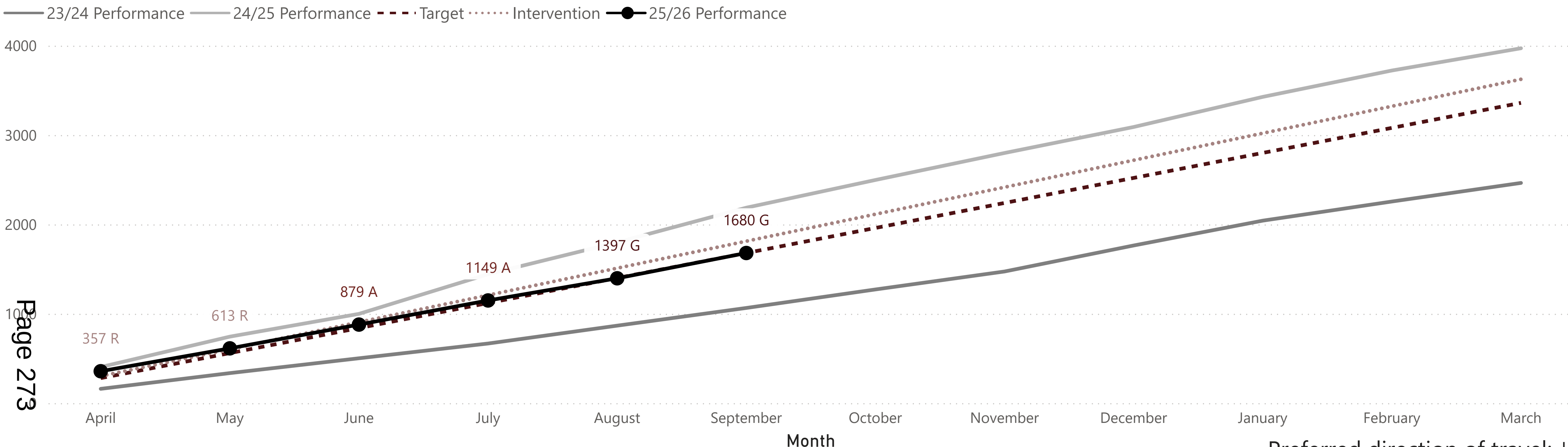
352

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 22: Number of missed bins



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

In September, a total of 487,423 waste collections were completed, with 253 missed collections reported, resulting in a missed collection rate of just 0.052%. This remains below the APSE benchmark average of 0.076%.

Latest year-end forecast:

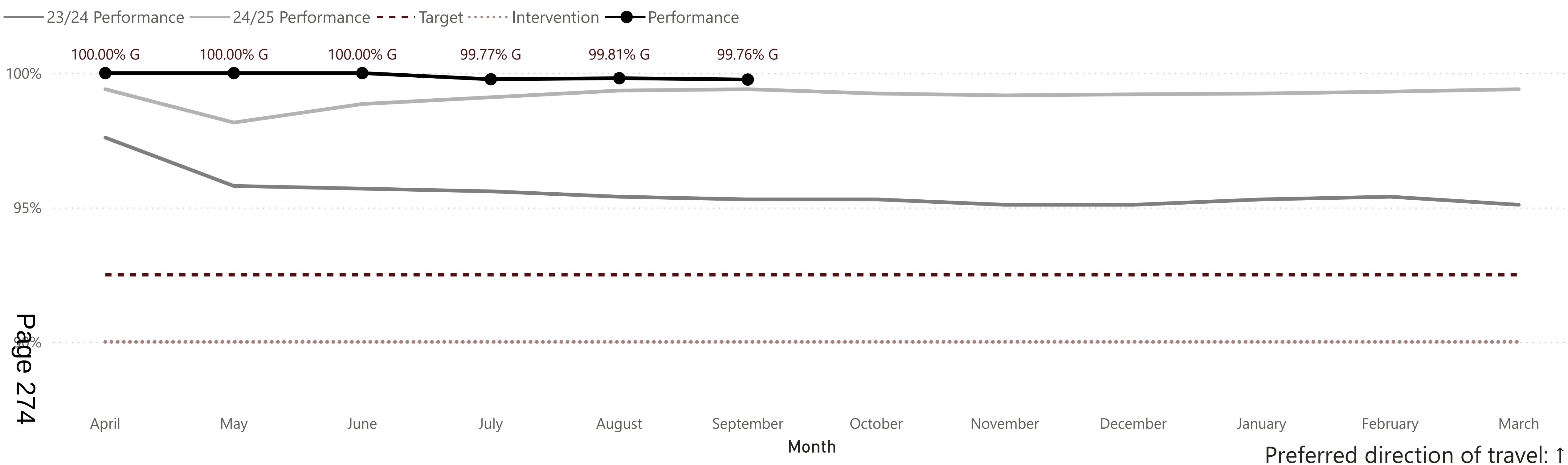
3360

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 23: The percentage of sampled areas which were clean or predominantly clean of litter, detritus, graffiti, flyposting or weed accumulations



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

A total of 206 inspections were completed across 10 wards in September, exceeding the monthly target of 175 inspections, ensuring full ward coverage.
Of these, 205 inspections achieved a pass grade (A or B). The single failure was due to detritus, which has since been rectified.

Latest year-end forecast:

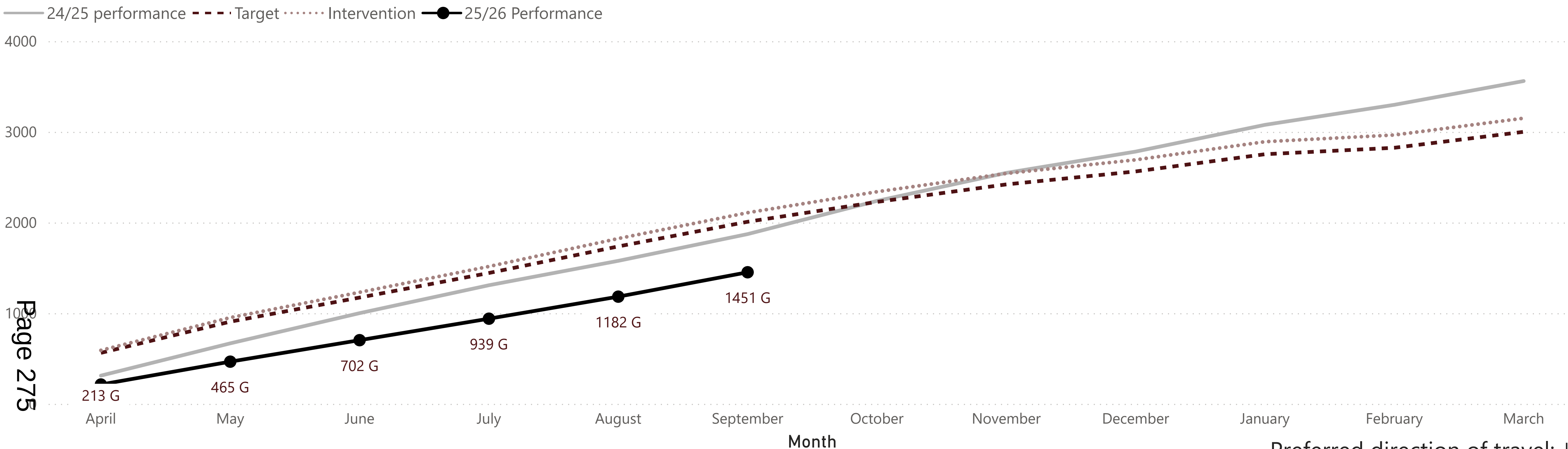
95%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 24: The number of flytips reported



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

A total of 269 fly-tips were recorded in September, a slight increase from August, but still a 9% reduction compared to September 2024. Of these, 13 incidents involved garden waste, all limited to single bags.
The forecasted annual outturn has been decreased, as we have recorded 400 fewer fly-tips than at the same point last year. Based on the current monthly average, the full year total is projected to be around 3,000 incidents.

Latest year-end forecast:

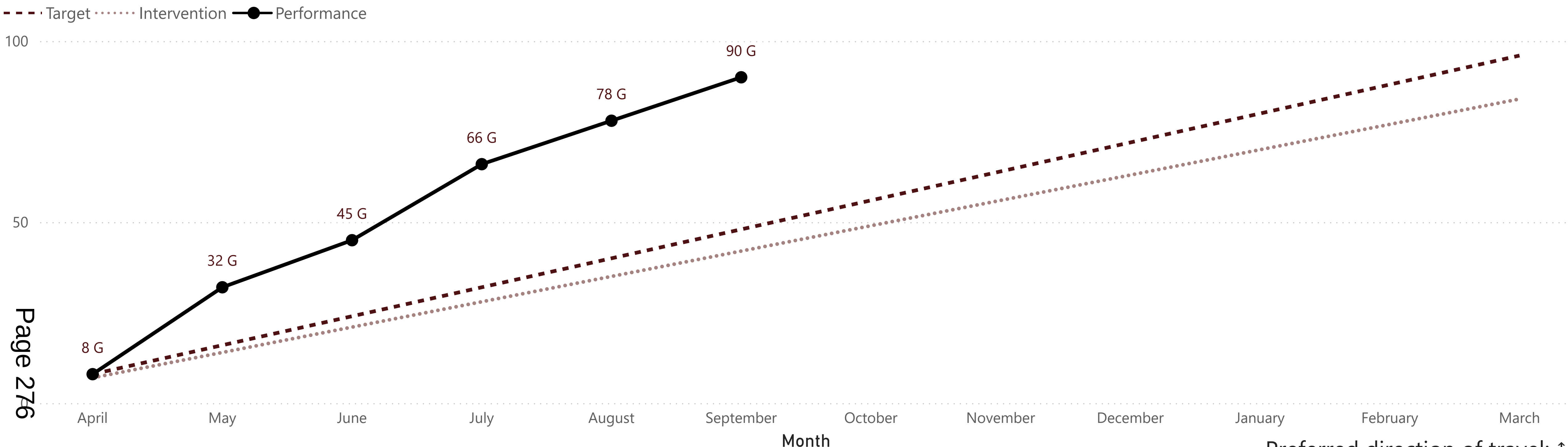
3000

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 25: Sanctions against environmental crimes and anti-social behaviour



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

45 total sanctions were issued during Q2 by the Community Action Team. These are:
Section 46 sanctions issued in relation to Bin receptacles (9)
Section 47 sanctions issued to Commercial Businesses (2)
CPW to residential properties in relation to Fly Tipping. (7)
CPW issued with regards to Cannabis smoking. Under Anti-Social Behaviour legislation. (3)
CPW issued to a Dog Owner for Dog related issues. (7)
Sanctions issued after Vehicle lift from locations in district that are deemed abandoned. (11)
Fixed Penalty Notices issued (5) - Fly Tip (1, £400.00), Commercial Fly Tip (2, £1,000.00), Littering (1, £150.00), Breach of PSPO (1, £100.00)
Additionally, there was one successful prosecution in relation to a Company operating as a waste clearance business failing to produce Licenses. A guilty verdict was concluded, with awards of a£660.00 Fine, £264.00 Costs , £2126.14 Victim Surcharge. This totals as £3,050.14 awarded by the Court

Latest year-end forecast:

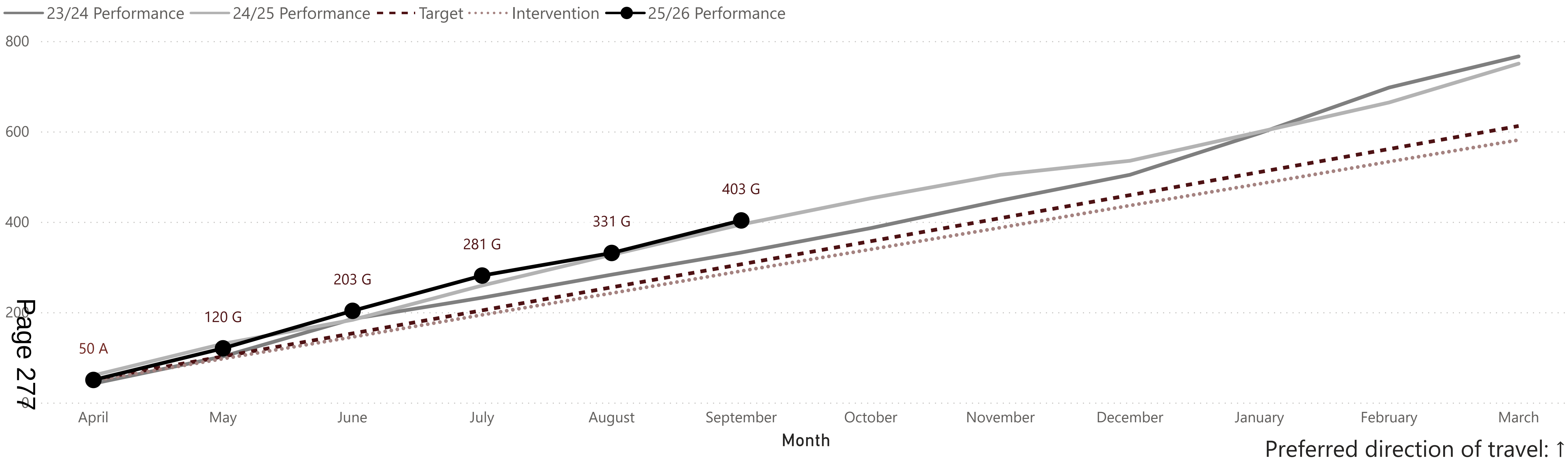
120

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 26: The number of programmed food safety inspections undertaken (cumulative)



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

A total of 72 inspections were completed in September. This exceeds the target of 51 per month despite the service not being fully resourced.

Latest year-end forecast:

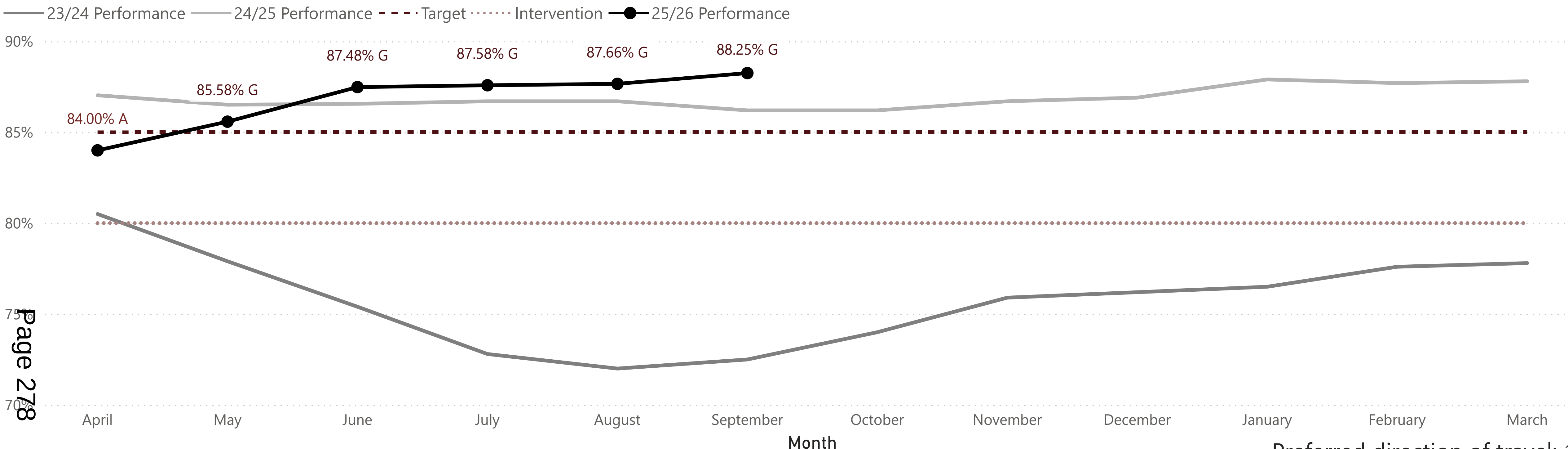
806

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 27: Percentage of calls to the Contact Centre answered



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

The cumulative Calls Answered performance for September has increased to 88.25% from 87.66% in August. The team is within the 85% answered target, which is attributed to low staff turnover and an experienced team contributing to performance.

Latest year-end forecast:

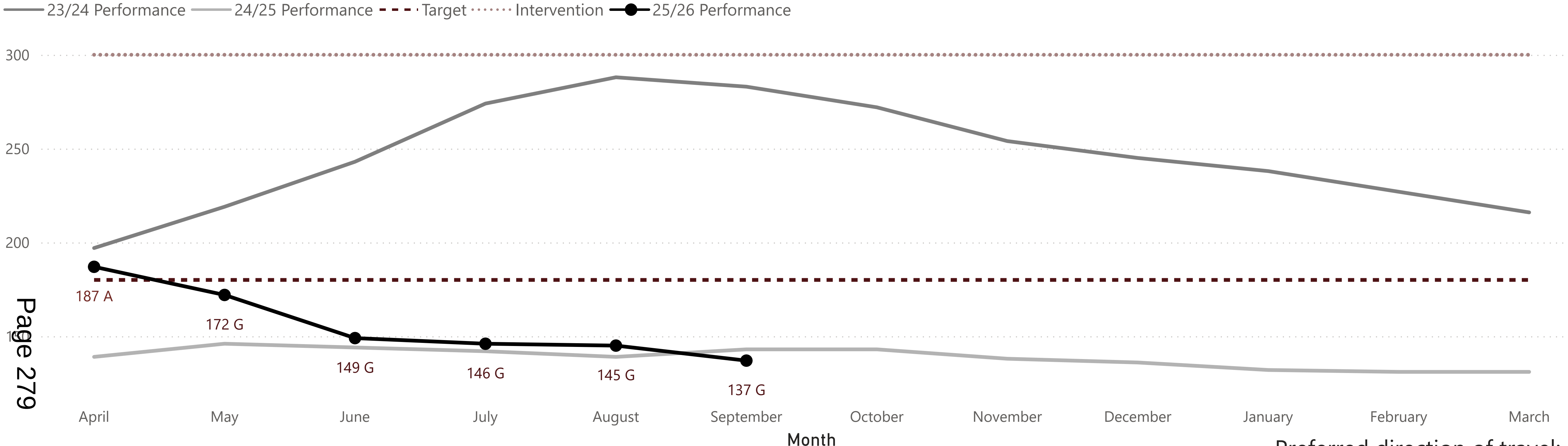
87%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 28: Average wait time for customers calling the Contact Centre (seconds)



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

The cumulative average wait time improved by 8 seconds in September, resulting in the team performing at 43 seconds ahead of target. The excellent performance is attributed to low staff turnover and an experienced team.

Latest year-end forecast:

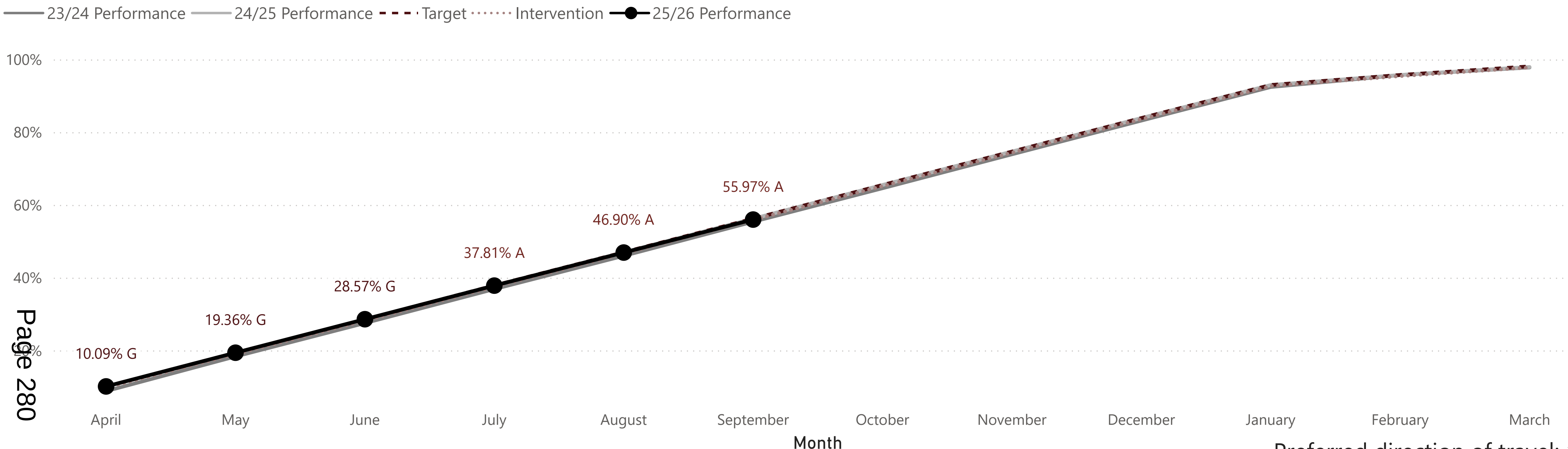
145

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 30: Council Tax collection rate



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

Council tax collection was 0.23% below its performance target in September, reflecting the reprofiling of instalments rather than non-payment. While the final forecast remains unchanged, performance will continue to be monitored closely.

Latest year-end forecast:

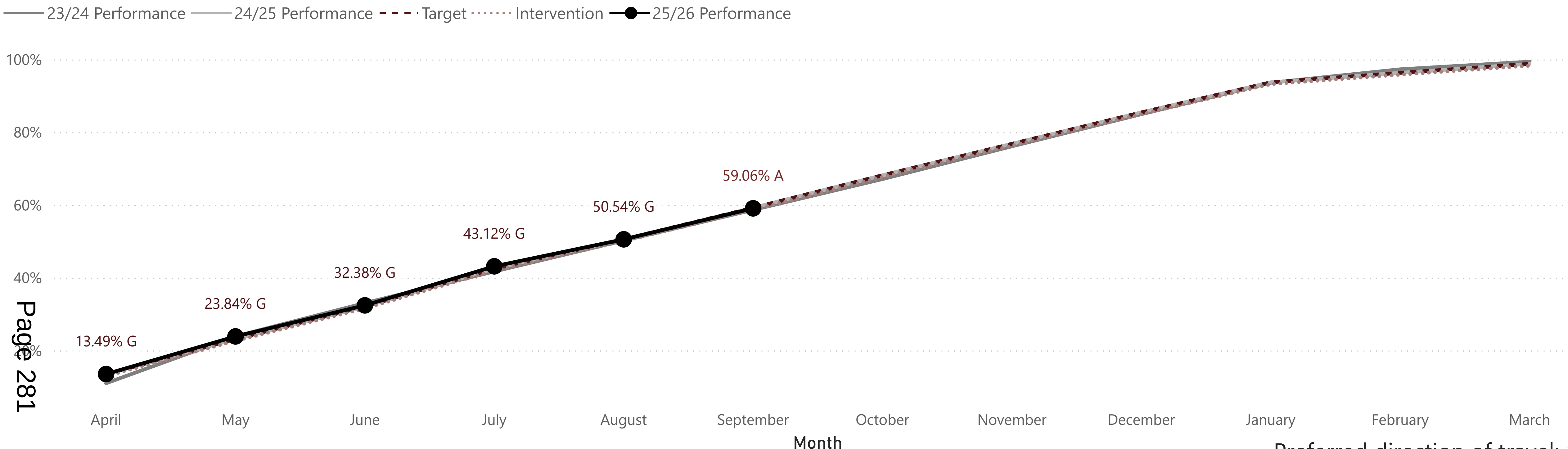
98.09%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 31: Business Rate collection rate



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

September collection of Business Rates was 0.14% below target. There is one large credit of ~£300,000, which is the result of a rateable value reduction, which has negatively impacted the performance of this metric. The final outturn forecast remains unchanged at 98.79%.

Latest year-end forecast:

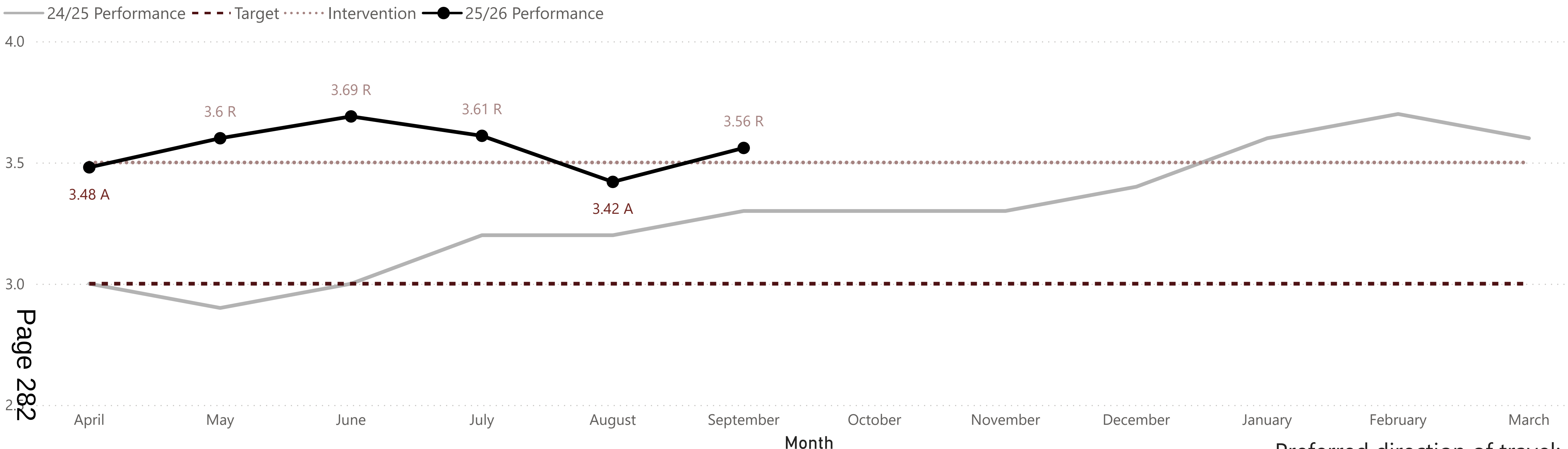
98.79%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 32: Short-term staff sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling)



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

We have seen an increase this month in the target days for short term absence. We have lost 92 days (51 days to coughs/colds and 41 to gastro) to coughs/colds and gastrointestinal illnesses in September. We have been promoting the flu jab scheme but take has been low this year. A reminder is to be sent out at the start of quarter 2.

Latest year-end forecast:

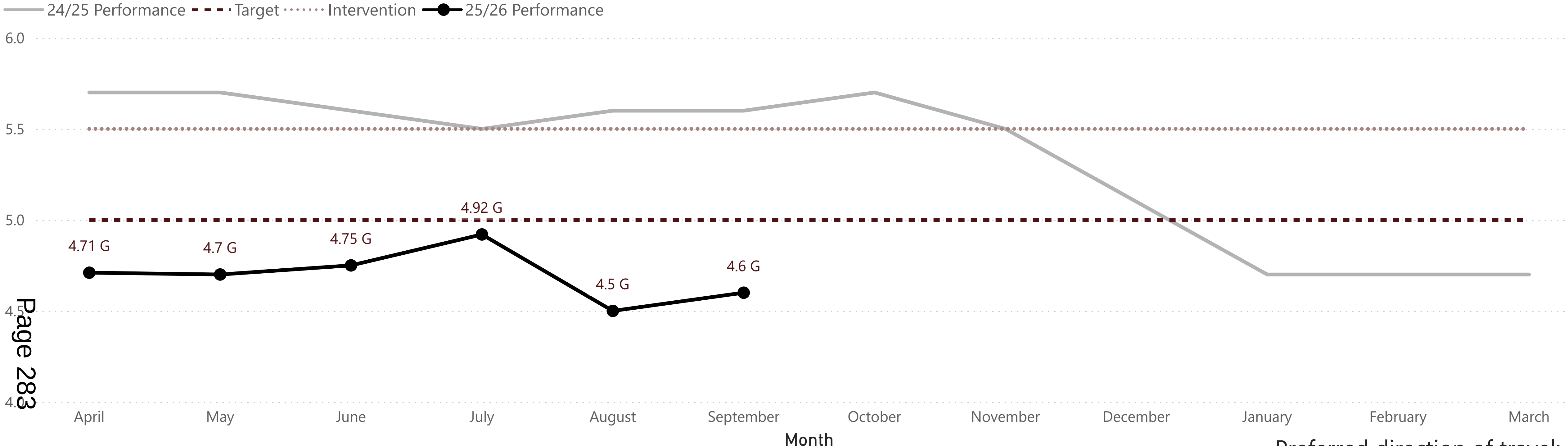
3.5

Latest projected outturn status:

A

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 33: Long-term sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) (rolling)



Preferred direction of travel: ↓

Latest Commentary from Service:

Long-term sickness days per FTE remains stable, with only one new case.

Latest year-end forecast:

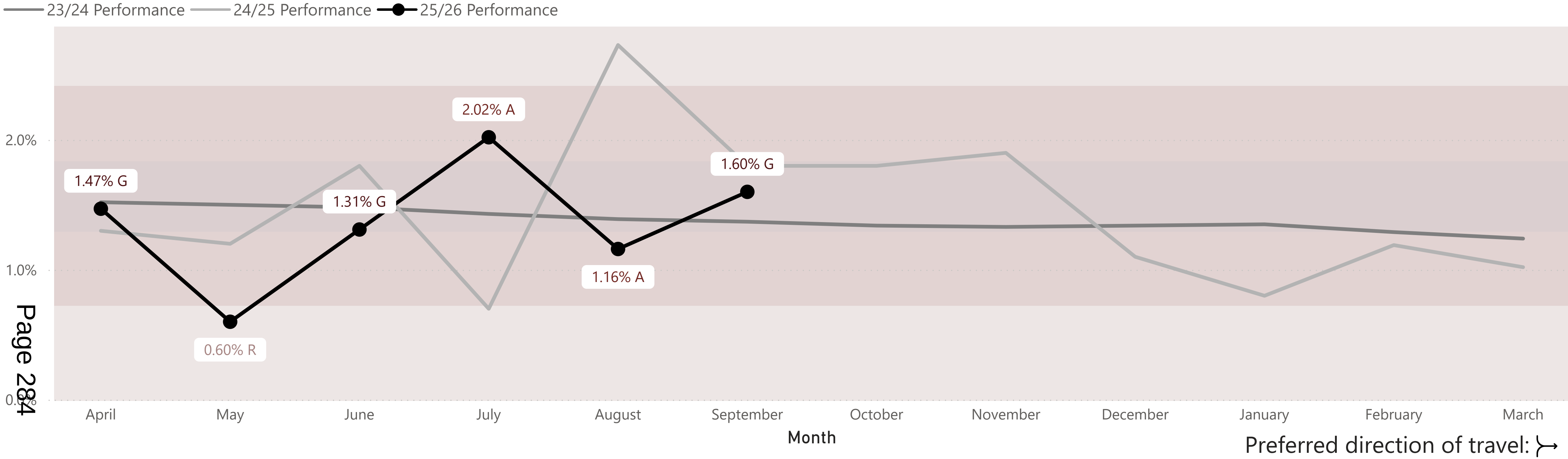
5

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 34: Staff Turnover (per month)



Preferred direction of travel: ↣

Latest Commentary from Service:

September saw a total of 11 leavers within the organisation, which is 1.6% of the workforce.

Latest year-end forecast:

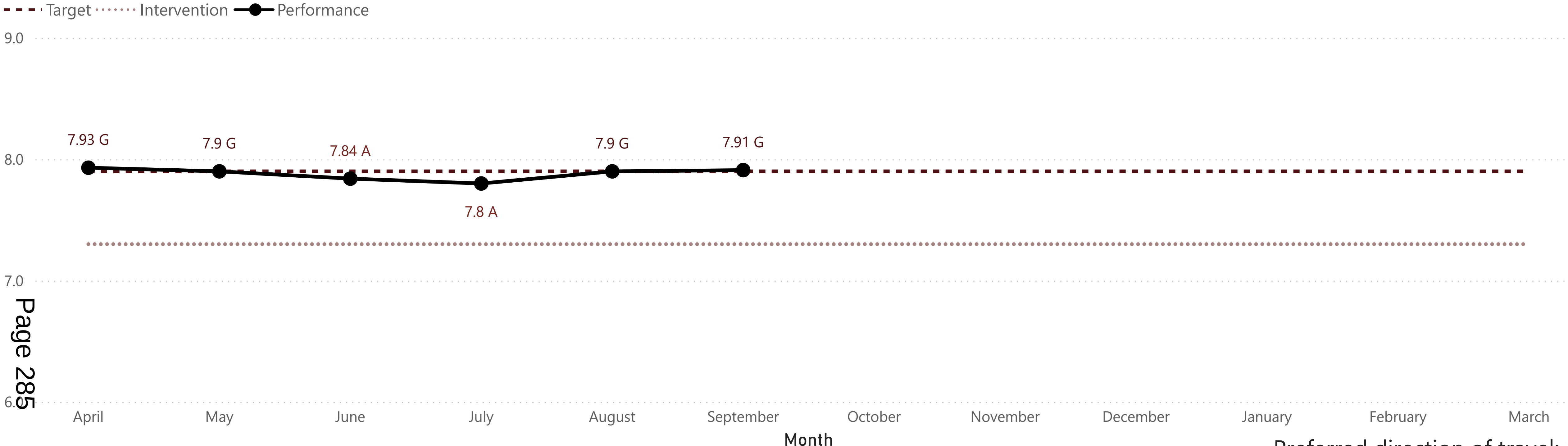
1.50%

Latest projected outturn status:

G

Outcome: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services

PI 35: Average length of staff service (years)



Preferred direction of travel: ↑

Latest Commentary from Service:

The average length of service slightly increased this month to 7.91 years. The average length of service for the 11 leavers was ~4 years. The HR team will continue to monitor the average length of leavers to ensure retention of newer employees does not become a major issue.

Latest year-end forecast:

7.9

Latest projected outturn status:

G

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Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	A Sustainable Framework for Play in Huntingdonshire
Meeting/Date:	Overview & Scrutiny Panel - (Environment, Communities & Partnerships) – 6th November 2025 Cabinet – 18th November 2025
Executive Portfolio:	Councillor Julie Kerr – Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene
Report by:	Gregg Holland – Head of Leisure, Health & Environment
Ward(s) affected:	All Ward/s

Executive Summary:

This report presents a comprehensive framework for the sustainable delivery of outdoor play across Huntingdonshire, designed to meet the evolving needs of children, families, and communities while aligning with the Council's strategic priorities. The Sustainable Play Framework sets out a tiered model of provision as detailed in the HDC Final Report (**Appendix 1**) that prioritises investment in high-impact areas, enhances flagship sites, and reviews the entirety of our play assets to ensure long-term financial, environmental, and social sustainability.

The framework is underpinned by extensive consultation, evidence-based analysis, and national best practice, including guidance from Fields in Trust and Design for Play. It responds to the findings of the 2025 Geographic Gap Analysis (**Appendix 3**) and the Thematic Gap Analysis (**Appendix 4**), which identified significant disparities in accessibility, quality, and inclusivity across the District's play network.

Key features of the framework include:

- Strategic Investment: A phased programme of capital investment totalling £730,000 over four years, embedded within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to ensure delivery and financial resilience.
- Commercial Sustainability: Development of income-generating flagship sites to support reinvestment in the wider play network and reduce long-term maintenance liabilities.

- Inclusive Design: Commitment to accessible, imaginative, and inclusive play spaces that meet the needs of all age groups, including children with additional needs and teenagers.
- Environmental Stewardship: Integration of sustainable design principles, biodiversity-friendly landscaping, and climate-resilient infrastructure to support the Council's Climate Strategy.
- Community Engagement: A co-design approach involving children, young people, and local stakeholders to ensure play provision reflects community aspirations and fosters local stewardship.

The framework supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, particularly Priority 1: Improving health and wellbeing and Priority 3: Doing our core work well, by positioning play as essential infrastructure for preventative health, social cohesion, and climate resilience. It also supports the Council's Place Strategy by working in partnership with Town and Parish Councils to deliver improvements which help to develop pride of place and support a good quality of life for our residents and improved physical activity, health and well-being in young people. The framework strengthens the Council's ability to secure external funding and developer contributions by demonstrating a clear, strategic approach to delivering high-quality, multi-functional green spaces.

Through this framework, Huntingdonshire District Council aims to become a national exemplar in delivering sustainable, inclusive, and impactful play provision that improves lives, supports communities, and protects the environment for future generations.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

a) to adopt the Sustainable Play Framework as the strategic approach for play provision across Huntingdonshire, ensuring alignment with the Corporate Plan, Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and the Council's Climate Strategy;

b) to approve the tiered play provision model as detailed in the HDC Final Report (**Appendix 1**) and phased implementation plan (2025–2030) as outlined in the HDC Final Report (**Appendix 1**) and supported by the HDC Implementation Guide (**Appendix 2**), including audit and prioritisation, pilot projects, and District-wide rollout, to deliver inclusive, high-quality play spaces;

c) to commit to securing multi-year funding through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to lock in the indicative £730,000 capital investment and enable delivery of the framework;

d) to delegate authority to the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene to identify and co-ordinate the development of income-generating flagship sites to create a commercially sustainable model that reinvests revenue into the wider play network; and

e) to delegate authority to the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene to develop community engagement initiatives and co-design to ensure inclusivity, local ownership, and alignment with the needs of children, young people, and families.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present a strategic framework for the sustainable delivery of outdoor play across Huntingdonshire, ensuring inclusive, high-quality provision that meets the needs of current and future generations. The framework aims to prioritise investment in areas of greatest impact, enhance flagship sites capable of generating income, and to review the entirety of our play assets to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

1.2 This approach aligns with the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and the Council's Place Strategy, Corporate Plan priorities—particularly Priority 1: Improving health and wellbeing and Priority 3: Doing our core work well—and the Climate Strategy, by embedding inclusive design, environmental stewardship, and commercial viability into the future of play provision. It also supports the Council's ambition to reduce inequalities, promote preventative health, and deliver resilient community infrastructure.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Access to high-quality play is essential for public health, child development, and community resilience. Evidence from Public Health England and the Raising the Nation Play Commission highlights that play supports physical activity, mental wellbeing, and social development. Risk-based play builds resilience and problem-solving skills, helping to reduce long-term pressures on health and social care services.

2.2 National standards from Fields in Trust emphasise that every child should have access to quality green and play space. Their research estimates that UK parks and green spaces deliver £34 billion in health and wellbeing benefits annually, saving the NHS over £111 million each year. These spaces are vital infrastructure for health, social cohesion, and climate resilience.

2.3 The Design for Play guidance, endorsed by Play England and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, stresses that play spaces must be inclusive, imaginative, and integrated into the wider public realm. Good design is a strategic investment that ensures long-term use, community value, and sustainability.

2.4 Huntingdonshire District Council currently manages a diverse portfolio of play areas, many of which have been adopted through housing developments or inherited from previous local government stock. To develop a cohesive and evidence-based investment strategy, the Council commissioned the Play Sufficiency Report which identified key disparities in accessibility, quality, and usage.

2.5 Many estate-based sites are underused and lack inclusivity, while flagship sites require investment to meet accessibility and quality standards. Provision for teenagers remains limited. Without a clear strategy, inefficiencies and maintenance costs will escalate, and health inequalities may widen.

2.6 This framework provides a commercially sustainable approach which: reviews the entirety of our play assets, prioritising investment for maximum impact, and enhancing flagship destinations capable of generating income to reinvest in the wider network.

2.7 It aligns with the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020), the Council's Place Strategy and Corporate Plan priorities — particularly Priority 1: Improving wellbeing and Priority 3: Doing our core work well—and supports the ambition to keep people well and out of crisis. The framework also enables multi-year funding, partnership opportunities, and the delivery of an inclusive, financially resilient, and environmentally responsible play network.

2.8 The Council currently manages 47 play areas across the district, including 2 skate parks which are inspected weekly by the Council's dedicated Play Area Inspector to ensure safety and usability. An annual Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) inspection is carried out by the Council's insurers, Zurich. A full list of the 47 play areas that the Council manage on a weekly basis can be seen at **(Appendix 5)**.

2.9 Our current approach is focused on maintaining existing provision to a safe and accessible standard, within the limits of available resources. Urgent repairs are addressed immediately, while non-urgent repairs are assessed and prioritised based on risk, usage, and budget. At present, our strategy is maintenance-led rather than expansion-focused, with emphasis on routine safety inspections, responsive repairs, asset management and prioritisation and community engagement where possible.

2.10 To implement the current approach outlined in 2.9, the Head of Leisure, Health and Environment has identified a need to increase the revenue budget for play and has put in a capital bid in the 2026/27 MTFS to increase it from £35,000 to £60,000 for the next 5 years. This is in addition to a request for investment in the form of a capital bid totalling £730,000 over the next 4 years to enable delivery of the framework detailed in this report.

2.11 While this report focusses on the Council's 47 play areas, it is recognised that play provision across the District is also delivered by Town and Parish Councils and private developers. These areas are not inspected or maintained by the Council. The Council aims to complement existing provision and focus investment in the district where it will have the greatest impact and meet identified gaps in access.

3. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

3.1 Demographic analysis highlights several factors that are directly relevant to the strategic planning of play provision across Huntingdonshire. The district has seen a 6.7% population increase since 2011, with nearly 30,000 children aged 0–14 expected by 2026. While the population remains predominantly White (92.4%), there is a gradual rise in ethnic diversity, particularly among younger age groups. This evolving profile reinforces the need for culturally inclusive play spaces that reflect the lived experiences of all families. Additionally, Cambridgeshire's above-average Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) rate (5.7%) signals a significant cohort of children with SEND, further underscoring the importance of accessible, sensory-rich, and inclusive design across the play estate.

3.2 Economically, Huntingdonshire performs well overall, but pockets of deprivation — particularly in Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and The Stukeley's — highlight areas where financial barriers may limit access to play. These insights are critical to the report's recommendations, as they provide a clear rationale for prioritising investment in areas of greatest need. Aligning future provision with demographic data ensures that play spaces are not only safe and engaging, but also equitable and responsive to the communities they serve. This evidence base supports a shift toward inclusive, place-based planning that delivers long-term social value.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 **Option1: Do Nothing**
Choosing to take no action would mean continuing with the current approach without introducing a strategic framework for play provision. This recognises that play provision is discretionary. While this option requires no immediate planned investment there will be cyclical replacement works carried out. This option does not position the Council to respond to changing community needs, address accessibility requirements, or deliver on the ambitions of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and Corporate Plan. It would also limit opportunities to create a financially sustainable model for play and to maximise the health and wellbeing benefits that high-quality play spaces can deliver.

4.2 **Option 2: Do Something**
This option involves making selective improvements to existing play areas without adopting a comprehensive strategy. While this would provide some visible enhancements, it would not deliver the systemic change required to ensure long-term sustainability, inclusivity, and financial resilience. Investment would be reactive rather than planned, reducing the ability to prioritise resources where they will have the greatest impact. This approach would achieve incremental progress but would not fully realise the potential benefits of a coordinated, evidence-based framework.

4.3 **Option 3: Do Everything (Recommended)**
Adopting the Sustainable Play Framework offers a proactive and strategic solution. This approach focuses on creating a tiered model of provision that prioritises investment in high-impact locations, enhances flagship and hub sites to deliver inclusive and engaging play experiences, and ensures compliance with national standards such as those set by Fields in Trust. It also incorporates the principles of Design for Play, ensuring that spaces are imaginative, accessible, and integrated into the wider public realm. By aligning with the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and Corporate Plan priorities, this option supports improved health and wellbeing, strengthens core service delivery, and contributes to environmental sustainability. It also establishes a commercially viable model by developing income-generating flagship sites, enabling reinvestment

across the network, and securing long-term financial resilience. It also positions the Council in a positive way when applying for external funding and working with partners to deliver improvements.

5. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) Panel discussed the A Sustainable Framework for Play in Huntingdonshire Report at its meeting on 7th November 2025.

5.2 Councillor Shaw praised the content of the report and mentioned that it was helpful to understand how the inclusive equipment at Hinchingbrooke Country Park could be accessed. Councillor Shaw also commented on the gym style equipment installed in many parks across the district observing that it is rare to be seen in use. The Panel heard that the One Leisure Active Lifestyles team were in the process of creating demonstration videos which residents could access via the One Leisure website and via QR codes to encourage usage of the equipment.

5.3 Councillor Alban observed that often small pockets of play equipment would be installed by developers and enquired whether there was opportunity to create a more collaborate and cohesive approach in parishes to link projects into a larger and well funded park rather than several smaller in order to better serve communities. The Panel heard that work was underway to better link opportunities through a collaborative approach from Leisure and Planning in order to efficiently create a better developed outcome for residents.

5.4 In response to a further comment from Councillor Alban, the Panel heard that community engagement would be key to the future development of the framework.

5.5 The Panel were advised following a question from Councillor Wells, that in a drive to increase footfall and become more financially sustainable, the team would look at opportunities for secondary spend, with the example of the café at Hinchingbrooke Country Park being given.

5.6 Councillor Pitt praised the positive content of the report and noted how vital play areas were in providing opportunities to form social connections within local communities. Councillor Pitt encouraged the Council to be more ambitious than the three flagship sites named within the report, in response to which the Panel heard that further opportunities would be developed once funding streams had been secured and that external funding opportunities would also be explored.

5.7 Following enquiries from Councillors Hunt and Lowe in relation to proposed engagement with young people, the Panel heard that the teams ambitions for engagement with young people were outlined within the report and that further detail on this would be developed as the relevant projects progress.

5.8 In response to enquiries from members relating to engagement from local communities, the Panel heard that ward members would be looped into further engagement opportunities as projects developed.

5.9 The Panel requested that further updates on the progress illustrated in the report be brought back to the Panel in due course and it was agreed that this would be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for Autumn 2026.

5.10 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Following the drafting of a desk top assessment, extensive community engagement was undertaken in March and June 2025 to test the finding and formalise the priorities for the proposed investment framework and align them with Strategic objectives.

6.2 The engagement programme combined quantitative and qualitative methods to capture a broad range of views, to include.

- District-wide online surveys promoted through the Council's website, social media channels, and local networks.
- Targeted focus groups with parents, carers, and young people, including underrepresented groups identified in the Gap Analysis.
- Stakeholder workshops with schools, health partners, Parish Councils, and community organisations.
- Site-based engagement sessions at flagship parks and local play areas to gather feedback from users on-site.

6.3 The engagement findings provide a clear mandate for a strategic, tiered approach to play provision that prioritises inclusivity, quality, and sustainability while aligning with the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and Corporate Plan priorities. A number of key findings were initially identified by the engagement and are highlighted below.

- Strong support for investment in flagship and hub sites to provide high-quality, inclusive play experiences with supporting facilities such as toilets and seating.
- Demand for inclusive and accessible play to meet the needs of children with additional needs and to provide opportunities for all age groups, particularly teenagers.

- Preference for natural and imaginative play features that encourage creativity, social interaction, and connection with nature, in line with Design for Play principles.

- Recognition of the need for sustainability, with respondents supporting a model that focuses resources where they deliver the greatest benefit and ensures long-term viability.

- Community willingness to engage in stewardship of local play areas, highlighting opportunities for partnership working and co-design.

6.4 To support this feedback, the table below summarises the comparative strengths of flagship and neighbourhood play sites, based on observed usage, play value and accessibility. This evidence reinforces the case for prioritising investment in high-performing, multi-functional sites that deliver the greatest community benefit.

Site Type	Indicative Locations	Play Types Offered	Accessibility	Strategic Value
Flagship Sites - High footfall, multi-age engagement	• Hinchingbrooke Country Park, • Riverside Park (St Neots), • Priory Park	Physical, sensory, imaginative, cooperative	Generally good, some fully accessible	High community impact, suitable for investment
Neighbourhood Sites - Low to moderate usage, often single-age focus	• Crocus Way (Yaxley), • Moorhouse Drive (Huntingdon), • Stokes Drive (Godmanchester)	Mostly physical, limited sensory or imaginative	Often limited, few inclusive features	Potential for change or redesign

7. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

7.1 Implementing the Sustainable Play Framework will deliver significant benefits for health, wellbeing, and community cohesion, but it also involves managing a set of strategic risks.

7.2 While the provision of play facilities is a discretionary service, once installed, we have a duty to ensure they are appropriately managed and maintained. This includes undertaking regular inspections, risk assessments, and necessary repairs to mitigate potential hazards and ensure the safety and wellbeing of users. Our commitment to responsible stewardship ensures that play areas remain safe, inclusive, and sustainable for the communities they serve.

7.3 The primary risk relates to community perception and engagement. Reviewing play provision and prioritising investment in high-impact sites may lead to concerns from residents about changes to local facilities. This will be mitigated through transparent communication, early engagement, and clear articulation of the benefits for health, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability.

7.4 Financial risk is another consideration. The framework requires upfront investment and a commitment to multi-year funding. However, this risk is offset by the creation of a commercially sustainable model that leverages income from flagship sites and reduces long-term maintenance liabilities. There is also a recognition that provision of high-quality play can have unquantified financial benefits to the Council; particularly around pride in place, reduction in anti-social behaviour, improving physical activity, and wider public sector benefits such as healthy lifestyles.

7.5 There is also a reputational risk if the Council is perceived as failing to act on the evidence gathered through consultation and the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020). Conversely, adopting the framework positions the Council as proactive, evidence-led, and committed to improving community wellbeing, which strengthens public trust and supports delivery of Corporate Plan priorities.

7.6 The sole focus of this report is to set out the proposed strategy of a sustainable play framework for Huntingdonshire which subject to full approval will underpin how the council should invest across the district in its play infrastructure over the coming years to support children and young people.

7.7 This report is separate to the "Transfer of Public Open Spaces Policy" that was approved by Cabinet in November 2023. This report focussed on the process and policy around the Council transferring public open space from another stakeholder to meet the requirements of the Corporate Plan or the transfer of Council land to a partner organisation and the process that should be undertaken.

7.8 Whilst there are similarities between the two reports, this report (A Sustainable Framework for Play in Huntingdonshire) as stated above seeks to confirm the council's approach to investment over the coming years and the report set out and approved in November 2023 by Cabinet clearly indicates the process that should be undertaken for acquiring or transferring public open spaces between the council and its partners.

7.9 If in the future, an opportunity presented itself to transfer or acquire public open space then as per the "Transfer of Public Open Spaces Policy" Officer's would develop and present a business case for approval.

7.10 Finally, there is a delivery risk associated with the scale and complexity of the programme. This will be managed through phased implementation, robust governance, and partnership working to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery.

Risk	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Community Perception	Concerns about reviewing play provision and making changes to local play areas	Medium	High	Transparent communication, early engagement, clear articulation of benefits
Financial Risk	Upfront investment and multi-year funding commitment	Medium	Medium	Embed in MTFS, develop income-generating flagship sites to offset costs
Reputational Risk	Perception of inaction or failure to deliver on consultation and strategy	Low	Medium	Adopt evidence-led framework, communicate progress, align with Corporate Plan
Delivery Risk	Complexity and scale of programme implementation	Medium	Medium	Phased delivery, robust governance, partnership working

8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Subject to financial approval, the intention would be to commence the main works in the 2026/27 financial year, albeit some preparatory work will be undertaken at the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The delivery of the Sustainable Play Framework will follow a phased programme designed to ensure strategic prioritisation, financial sustainability, and measurable outcomes. Each phase builds on the previous stage, moving from evidence-based planning to pilot delivery and then to district-wide implementation. This structured approach ensures that improvements are inclusive, future-proofed, and aligned with the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020), Corporate Plan priorities, and national best practice standards. The programme also embeds continuous monitoring and community engagement to maintain quality and relevance over time.

8.2 The phased approach will deliver a modern, inclusive, and financially sustainable play network across the district. Outcomes include full compliance with safety and accessibility standards, improved health and wellbeing through increased physical activity and social interaction, and the creation of flagship sites that set a benchmark for quality and inclusivity. The framework will also establish a lifecycle renewal model, ensure long-term asset resilience, and embed community engagement to foster local stewardship and continuous improvement. Collectively, these outcomes will position Huntingdonshire as a leader in delivering high-quality, sustainable play provision aligned with national best practice and the Council's strategic priorities.

8.3 A summary of Activities and Outcomes can be found in the following table.

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Phase 1: Audit and Prioritisation	Q3–Q4 2025/26	• Documentation audit; • Digital asset register; • Capital Prioritisation Matrix; • Inclusive Design Standards; • Youth Co-Design Programme	Full EN1176 compliance; Reduced legal risk; Equity-based investment framework; Youth-informed strategy
Phase 2: Pilot Projects	2026/7	• Safety remediation; • Inclusive upgrades; • Youth provision; • Yaxley feasibility;	Safer, inclusive parks; Increased youth engagement; Community-led designs; Improved accessibility
Phase 3: District-Wide Rollout	2027–2030	• Retrofit inclusive equipment; • Natural play pilot; • Lifecycle renewal fund	Broader reach of inclusive play; Sustainable asset management; Innovative play models piloted
Ongoing: Maintenance & Feedback	Annual	• Annual H&S audits; • Community surveys; • Observational studies; • Friends of the Park groups	Continuous improvement; Community stewardship; Evidence-based planning

9. LINK TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

9.1 The Sustainable Play Framework is a key enabler for delivering the ambitions set out in the Council's Place Strategy and the Corporate Plan. It directly supports Priority 1: Improving health and wellbeing by creating inclusive, high-quality play environments that encourage physical activity, social interaction, and mental resilience. It also underpins Priority 3: Doing our core work well by introducing a structured, evidence-based approach that ensures resources are targeted where they deliver the greatest impact and long-term value.

9.2 The framework aligns with the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and the Council's Place Strategy and integrates the Green Space principles established in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which recognise open space and play as essential infrastructure for sustainable communities. These principles emphasise the role of green infrastructure in promoting health, biodiversity, and climate resilience, and they set clear expectations for quality, accessibility, and long-term stewardship. By embedding these principles, the framework ensures that play provision is not only functional but also contributes to the wider environmental and social objectives of the district.

9.3 This approach positions play as a critical component of community infrastructure, supporting preventative health measures, reducing future demand on services, and enhancing the district's reputation as a forward-thinking authority. It also strengthens the Council's ability to secure external investment and developer contributions by demonstrating a clear, strategic plan for delivering high-value, multi-functional green spaces.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure that public spaces, including play areas, are accessible and inclusive. This requires taking all reasonable steps to remove barriers and provide equal opportunities for children and carers with disabilities, while balancing safety considerations for all users. The emphasis is on inclusion and ensuring that play spaces enable children of all abilities to participate and interact wherever practicable.

10.2 In addition, the Council has obligations under the Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 to take reasonable care to ensure that visitors are safe when using its facilities. This includes maintaining play areas to an appropriate standard, carrying out regular inspections, and managing foreseeable risks without eliminating the inherent benefits of play, such as managed risk-taking that supports child development.

10.3 Failure to meet these duties could expose the Council to legal challenge and reputational risk. Conversely, adopting the Sustainable Play Framework demonstrates compliance with statutory requirements, supports best practice in inclusive design, and reinforces the Council's commitment to equality, safety, and community wellbeing.

11. ACCESSIBILITY COMMITMENT

11.1 Ensuring inclusive access to play is a core principle of the Sustainable Play Framework. The Council recognises that many estate-based play areas are underused and lack features that support accessibility, particularly for children with disabilities and teenagers. Flagship sites, while popular, require investment to meet modern standards of inclusivity and quality.

11.2 The framework commits to embedding inclusive design principles across all tiers of provision, guided by national standards such as Fields in Trust and Design for Play. This includes the installation of accessible equipment, imaginative features that support neurodiverse engagement, and supporting infrastructure such as seating, shade, and accessible pathways.

11.3 Provision for teenagers will be addressed through targeted upgrades and co-design programmes that reflect their needs and preferences. By prioritising investment in high-impact sites and reviewing the entirety of our play assets, the framework ensures that resources are directed where they deliver the greatest benefit—creating a play network that is equitable, welcoming, and future-proofed.

11.4 This approach supports the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and contributes to wider goals around health equity, community cohesion, and preventative wellbeing.

12. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Delivery of the Sustainable Play Framework will require phased capital investment supported by robust financial planning to ensure long-term sustainability. The indicative investment plan below outlines the proposed allocation of resources across key locations and activities over the next four financial years. This approach prioritises early wins to address safety and accessibility, feasibility work for future flagship projects, and targeted investment in high-impact sites. It also incorporates district-wide initiatives for inclusive play and lifecycle renewal, ensuring compliance with national standards and alignment with the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and the Council's Place Strategy.

12.2 To secure these investments, the programme will be embedded within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and annual budget-setting process. This will ensure that funding commitments are locked in, enabling multi-year delivery and reducing the risk of delays or underfunding. By aligning with the MTFS, the framework supports financial resilience and provides a clear basis for leveraging external funding and developer contributions.

12.3 The total indicative investment across the district is £730,000, representing a strategic commitment to creating an inclusive, resilient, and commercially sustainable play network. This indicative sum will be subject to review in terms of the location for development and value based on evidence, constraints at the time of the investment.

12.4 Indicative Investment Plan for the Sustainable Play Framework; -

Financial Year	Location of investment	Value	Total
26/27	Remedial quick wins District Wide	£20, 000	£165,000
	Feasibility	£25,000	
	Ramsey	£120,000	
27/28	Huntingdon	£100,000	£160,000
	Godmanchester	£60,000	
28/27	St Ives	£50,000	£150,000
	St Neots	£100,000	
27/28	Sawtry	£100,000	£175,000
	Inclusive Play District Wide	£75,000	
28/29	St Neots Destination Play	£80,000	£80,000
Total Indicative Investment across District			**£730, 000**

12.5 To deliver more substantial improvements to play areas, the Council will seek to layer funding from multiple sources. This may include internal budgets, external grants, developer contributions (Section 106), and partnership funding. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can be used to support the overarching capital funding as outlined in this report to mitigate the impact of growth or respond to future development needs. Where appropriate, this report and associated evidence can be used to support CIL funding bids — for example, in areas where population growth is placing increased pressure on existing infrastructure. By aligning investment with strategic growth and working collaboratively with stakeholders, the Council can ensure that play provision remains responsive, inclusive, and sustainable.

13. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Improved access to high-quality, inclusive play spaces delivers significant health and wellbeing benefits for children, families, and communities. The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) identifies play as a critical intervention for tackling social isolation, improving mental health, and promoting physical activity from an early age. Well-designed play environments encourage active lifestyles, support emotional resilience, and provide opportunities for social interaction, which are essential for reducing loneliness and building stronger communities.

13.2 These outcomes align directly with the Corporate Plan priorities, particularly Priority 1: Improving health and wellbeing, and contribute to the Council's overarching ambition to keep people well and out of crisis. By embedding inclusive design and co-creation principles, the Sustainable Play Framework ensures that play provision is equitable, accessible, and capable of delivering long-term preventative health benefits across the district. The outcomes also contribute to the delivery of the Council's Place Strategy to support a good quality of life for all people at all stages of life.

13.3 The following evidence-based benefits highlight why investment in play is a strategic health priority:

- Improved Physical Health: Regular active play reduces the risk of childhood obesity and supports healthy growth and development.
- Enhanced Mental Wellbeing: Play reduces stress and anxiety, improves mood, and builds emotional resilience in children and young people.
- Social Development: Inclusive play spaces foster social interaction, cooperation, and communication skills, reducing isolation and loneliness.
- Cognitive and Creative Growth: Risk-based and imaginative play supports problem-solving, creativity, and decision-making skills.
- Preventative Health Impact: Increased physical activity and social engagement contribute to long-term health, reducing future demand on health and social care services.
- Community Cohesion: Accessible, well-designed play areas create safe, welcoming spaces that strengthen community ties and intergenerational interaction.

14. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The Sustainable Play Framework supports the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy by embedding sustainable design principles into all stages of play provision. This includes the use of natural and low-carbon materials, biodiversity-friendly landscaping, and sustainable drainage solutions to manage surface water and reduce flood risk.

14.2 By concentrating investment on strategic sites, the framework creates opportunities to integrate play into green infrastructure, enhancing habitats and contributing to the district's climate resilience objectives. These measures align with the Climate Strategy outcomes of reducing carbon emissions, increasing biodiversity, and promoting sustainable land use. In addition, the framework encourages children and young people to engage with nature, fostering environmental awareness and building a lifelong connection to the natural world—supporting both climate goals and community wellbeing.

15. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The Sustainable Play Framework reinforces the Council's commitment to equality, accessibility, and community cohesion. By embedding inclusive design principles and aligning with national standards such as Fields in Trust and Design for Play, the framework ensures that play provision meets the needs of all residents, including those with disabilities and underrepresented groups. It also supports the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and contributes to wider policy objectives on health, wellbeing, and climate resilience. Beyond compliance, the framework strengthens social value by creating spaces that foster intergenerational interaction, encourage community stewardship, and enhance the quality of life across the district. This approach positions the Council as a proactive, evidence-led authority delivering long-term benefits for residents and the environment.

15.2 As the Council moves through the process of Local Government Reorganisation, the Sustainable Play Framework offers a timely opportunity to embed lasting principles that will shape future service delivery. By investing in inclusive, high-quality play spaces now, the Council can leave a positive legacy that reflects its commitment to community wellbeing, environmental stewardship, and social equity. This proactive approach ensures that play provision remains a priority during the transition and provides a strong foundation to build upon with significant benefits to the community, particularly for children and young people.

16. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

16.1 The Sustainable Play Framework provides a strategic, evidence-led approach to improving outdoor play provision across Huntingdonshire. It responds directly to consultation findings, national best practice, and the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020), ensuring that play spaces are inclusive, imaginative, and accessible to all. By prioritising investment in high-impact areas and enhancing flagship sites, the framework supports improved health and wellbeing, community cohesion, and environmental resilience—delivering on Corporate Plan priorities and statutory duties.

16.2 The recommended decisions also enable the Council to establish a financially and commercially sustainable model for play. Through the identification of underused sites and development of income-generating destinations, the framework allows the Council to direct resource appropriately and create opportunities for reinvestment. Embedding the programme within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy ensures delivery is achievable and resilient. Collectively, these measures position Huntingdonshire as a forward-thinking authority committed to delivering high-quality infrastructure that improves lives and supports thriving communities.

17. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – HDC Final Report. Premier Advisory Group (2025).

Appendix 2 – HDC Implementation Guide. Premier Advisory Group (2025).
Appendix 3 - HDC Geographic Gap Analysis. Premier Advisory Group.
Appendix 4 - HDC Thematic Gap Analysis. Premier Advisory Group.
Appendix 5 – List of 47 HDC play areas.

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- HDC Summary Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Equality Addendum. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Sustainability Strategy. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Observation Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Consultation Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Annexes for Community Engagement and Consultation Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Community Profile. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Demographic Data Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- Everything to Play For: A Plan to Ensure Every Child in England Can Play (2025). Raising the Nation Play Commission.
- HDC. Corporate Plan
- HDC. Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and 10 Year Action Plan
- Huntingdonshire District Council - Transfer of Public Open Spaces Policy – November 2023

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Huntingdonshire District Council

Final Report

Private & Confidential

September 2025

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1. Executive Summary

This report presents Huntingdonshire District Council's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment, providing a district-wide evaluation of access, quality, safety, and inclusivity of children's play spaces. It draws on extensive consultation, data analysis, and benchmarking to present an evidence-based assessment of current service provision and future opportunities. The findings demonstrate clear areas of strength to consolidate, as well as pressing issues that demand targeted action.

This evidence points to a dual imperative: to build on Huntingdonshire District Council's strong legacy of play provision while identifying practical pathways for continuous improvement. The recommended actions form part of a cohesive strategy to support sustainable development, enhance resident wellbeing, and ensure value for money in the stewardship of public spaces.

1.1 Key Findings and Strategic Implications

- **Safety and Quality**: Health and Safety inspections carried out by Handsam identified a small number of sites where surfacing, signage, or individual equipment components may require attention. In most cases, remedial works are already underway or planned as part of ongoing maintenance schedules. These reports should be consulted alongside the council's internal H&S reports before being actioned. Where continued investment is not feasible due to low usage or recurring vandalism, alternative options (such as rationalisation or redesign) may be appropriate.
- **Patterns of Use**: While many sites were well-used, a number of smaller or less accessible locations were observed with limited or no users at the time of assessment. Usage patterns often reflect factors such as visibility, proximity to housing, and site features, rather than quality alone. The Current Provision Report provides a detailed breakdown.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion**: Some sties offer inclusive play features. Many older sites were designed before contemporary accessibility standards were introduced, and retrofitting is not always straightforward. Nonetheless, there is a clear opportunity to prioritise accessible, multi-generational design in future upgrades and new developments.
- **Equity Across Localities**: There are natural variations in provision across a large and predominantly rural district. Some communities, particularly in growth areas or historic estates, rely on older sites that may benefit from targeted improvement. Addressing these

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imbalances is key to ensuring all residents enjoy safe, inclusive, and engaging places to play.

- **Provision for Older Children**: While some traditional youth facilities such as multi-use games areas were underused during assessment visits, consultation suggests demand for more adventurous, flexible, and socially oriented spaces. This presents an opportunity to reimagine provision in partnership with young people.

1.2 Action Planning

This report proposes a phased five-year capital delivery programme that balances current needs with long-term aspirations.

- Phase 1 focuses on immediate safety works and high-need sites, such as a full site reviews at Yaxley and youth provision in Ramsey.
- Phase 2 targets inclusive upgrades in Amber-rated areas such as Godmanchester and St Ives (where appropriate).
- Phase 3 consolidates earlier gains through retrofitting and innovation pilots.

These projects are supported by four cross-cutting reforms:

- A governance and compliance review
- The integration of inclusive design standards
- Youth-led co-design processes
- An equity-based investment framework

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2. Introduction

This report provides Huntingdonshire District Council with an independent assessment of local play needs, challenges, and opportunities. Drawing on data, stakeholder feedback, and benchmarking, it offers a rounded view of current provision and future potential. The analysis recognises both the Council's achievements and the constraints of managing a large, diverse portfolio across a rural and historic district. The purpose is to establish a clear, evidence-based baseline to guide strategic, proportionate, and sustainable decision-making. Rather than suggesting uniform solutions, the report highlights tailored approaches aligned to local context, community priorities, and available resources.

As part of the consultation, respondents referenced a number of play areas not managed by HDC. These have been retained to give a holistic view of the wider play landscape, but are identified below:

- Judith's Field
- Butcher Drive
- Millfields Park
- Warboys Park
- Roman's Edge
- Alconbury
- Crescent
- Dunnock Way

The maintenance and planning of these parks does not fall within the remit of Huntingdonshire District Council. However, they should be considered within council-wide strategic planning through collaboration with the relevant authorities where possible, in order to provide the best possible landscape of play provision for the communities served by HDC.

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3. Community Profile

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of demographic and economic data across the Huntingdonshire District, contributing to a wider assessment of outdoor play opportunities in the region. Understanding the district's population characteristics is essential for the evaluation of current and future demand for play opportunities across open spaces and ensuring inclusive, accessible provision for all children and young people.

The intention is to build further upon the previous engagement work delivered by HDC through the development of their 'Healthy Open Spaces Strategy'[1]. This strategy involved a community questionnaire as part of the consultation process in which barriers to outdoor play were explored. Through additional consultation Premier Advisory Group has explored the trends identified by the District Council.

This report explores key demographic indicators, including population size, growth trends, and population projections, offering insight into how Huntingdonshire's community is evolving. Birth rates are examined to anticipate future needs, while economic activity levels provide context on employment patterns and household incomes, which all influence access to play and recreational facilities. The report investigates ethnic diversity within the district to support culturally inclusive play strategies and assesses data on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to ensure play provision meets the requirements of children with additional needs.

Where available, the analysis utilises Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) and ward-level data to provide a detailed local perspective. This is complemented by district-level data and, where necessary, local authority-held statistics. Any relevant internal council data sources will be reviewed to ensure a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of play opportunities across Huntingdonshire.

3.1 Population and Birth Rates

According to the 2021 Census data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Huntingdonshire's population increased by 6.7%, adding approximately 11,300 new residents since 2011, bringing the total to around 180,800 in 2021. This growth is slightly higher than the overall increase for England,

[1] Huntingdonshire District Council (2020) *HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy.* Available at: https://democracy.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s111005/Appendix%202%20-%20HDC%20Healthy%20Open%20Spaces%20Strategy%20and%2010%20Year%20Action%20Plan.pdf

which was 6.6% during the same period. In terms of total population ranking among local authorities, Huntingdonshire maintained its position, ranking 150th out of 309 areas in England, consistent with it standing a decade ago.

Surrounding areas experienced varying rates of population growth between 2011 and 2021:

- Bedford: 17.7% increase
- Peterborough: 17.5% increase
- Fenland: 7.6% increase
- East Cambridgeshire: 4.6% increase

Regarding specific age groups, Huntingdonshire saw a 4.4% decrease in children aged under 5 years, equating to approximately 440 fewer children. Additionally, there was a 12.5% reduction in individuals aged 15 to 24 years, a decline of about 2,470 people. Conversely, the population aged 65 and over increased, reflecting national trends of an ageing population.

3.1.1 Population of children aged 0 -14

Table 1a outlines the estimated number of children to be resident in Huntingdonshire, as per ONS estimates for 2022, aligned with the following age groups:

- Under 2 years
- 2 years
- 3-4 years

Table 1b outlines the estimated number of children to be resident in Huntingdonshire, as per ONS estimates for 2022, aligned with the following age groups:

- 5-7 years
- 8-11 years
- 12-14 years

Source:https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/wardlevelmidyearpopulationestimatesexperimental

Table 1a - Approximate number of children aged 0 – 4 years resident in Huntingdonshire as of mid-2022 (source: ONS September 2023)

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Ward	0–1-year-olds	2-year-olds	3–4-year-olds
Alconbury	47	33	69
Brampton	250	137	260
Buckden	59	31	59
Fenstanton	92	38	84
Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	262	117	266
Great Paxton	51	28	61
Great Staughton	45	24	63
Hemingford Grey & Houghton	154	82	140
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	118	74	150
Huntingdon East	93	50	131
Huntingdon North	270	147	343
Kimbolton	48	27	53
Ramsey	240	108	270
St Ives East	160	95	129
St Ives South	130	64	150
St Ives West	53	29	54
St Neots East	124	93	164
St Neots Eatons	193	107	200
St Neots Eynesbury	265	120	239
St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	188	111	215
Sawtry	127	69	140
Somersham	76	34	70
Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley	86	35	143
The Stukeleys	234	112	197
Warboys	187	97	194
Yaxley	224	120	297
Totals	**3776**	**1982**	**4141**

The table above presents the population of children aged 0-4 years across the wards in Huntingdonshire. The data shows that 3–4-year-olds form the largest group, with a total of 4,141 children, followed by 0-1-year-olds with 3,776 children, and finally, 2-year-olds with 1,982 children.

Certain wards may require additional childcare provision for 0–1-year-olds. Huntingdon North has the highest number in this age group, with 270 children, followed closely by St Neots Eynesbury (265 children) and Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots (262 children).

The statistics suggest that 2-year-olds may require increased childcare provision. The ward with the lowest number of 2-year-olds is Great Staughton, with 24 children, while the highest is in Huntingdon

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North, with 147 children. This indicates that 3–4-year-olds may already have more available childcare provision compared to the 2-year-old population. However, Yaxley and The Stukeleys also show a significant need for additional childcare services in this age group. Other wards with relatively low numbers of 2-year-olds include Kimbolton (27 children) and Buckden (31 children).

For 3–4-year-olds, Huntingdon North again has the largest population, with 343 children, followed by Yaxley (297 children) and Ramsey (270 children). In contrast, the wards with the smallest number of 3-4-year-olds include Kimbolton (53 children) and Buckden (59 children).

These figures highlight varying levels of demand for play provision across Huntingdonshire. Areas such as Huntingdon North, St Neots Eynesbury, and Yaxley may result in less participation, particularly for 0–1-year-olds and 2-year-olds, while demand remains high for 3–4-year-olds in several other wards.

Table 1b - Approximate number of children aged 5 – 14 years resident in Huntingdonshire as of mid-2022 (source: ONS September 2023)

Ward	5–7-year-olds	8–11-year-olds	12–14-year-olds
Alconbury	99	136	114
Brampton	402	539	383
Buckden	120	135	113
Fenstanton	160	212	156
Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	356	537	353
Great Paxton	100	136	116
Great Staughton	89	135	95
Hemingford Grey & Houghton	225	329	214
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	202	256	230
Huntingdon East	209	311	240
Huntingdon North	485	683	513
Kimbolton	85	131	138
Ramsey	366	542	363
St Ives East	207	341	244
St Ives South	226	336	285
St Ives West	85	141	101
St Neots East	269	367	233
St Neots Eatons	360	492	363
St Neots Eynesbury	441	481	349
St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	336	539	433
Sawtry	216	341	231

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Somersham	116	168	104
Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley	184	280	217
The Stukeleys	295	335	220
Warboys	243	337	227
Yaxley	450	536	409
Totals	**6326**	**8776**	**6444**

The table above presents the population of children aged 5–14 years across Huntingdonshire. The largest group is 8–11-year-olds (8,776 children), followed by 12–14-year-olds (6,444 children) and 5–7-year-olds (6,326 children).

Certain wards, particularly Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton, have significantly higher numbers of children across all three age groups, indicating a greater need for educational and childcare resources. In contrast, smaller wards such as Great Staughton, St Ives West, and Kimbolton have lower child populations, potentially requiring fewer services.

The distribution of children across age groups suggests a continued demand for primary and secondary education, as well as youth and recreational services, particularly in high-population areas. Strategic planning will be essential to ensure adequate provision of resources to meet the needs of children and families across Huntingdonshire.

3.1.2 Population Projections and Migration

Table 2 below shows a five-year population projection for children aged 0-14.

Source: Population projections for local authorities: Table 2 - Office for National Statistics

Table 2 – Population projections in Huntingdonshire between 2026-2030 (Source ONS Via Nomis 2023)

Age	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
0-4	9,237	9,217	9,192	9,171	9,155
5-9	9,854	9,732	9,615	9,575	9,527
10-14	10,764	10,541	10,372	10,189	10,034
Total	**29,855**	**29,491**	**29,179**	**28,936**	**28,715**

The 5-9-year-old age group is forecasted to decline steadily from 9,854 in 2026 to 9,527 in 2030—a reduction of 327 children. The 10-14-year-old age group will also see a gradual decrease, dropping from 10,764 in 2026 to 10,034 in 2030, a loss of 730 young residents.

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The 0-4 age group is expected to remain relatively stable, with only a modest decline of 82 children between 2026 and 2030. However, the decreasing numbers of primary and lower secondary-aged children could impact future demand for play provision.

Overall, the data suggests that while early years childcare demand will likely stay consistent, the need for services catering to older children (5-14 years) may decrease in the coming years.

Table 3 below shows the number of observations made of people who moved to Huntingdonshire when arriving in the UK.

Source: Year of arrival in UK - Office for National Statistics

Table 3 – Arrival of residents in Huntingdonshire

Time arrived in the UK	Number of observations
Arrived 2011 to 2013	2161
Arrived 2014 to 2016	2735
Arrived 2017 to 2019	3355
Arrived 2020 to 2021	1328

The latest ONS Census data shows the number of new arrivals in Huntingdonshire between 2011 and 2021. Over this period, a total of 9,579 residents moved to the district from outside the UK.

- Between 2011 and 2013, 2,161 people arrived.
- From 2014 to 2016, arrivals increased to 2,735.
- The highest number of arrivals occurred between 2017 and 2019, with 3,355 new residents.
- During 2020 and 2021, arrivals declined to 1,328, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on international movement.

This data highlights fluctuating migration trends, with a peak in arrivals before 2020, followed by a decline during the pandemic. Future monitoring will be essential to determine whether migration levels return to pre-pandemic trends or continue to shift due to economic and policy factors.

3.1.3 Birth Rates

Table 4 demonstrates the number of live birth rates recorded across Huntingdonshire over the past 5 years.

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Source: [Nomis - Query Tool - Live births in England and Wales : birth rates down to local authority areas]

Table 4 - Birth rates in Huntingdonshire between 2019-2023 (Source: ONS via Nomis 2023)

Date	Live Births
2019	1,867
2020	1,783
2021	1,890
2022	1,707
2023	1,714

Huntingdonshire's population dynamics reveal notable trends among children and young people. As of the 2021 Census, the district experienced a 6.7% population increase since 2011, reaching approximately 180,800 residents. Despite this overall growth, certain age groups have seen declines. Notably, the number of residents aged 15 to 24 years decreased by 12.5% (approximately 2,470 individuals), and children under 5 years old saw a 4.4% reduction (about 440 children). These shifts suggest a trend where younger populations are either relocating or fewer young families are settling in the area. Looking ahead, Huntingdonshire's population is projected to grow by 9.9% by 2031, adding approximately 17,945 individuals. However, forecasts suggest a 3.5% decrease (around 725 individuals) in the 5-14 age group during this period

The above table shows how birth rates have been declining since 2019, however, It is important to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Huntingdonshire's live birth rates. During the pandemic, birth rates across the UK declined to levels last seen in 2003, reflecting significant social and economic disruptions. The sharp decline in 2020 and 2021 may have been influenced by uncertainties surrounding employment, healthcare, and financial stability, discouraging some families from having children.

Table 5 - Residents in Huntingdonshire who moved to Enfield from inside or outside the UK in 2021

Migrant indicator	Observation
Does not apply	1752
Address one year ago is the same as the address of enumeration	160514
Address one year ago is student term-time or boarding school address in the UK	376
Migrant from within the UK: Address one year ago was in the UK	16926
Migrant from outside the UK: Address one year ago was outside the UK	1264

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As of 2021, there were approximately 16,926 residents who had moved into Huntingdonshire from other areas in the UK within the past year, and 1,264 residents who had migrated from outside the UK.

When comparing this information to previous ONS data for 2017-2019, which showed 3,355 international arrivals, the data suggests a significant decline of 2,091 migrants between 2019 and 2021. This represents the largest decrease observed in recent years, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit, both of which contributed to restrictions on international movement and economic uncertainty. Conversely, internal migration trends show 16,926 people relocated to Huntingdonshire from other parts of the UK in the past year. While internal migration had remained relatively stable in previous years, this suggests a potential increase in domestic relocation, possibly driven by changing housing preferences post-pandemic.

It is important to note that the latest 2021 data does not specify outflows, meaning the number of people who moved out of Huntingdonshire during this period remains unknown. As a result, net migration figures may be slightly overstated, and further monitoring will be required to assess long-term migration trends in the district.

3.1.4 Ethnicity

The below tables show ethic breakdown of the population from the 2021 census.

Table 6: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total per person	Percentage
White	167,116	92.4%
Asian	5,745	3.2%
Mixed	4,057	2.2%
Black	2,646	1.5%
Other	1,268	0.7%

According to the latest census, the population in Huntingdonshire is predominantly white (92.4%), with non-white minorities representing the remaining 7.6% of the population. Asian people were the largest minority group in Huntingdonshire accounting for 3.2% of the population.

In 2021, the ethnic composition was predominantly White at 92.4%, a slight decrease from 94.8% in 2011. The "Mixed or Multiple" ethnic groups category saw an increase from 1.5% to 2.2% over the same period. The "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" group rose from 2.5% to 3.2%, and the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" group increased from 1.0% to 1.5%.

The following uses the latest census to provide a breakdown of ethnicity by age group in Huntingdonshire. In UK census data, CC stands for "confidentiality controlled" meaning the actual number is very small (typically fewer than 3-5 people) and is hidden to protect individual privacy. It is not missing, just redacted on purpose.

Ethnicity	Age 0-4	Age 5-11	Age 12-16	Age 17-18
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	CC	CC	CC	CC
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	CC	CC	CC	CC
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	125	195	85	CC
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	85	180	140	30
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	65	115	90	35
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	130	175	125	35
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	CC	CC	CC	CC

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Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other	CC	CC	CC	CC
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	205	275	140	55
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	130	185	CC	25
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	130	200	125	35
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed	185	210	115	35
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	7,625	12,040	8,385	3,080
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	CC	CC	CC	CC
White: Irish	CC	CC	CC	CC
White: Roma	CC	CC	CC	CC
White: Other White	720	910	545	165
Other ethnic group: Arab	CC	CC	CC	CC

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Any other	90	CC	CC	CC

3.2

Economic Activity

3.2.1 Employment

Table 7 shows the frequency of adults who were 'economically active' (which implies they are in employment) last year.

Source: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157208/report.aspx#defs

Table 7 – Incidence of employment and unemployment in Huntingdonshire (NOMIS 2025 using ONS data from October 2023-September 2024).

Area	Economically Active	In Employment	Employees	Self Employed	Unemployed
Huntingdonshire (numbers)	97,900	94,300	82,000	12,300	2,800
Huntingdonshire (%)	86.7%	83.6%	73.6%	10.0%	2.8%
East of England (%)	79.3%	76.7%	66.8%	9.8%	3.2%
Great Britain (%)	78.4%	75.5%	66.0%	9.2%	3.7%

Compared to the broader region, Huntingdonshire's high employment rate suggests a generally prosperous economy with strong job availability. The lower unemployment rate could mean that more families have stable income sources, but the cost of living and work schedules may still influence the accessibility of play opportunities.

3.2.2 Families living in low-income households

Table 8 shows the number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income in Huntingdonshire, East of England, and the United Kingdom over the past eight years.

Source:https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2023

Table 8 - The number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income (DWP using ONS data from 2016-2023)

Area	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023

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Huntingdonshire Number	3,608	3,522	3,920	3,902	4,095	3,694	3,724	3,477
Huntingdonshire (%)	11.1%	10.8%	12.1%	12.1%	12.8%	11.4%	11.4%	10.4%
East of England Number	161,406	163,658	181,027	181,375	186,542	168,581	170,404	166,146
East of England (%)	14.0%	14.1%	15.4%	15.4%	15.7%	14.2%	14.4%	13.8%
United Kingdom Number	1,985,890	2,099,684	2,248,520	2,293,551	2,455,064	2,384,106	2,473,462	2,480,507
United Kingdom %	16.2%	16.9%	18.0%	18.2%	19.3%	18.7%	20.1%	20.1%

Huntingdonshire has consistently maintained a lower percentage of children in low-income households compared to both regional and national figures, indicating a relatively better economic standing. However, there was a peak in 2020, likely linked to economic pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a decline in recent years.

Despite its relatively lower rates, Huntingdonshire still has pockets of deprivation, particularly in areas such as Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and The Stukeleys, where a higher proportion of families face financial hardship. These areas may require targeted interventions to support access to affordable or free play provisions.

Lower-income households may struggle with financial barriers to accessing play, particularly in areas with fewer free recreational facilities. Families with limited resources may face challenges in affording transport, entry fees, or equipment necessary for participation in structured play activities. Ensuring sufficient free and inclusive play opportunities in deprived areas is essential to prevent economic disparities from limiting children's access to play.

3.2.3 English Indices of Deprivation 2019

See Appendix A for the full table list of Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) rank and decile.

The centre of Huntingdonshire is the most deprived. LSOAs Huntingdonshire 008A & 008B (Huntingdon North) have the most deprivation present in the district in the local IMD deciles. The most deprived wards are Yaxley, The Stukeleys, and Warboys. 10 out of 106 of the LSOAs in

Huntingdonshire are in the 3 most deprived deciles for IDACI. There are 11 LSOAs that are particularly deprived in the IDACI domain.

Other areas with moderate deprivation, such as Huntingdonshire 008E, 022C, and 022D, fall within IMD deciles 3 and 4, indicating slightly improved economic conditions but still higher-than-average levels of deprivation. These areas, while better off than the most deprived parts of the district, may still struggle with access to well-maintained and safe play facilities, particularly for children from lower-income households.

Conversely, some parts of Huntingdonshire rank among the least deprived areas in the country, with LSOAs such as Huntingdonshire 020D, 007A, and 006D ranking within the top 10% nationally in both IMD and IDACI. These areas are characterised by higher incomes, better infrastructure, and increased access to recreational spaces, ensuring more opportunities for children to engage in play.

The disparities in deprivation levels across Huntingdonshire directly influence access to play opportunities. In highly deprived areas, limited financial resources, higher unemployment, and lack of safe, free play spaces can restrict children's ability to engage in play, impacting their physical, social, and cognitive development. Additionally, families in these areas may lack the means to travel to well-equipped play facilities located in more affluent parts of the district.

In contrast, children in wealthier areas benefit from a greater availability of safe, high-quality play spaces, with better access to structured recreational activities, clubs, and sports facilities. These inequalities underscore the need for targeted investment in deprived areas to ensure all children, regardless of economic background, can access play opportunities. Efforts to bridge these gaps could include expanding free play areas, investing in community play programmes, and ensuring transport accessibility to existing recreational facilities. Addressing these disparities is essential for promoting inclusive play and supporting children's overall well-being.

3.3 SEND Designation and ECHP Rates

In 2024, the EHCP rate in Cambridgeshire was 5.7%. This rate is higher than the English average and regional rate of 4.71% and 4.6% respectively. This high EHCP rate represents a potential area of challenge. The EHCP rate for state-funded secondary schools was 1.6%, higher than the regional average (1.3%) and equal to the national average.

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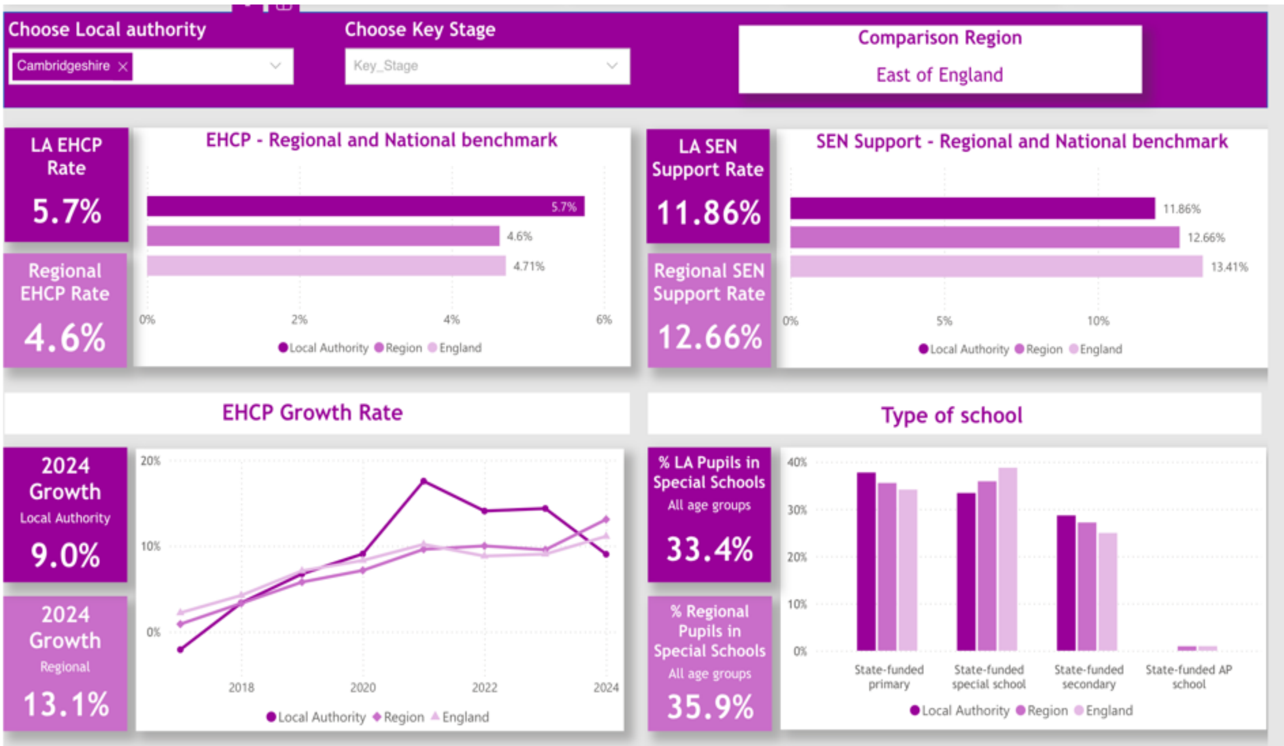
Cambridgeshire's SEN Support Rate (11.86%) ranks lower than the regional (12.66%) and national (13.41%) rates. In state-funded secondary schools, the SEN support rate was 4.07%, considerably lower than the national average of 18.32% and slightly below the regional rate of 5.22%. This large gap may indicate significant under-identification, meaning students are struggling without proper support. Alternatively, this may result from strong mainstream education and effective early support. Further investigation is required to see whether lower SEN support rate is due to better early intervention strategies or if students with needs are not being recognised or supported adequately.

The top primary needs in Cambridgeshire at Autistic Spectrum Order, Social Emotional and Mental Health, and Speech, Language and Communication needs.

Image 1: Data from Public Alchemy



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4. Consultation

The purpose of the consultation was to understand how current play provision meets the needs of children and families in Huntingdonshire, and to identify areas where improvements or further development may be required.

To build a comprehensive and inclusive picture, input was sought from a wide cross-section of the community. Surveys were carried out with children under the age of five, and with pupils across Key Stages 1 to 4. The views of parents and carers were gathered alongside those of childcare providers, local stakeholders, and representatives from town and parish councils. In addition to the survey responses, focus groups with parents and interviews with childcare providers offered further qualitative insight into local needs and experiences.

On behalf of HDC, PAG conducted a comprehensive data collection exercise between 2nd April and 16th June 2025. The primary objective was to gather views from a wide range of stakeholders to inform the development of local policy and service planning.

4.1 Surveys

This section highlights the key responses from each survey, for the detailed breakdown of responses to each survey, please see the consultation report and supporting annexes.

4.1.1 Under 5s

Responses from parents, carers, and childcare professionals on behalf of children under the age of five indicate that this age group engages in play across a broad range of environments. Indoor spaces, gardens, playgrounds, and grassy open areas were most frequently cited, with woodland and nature-based settings also proving popular. Levels of happiness with outdoor play opportunities were generally high, with the majority of respondents describing their children as either “happy” or “very happy” when playing outside. Parks such as Hinchingbrooke Country Park, Priory Park, Judith’s Field (not run by HDC), and Butcher Drive (not run by HDC) were most commonly identified as favourites, valued both for their variety of equipment and their proximity to home.

Safety was generally perceived positively, though a minority raised concerns about certain sites. Satisfaction with playground quality was mixed: while some families praised facilities as “great,” others rated them “okay” or “not very good,” highlighting issues of maintenance and suitability.

Swings and slides were the most consistently popular equipment, with additional interest in climbing frames and sensory play items. Conversely, large climbing structures and spinner equipment were considered inappropriate or unsafe for very young children. Parents and carers expressed a clear desire for more toddler-friendly and inclusive play facilities, improved cleanliness, and greater provision of supporting amenities such as toilets, bins, and seating.

4.1.2 Key Stage 1

The Key Stage 1 survey, with the largest response rate across cohorts, revealed a strong preference for structured play environments such as playgrounds with equipment, complemented by use of gardens, grassy areas, and community or leisure spaces. Frequency of park use tended to be concentrated at weekends, with relatively few children visiting on a daily basis. Popular sites included the "Pirate Park" in Ramsey (an HDC site), alongside other parks such as Millfields Park, Warboys Park, Judith's Field, and new estate play areas in Romans' Edge and Alconbury, which fall outside HDC's direct management.

Accessibility was generally high, with most children able to reach parks on foot or by bicycle. Safety perceptions were also largely positive, though a small number of respondents raised concerns around antisocial behaviour and the presence of older youths. Children's enjoyment was strongly associated with the variety and quality of equipment, open spaces for informal games, and opportunities for social interaction. Swings, climbing frames, and slides were most frequently highlighted, though many children expressed a desire for more adventurous or age-appropriate features. Dissatisfaction tended to centre on outdated equipment, overcrowding, or poorly maintained sites. Suggestions for improvement included the installation of larger climbing frames, splash or paddling pools, and facilities catering specifically for older children, supported by better upkeep and proximity to residential areas.

4.1.3 Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 respondents reported a strong reliance on homes and gardens for daily play, with playgrounds, grassy areas, and school grounds also regularly used. Park visits were less frequent after school, with many children indicating that they rarely used parks during the week. Favourite sites included the "Pirate Park" in Ramsey (HDC), alongside others such as Godley Green, Judith's Field, Millfields Park, and Warboys Park, which are managed by other organisations. Accessibility remained a critical determinant of use; while most children could walk or cycle to local parks, a significant minority relied on adult transport, limiting independent play. Safety was perceived positively overall, though some children reported feeling unsafe due to dogs, vandalism, or antisocial behaviour. Swings, climbing frames, zip lines, trampolines, and sports-oriented equipment were valued most highly. Improvement suggestions centred on greater provision for older children, more adventurous and varied equipment, and investment in neglected or outdated sites. These responses highlight both the continued importance of well-maintained facilities and the need for greater age-appropriate variety across the district.

4.1.4 Key Stage 3 and 4

Responses from older children and young people demonstrated a noticeable decline in the use of formal play spaces. Most reported preferring to spend time at home, at friends' houses, in grassy areas, or in nearby streets, although some still used traditional playgrounds. Parks were generally not visited on a daily basis, with the majority attending only a few times a week, if at all. Favourite sites included Millfields, Priory Park, Riverside Park, and Henbrook Park (not HDC), although some respondents indicated that no suitable or safe facilities were available in their area.

Access was feasible for most via walking or cycling, though reliance on adult transport remained a barrier for some. The features that appealed most to this age group were open spaces for social interaction, youth shelters, and exercise facilities, with swings, zip wires, monkey bars, and obstacle courses also mentioned. The overall perception of local provision was that it remained designed primarily for younger children, with limited age-appropriate features. KS3/4 respondents consistently highlighted a need for more modern, inclusive, and stimulating equipment, alongside improvements in cleanliness, lighting, and maintenance. Dissatisfaction with the lack of facilities for teenagers emerged as a strong and consistent theme.

4.1.5 Town and Parish Councils

45 councils identified themselves on the survey, outlining 93 play areas. However, many did not complete the survey so only 57 parks or play areas were represented. The majority of provision was aimed at younger children, particularly those aged 4–7, with very limited equipment for teenagers. Swings, slides, and climbing frames were the most common features, while specialist provision, such as BMX tracks or accessible equipment, was rare.

Usage was reported as generally high, with most parks being used daily or several times a week. However, concerns were raised regarding maintenance, with many councils identifying ageing or

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broken equipment and the significant financial burden of repairs and replacements. Only 14 per cent of councils reported having accessible or inclusive facilities for children with additional needs. While some councils have plans for upgrades or expansion over the next five years, funding constraints were identified as the principal barrier to improvement. Councils consistently called for greater support in developing inclusive provision, particularly for teenagers and children with disabilities, alongside recognition of the broader social role of play areas within community life.

4.1.6 Stakeholders

Although the stakeholder survey achieved only six responses, it nonetheless provides valuable perspectives from local professionals and community representatives. Respondents included play providers, education staff, and community workers. Several noted slight increases in park usage in recent years, likely linked to post-pandemic behavioural shifts.

Stakeholders advocated for greater variety in play provision, including equipment for older children and teenagers, sensory features, and facilities such as outdoor gyms or table tennis. Coneygeare Park and Godmanchester's Riverside Park were identified as particularly popular, though the latter was viewed as limited in its offer for older children. While most expressed general satisfaction with current provision, the need for more inclusive, multigenerational, and geographically well-distributed facilities was highlighted as an ongoing priority.

4.1.7 Childcare Providers

Eight childcare providers contributed to the survey, supplemented by three follow-up interviews. Respondents comprised primarily childminders, with additional representation from nursery staff. While some felt that provision was broadly adequate, others highlighted clear disparities across the district, with certain areas significantly underserved.

Providers emphasised concerns about accessibility for children with special educational needs and disabilities, describing some play areas as unsuitable or inaccessible. Maintenance issues, including broken or outdated equipment, were reported, with climbing frames, seesaws, and roundabouts often singled out. Popular features remained swings, slides, and climbing equipment, with some emphasis on sensory play. Specific parks, including Priory Park, Stukeley Meadows, and Slepe Park, were criticised for this, while Hinchingbrooke Park was praised for its inclusivity.

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Childcare providers advocated for improvements including inclusive swings, in-ground trampolines, shaded areas, and clearer maintenance responsibilities. The need for age-appropriate provision, particularly to separate younger children from older groups congregating inappropriately, was also underlined.

4.1.8 Parents and Carers

Despite extensive engagement efforts, only eight parents and carers responded to the survey, making this the least represented group. Those who did respond reported relatively frequent use of parks, with several families visiting multiple times each week. Safety was generally viewed positively, though concerns were raised regarding poor lighting, antisocial behaviour, and the presence of dogs.

Parents valued swings, slides, climbing frames, and imaginative structures, though small or ineffective equipment such as bouncy rides and spinning seats were often criticised. Levels of satisfaction with local provision were moderate, with most describing themselves as “satisfied” rather than enthusiastic. Common barriers to more frequent use included the absence of toilets and changing facilities, maintenance, and a lack of suitable equipment for mid-age children (particularly around seven years old).

Suggested improvements focused on the introduction of toilets, cafés or refreshment options, more varied and challenging equipment for older children, and better promotion of underutilised play areas. Parents consistently stressed the importance of inclusive design, improved facilities, and safer environments. Notably, six of the eight respondents expressed a willingness to participate in further consultation, demonstrating an appetite for continued dialogue.

4.2 Focus groups

In order to gather detailed findings relating to parental views of local play opportunities, PAG organised 7 focus group sessions. These sessions were planned to target a range of parents geographically across Huntingdonshire. Efforts to raise engagement and target parents who may be willing to contribute included Facebook group marketing, direct emails to local parent organisations, local charities, community groups and contact with schools.

Despite email reminders before the session (2 days before, 2 hours before and 10 minutes before) turnout was minimal. Across the events, only 2 of the 9 parents who signed up showed up to discuss outdoor play. The attended sessions were the evening session and the Huntingdon targeted session.

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Attendees were enthusiastic to contribute and intended topics were covered, despite low turnout. The conversations which took place with these parents were also further supported by the parent/carer survey, as outlined in the previous section. Key themes were identified throughout discussion; these are summarised below.

- Limited provision for older children and teenagers – both sessions highlighted a gap in play opportunities for older children, 10+ and teenagers.
- Insufficient facilities – toilets, seating, shade and refreshments were consistently flagged throughout both sessions.
- Safety and accessibility – poor lighting at specific parks was an area of concern through both sessions.
- Quality and maintenance – generally, parks were described as well-maintained, however both sessions identified equipment could be seen as uninteresting for older children.
- Frequently mentioned parks:
    - Hinchingbrooke Park – described as well-maintained and seemingly a popular choice for parents.
    - Hill Rise Park – identified as an area which does not always feel safe due to lighting.
    - Somersham Park – well-maintained but lacks facilities such as toilets and refreshments.
    - Coneygeare Park – a popular choice for young children however does not feel safe later in the day due to lighting.
    - Great High Ground – popular for young children; however, lacks sufficient seating to cater for the number of users.
    - Riverside Parks, St Neots – equipment often soiled by birds, the rocket park was identified as poorly lit.

4.3 Interviews

Three childcare provider interviews were scheduled to provide further insight into play opportunities in Huntingdonshire. These interviews supported the survey responses from childminders, allowing interviewees to expand further on their previous contributions and share deeper insights from their experiences.

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Questions were open and allowed interviewees to discuss topics they felt were particularly poignant.

4.3.1 Contextual questions

Through the initial questions, PAG ensured awareness of the location of the childcare providers, to ensure understanding of relevant parks. The interviewees were based across the district, specifically the following areas:

- Huntingdon: supporting children across Huntingdon, St Ives, Ramsey and Godmanchester
- St Neots: supporting the St Neots area
- St Ives: supporting St Ives and surrounding villages.

All the childminders interviewed cater to under 5s, with one also supporting a range from 5 to 8. Two of the providers access the outdoor play areas every day, with one making use of them on a weekly basis.

4.3.2 Local landscape of play

Given the geographical spread of the childminders, as expected a range of parks were identified as regularly used. Some of the named parks which are regularly used and maintained by HDC included:

- Hinchingbrooke park
- Priory Park
- Riverside Park
- Loves Farm play areas
- Coneygeare park.

For the most part, these parks were preferred due to their geographical location. Given the challenge of supporting multiple children at once, the location is especially critical for the childminders. For example, the childminder based in St Ives expressed that whilst Hinchingbrooke is a lovey park, the challenge to get there using public transport means they cannot visit often. One of the interviews also expressed a preference for the above parks because of the open spaces and the amount of greenery.

The interviews covered specific features which interviewees found particularly interesting for the children they care for. Examples included:

- Wooden materials for equipment over metal

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- Swings
- Climbing frames
- Large green spaces
- Equipment which allows for multiple activities at once
- Spinning toys.

When asked about safety, specific parks were referred to as potential concerns. The examples provided by the community and the reasoning are included below:

- Priory Park: described as not suitable for the smaller age groups.
- Hill Rise Park: some stakeholders stated that they think the equipment is often vandalised or unsafe, and had concerns that uneven surfaces and broken glass in the forestry can present a risk to young children.
- Coneygeare Park: play equipment is not enclosed which presents a risk for childminders caring for multiple children. There is also uneven flooring which is difficult for small children.
- Hinchingbrooke Park: stakeholders stated that they feel risks are present due to proximity to dog training classes. There is a concern that this information is not publicised which means shared spaces are sometimes avoided due to uncertainty.

Through the interviews, childminders outlined their experiences with local outdoor play areas and the age range they cater for. There was some reference here to older children being 'bored' as a result of the tailoring of equipment at play spaces to young children. In particular, one childminder raised that this had led to older children using spaces intended for young children. Whilst acknowledging this is through no fault of their own, this can present some safety risks. One childminder shared their experience of verbal abuse from older children when using play spaces for young children.

4.3.3 Accessibility and barriers

Regarding accessibility, all of those interviewed raised concerns. Whilst there was praise regarding clear, safe pathways to access the majority of parks, the parks themselves were described as inaccessible to children with SEND. Those interviewed expressed unhappiness with what was available, with no play equipment allowing these children to play independently. Concerns of this nature were rooted in children with SEND expected to observe other children play, rather than being able to engage in play themselves. Where wheelchair equipment was present, one interviewee said this was not enclosed, therefore restricting their ability to use this due to supporting multiple children at one time. In contrast, Hinchingbrooke Park was praised for the opportunity for inclusive play. Comments on the roundabouts demonstrated some opportunity for children of varying abilities to engage in shared play.

Barriers to accessing parks were highlighted as safety, as well as difficulty travelling and parking to certain parks. Whilst one childminder outlined that they are able to travel with their van, they were aware that this was a privilege that others would not have access to. Travel restrictions were said to require rigorous planning to navigate public transport. Safety concerns were largely due to a lack of fencing surrounding play areas and uneven flooring. Coneygeare was used as an example of a play area with particularly challenging flooring, whereas Riverside Park was described as the ideal flooring type for safe play.

Speaking from their experiences at the play areas as childminders, unique challenges were identified. These included a lack of shade and benches, as well as limited pieces of equipment which is challenging for those attending the park with more than one child.

4.3.4 Quality and suitability

Feedback on the quality of outdoor play areas was positive. One interviewee commented that the parks they attend are maintained quite well, often engaging directly with maintenance staff when at the parks. They also reported broken equipment had been replaced quickly. The challenges relating to grounding, which is outdated were shared by multiple interviewees, with one childminder expressing concern around the lack of risk assessment.

Use of the parks was reported to be enjoyable for the children. Some responses confirmed that they are able to engage with a range of play types with the children they support, including imaginative and physical play. Great High Ground (the "pirate boat park") was named as an excellent example of this. Childminders reported high use of the open spaces to encourage a range of play, as opposed to select pieces of equipment.

When asked about the facilities available at parks across Huntingdonshire, the providers expressed concerns regarding the lack of toilets and benches. These issues were consistently discussed in all three interviews. One interviewee identified that whilst there are toilets at Riverside Park, they have experienced repeated issues accessing these due to the doors being locked.

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4.3.5 Improvements and aspirations

Specific equipment was suggested by interviewees when asked which features or designs, they would welcome. This included:

- Flat roundabouts – wide enough for wheelchair users
- In-ground trampolines
- Additional climbing activities for younger children.

Aspirations to improve the play spaces for childminders specifically included various recommendations relating to safety and facilities. Regarding safety, suggestions included a focus on using wooden equipment instead of metal as this cannot be used when weather conditions vary. Fencing in of equipment and even, grass surfaces were reinforced as important to interviewees, as well as facilities to eat such as benches.

Further suggestions related to communication and signage, as outlined below.

- Reports of uncertainty as to who was responsible for maintaining certain parks due to some lack of signage means that some respondents were unsure where to report damaged or dangerous equipment.
- Communication relating to the use of shared spaces was requested, for example Hinchingbrooke Park's dog training classes to ensure young children can use the space when these are not taking place. Furthermore, information relating to pond dipping activities was requested.

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5. Current Provision Assessment

To assess the quality and perception of current provision across Huntingdonshire, PAG employed the following approach:

- Use of consultation methods – surveys, focus groups and interviews – to understand local perception (this is outlined in the previous section)
- Geographic mapping to identify the location of existing parks and where provision is dispersed[2]
- In person observations of mapped parks to understand the level of use and accessibility.

This section outlined the relevant findings, as well as a thematic Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of provision maintained by HDC. The findings below are organised by village, with key findings from observation assessments outlined.

5.1 Godmanchester

Observations across three local parks revealed generally low levels of use, with no children present at Stokes Drive and Roman Way, and only light to moderate use at Wigmore Farm (1–9 children). This may have been influenced by factors such as weather or time of day. While all sites were walkable from nearby homes and accessible via pedestrian routes, none offered a fully inclusive play experience. Wigmore Farm was the most accessible, with some inclusive features in the infant zone and good manoeuvrability, though overall provision remained limited. Roman Way included fixed sensory and imaginative elements, but these were not practically usable for children with mobility impairments.

The sites were clean, well maintained, and fully fenced with secure gates, supporting supervision and safeguarding. However, no intergenerational or adult-oriented fitness features were present. Shade and shelter were limited, with only natural tree cover at Stokes Drive and Wigmore Farm offering partial protection. Overall, while the parks were safe and in good condition, improvements in inclusivity, variety, and family-friendly amenities would better support community use.

5.1.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

[2] HDC PSA - RAG - Google My Maps

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Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Wigmore Farm	Good internal surfacing, wide age range, some inclusive features	Junior zone lacks accessible equipment, no formal shelter or shade
Roman Way	Clean site, sensory play attempts, secure fencing	No seating, no bin, heavy ladder-based access limits inclusive play
Stokes Drive	Compact, tidy, good fencing	Woodchip surfacing and no accessible play equipment, no defined play zones, or diversity

Across all three sites, there was a noticeable shortfall in inclusive provision. While physical entry and internal movement were often possible, equipment design did not support equitable play for disabled children. Creative, sensory, and fantasy play were notably underrepresented across the sites. While some equipment encouraged physical engagement and solitary activity, there was limited provision for children with varied cognitive or social development needs.

5.1.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Wigmore Farm	Two-tiered layout with age zoning; wide range of challenge; ample internal space and surfacing	No structured sensory provision; limited accessible equipment in junior zone; no shade or shelter
Roman Way	Secure fencing, sensory elements (e.g. themed climbing frame), clean environment	No seating, inaccessible to children with mobility issues, sensory play unreachable without ladder access
Stokes Drive	Compact layout, group swing, shade from trees, soft surfacing	No accessible equipment, woodchip limits mobility, minimal equipment variety, no sensory or imaginative play

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Across the three Godmanchester play areas (Stokes Drive, Roman Way, Wigmore Farm), observed family engagement was low at the time of visits. No families were seen using the sites for shared activities, although weather and time of day may have influenced this. That said, key design elements to support intergenerational or family play were generally absent.

5.2 Huntingdon

Observations across 22 sites showed uneven levels of use. Thirteen sites, including small estate parks such as Sapley Fields, Meadow Gardens, and Garner Court, as well as more adult-oriented or ambiguous spaces like the Wetland Area and MUGA Sallowbush, had no children present at the time of visit. In contrast, Hinchingbrooke Play Area, Oxmoor Lane, and Woodland Play Area demonstrated clear community uptake, with 10–29 children observed. These higher-use sites tended to cater for a wider age range, supporting both younger children and teens, whereas many others were limited to KS1/KS2 provision and lacked opportunities for intergenerational play.

Inclusivity could be improved in these parks, with no park offering a fully inclusive experience. Fourteen had no accessible equipment, and where inclusive features existed, they were sometimes limited or unusable. For example, Hinchingbrooke Sensory Park included a wheelchair swing that was locked at the time of the visit – although the key for this is available on request, there was no observed instructions on where the key could be obtained, suggestion to advertise this more explicitly, Thames Road had damaged sensory boards, and Oxmoor Lane offered step-free circulation but no dedicated inclusive pieces. Seating was generally available but often restricted to a single bench. Overall, while some sites demonstrated strong community engagement, the majority showed low to no use, and provision for inclusivity and broad age ranges was limited

5.2.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Oxmoor Lane	Best all-round accessibility and surfacing	No specialist inclusive equipment
Devoke Close	Good surfacing and cleanliness	Graffiti, limited shade, only partial equipment access

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Hinchingbrooke Play Area	High usage and broad age appeal	Insecure gates, poor path infrastructure
Hinchingbrooke Sensory	Wheelchair swing exists	Locked and unusable; no fencing
Sapley Fields	Large open space	No paths to equipment, vandalism, inaccessibility
Meadow Gardens	Local use evident	No pathways or inclusive play options
Stukeley Meadows	Generally tidy, some seating	Dangerous flooring condition, trip hazards
Mayfield Crescent	Soft surface present	Equipment and layout unsuitable for SEND access
Riverside Park	Good site condition	No inclusive play options despite good access

Across the observed sites, physical play was almost universally supported, with most parks offering equipment such as swings, slides, and climbing frames. In contrast, opportunities for fantasy and imaginative play were limited and tended to appear only in themed locations such as Whaddons and Thames Road. Creative or sensory-focused play was often tokenistic, with features either underdeveloped or entirely absent.

Thames Road stood out as an outlier, providing a stronger mix of play types through fantasy elements, cooperative play structures, and toddler-friendly design, though these benefits were offset by notable access limitations.

5.2.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	**Strengths**	**Gaps**

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Oxmoor Lane	Strong layout, group swing, age variety, partial sensory access	Incomplete pathway paving, "coolest" feature (floor trampoline) is inaccessible
Thames Road	Sensory boards, themed, group play options, suitable challenge	No path access to play area, limited for older children
Hinchingbrooke Play Area	High use, wide age appeal	Rope-secured gate, inaccessible slide, poor layout
Hinchingbrooke Sensory Park	Themed, well-designed for early years	Locked inclusive swing, no fencing, aging equipment
Devoke Close	Good surface, climbing frame with cubbyholes	Graffiti, no true inclusive value
Woodland Play Area	Distinct zones, sensory and climbing	No fencing, steep play features
Riverside Park	Themed (train/nautical), interactive features	Excludes children with disabilities
Bevan Close	Local use, partial surfacing	Only three pieces of non-inclusive equipment, no bins
Garner Court	Sheltered bench, internal bins	Littering, inaccessible equipment
Sapley Fields	Large space, soft surfacing	Equipment unclear in purpose, vandalised, poor access

Across the observed sites, family engagement varied significantly:

- High family use and visible interaction were noted at Hinchingbrooke Play Area, Riverside Park, and Devoke Close. At these locations, parents were seen actively supporting

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children's play, supervising use of higher-risk equipment (e.g., zip lines, large climbing frames), and engaging in shared experiences like picnics or group games.

- Moderate engagement was present in sites such as Oxmoor Lane and Thames Road, though these lacked designated family zones or picnic tables, limiting potential for prolonged stays.
- Very low engagement was observed in smaller estate parks (e.g., Bevan Close, Meadow Gardens, The Whaddons) where the play offer was minimal or narrowly age focused.

Children were most visibly engaged at Hinchingbrooke, Riverside, Oxmoor Lane, and Thames Road, where a balance of moderate challenge, social equipment such as group swings and climbing frames, and visually stimulating environments encouraged active play. Memorable features included the floor trampoline and spinning seats at Oxmoor Lane, insect-themed sensory play and roundabout at Hinchingbrooke Sensory Park, nautical and train-themed structures at Riverside Park, and the distinctive climbing "dog" sculpture at Hinchingbrooke Country Park.

However, there is scope to improve the quality and inclusivity of provision. This includes addressing inaccessible or broken access routes (e.g., Mayfield Crescent, Sapley, the Hinchingbrooke slide), locked inclusive equipment such as the ramp swing at Hinchingbrooke Sensory Park, and surface degradation, notably cracking at Stukeley Meadows and muddy or worn approaches at other sites. Vandalism was also observed at locations including Sapley Fields and Devoke Close. Additionally, safety concerns arose at sites with unfenced proximity to water or roads, such as the Wetlands and Hinchingbrooke Play Area.

5.3 Ramsey

At the time of observation, Between 1–9 children were observed. While not heavily populated, the site showed signs of regular engagement across multiple pieces of equipment. While the park in Ramsey offered relatively good space and manoeuvrability, most equipment did not provide equitable access for children with more complex mobility or sensory needs.

The park was clean and well-maintained, with no evidence of litter or vandalism at the time of visit. A single bench was provided, which may be sufficient given the park's size, but no structured shade or shelter was available.

5.3.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

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Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Signal Road	Clean, well-maintained, wide age appeal up to KS2, good fencing	Limited accessible equipment, no shade or family seating, partial path access

One key sensory opportunity was observed: the pirate ship includes interactive sensory components such as tactile toys or auditory panels.

Despite the park's compact size, play zones were implicitly grouped by activity type — e.g., climbing, swinging, and imaginative play each had a defined area. This supported a logical and functional flow. The pirate ship supports cooperative play, with space for group interaction and shared use — this was the strongest feature in terms of social engagement. Other equipment such as group swings and a seesaw offer further opportunity for parallel and cooperative play, though solitary play was also prevalent.

5.3.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Signal Road	Inclusive pirate ship with ramp and sensory play; logical layout; wide range of challenge	Only one accessible feature; limited sensory play overall; three pieces of equipment lack path access

Observed family presence at Signal Road Play Area was moderate, with 1–9 children using the site during the visit. Children were seen interacting actively with the play equipment — particularly the pirate ship — suggesting high engagement, although formal support for family play and supervision was limited. Children were observed engaging with a wide range of equipment, especially the pirate ship. Swings, the seesaw, and climbing items were also in use, suggesting broad appeal.

5.4 Sawtry

At the time of observation, the park saw moderate use, with 1–9 children present. Some children engaged with equipment such as the zip wire, while others played independently on grassy areas, indicating partial utilisation of the formal play offer. Young people aged 11+ were present but used the space informally rather than through targeted features.

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Accessibility was limited by uneven grassy paths that did not lead directly to equipment, hilly terrain, and natural surfacing that is neither level nor DDA-compliant, creating barriers for mobility aids or pushchairs. Some equipment, like the group swing, could support children with limited mobility if accompanied, but there were no continuous accessible pathways linking features. The park is centrally located and easy to access on foot or by car, though the absence of formal entrances, signage, or accessible surfacing reduces usability for visitors unfamiliar with the site.

Inclusive play is minimal, with little sensory provision. The hilly terrain creates exclusionary zones and elevates risk from falls, while elevated equipment and slope gradients limit independent access. Maintenance was positive: the site was litter-free, bins were provided, and no vandalism was observed.

5.4.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Rowell Way	Wide age coverage; group swing and zip wire support engagement across multiple age groups	No formal fencing or shelter; limited accessible paths; safety risks due to uneven surfaces and hill placement; inadequate seating for families

While some equipment (e.g. group swing) may be accessible with assistance, there are no direct paths or accessible surfaces linking the play items — especially those placed on sloped terrain. The park includes equipment theoretically usable by children with disabilities, but lack of level access and uneven surfacing severely limits usability.

Some sensory equipment was observed (likely touch-based or themed components). Equipment was varied in function (swings, slide, zip wire), but not formally zoned. Play types were dispersed across a natural slope, affecting flow and accessibility. The play area offered a wide challenge spectrum, from toddler-appropriate swings to a high zip wire — suitable for KS2 and older users.

Creative, sensory, and imaginative play were all underrepresented, limiting the site's alignment with broad developmental and inclusive standards.

5.4.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

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Site	Strengths	Gaps
Rowell Way	Wide age appeal; group swing and zip wire in use; open green setting; informal sensory elements	No structured shade, shelter, or seating; steep terrain limits accessibility; sensory play is minimal and not inclusive; paths do not connect to equipment

Observed family engagement at Rowell Way was moderate, with a small number of children (1–9) using the play area at the time of the visit. However, the site's overall design does not actively support intergenerational play or sustained family use.

There was no dedicated space for shared family activity. While the park's grassy layout theoretically allows for picnics or informal gatherings, this potential was not supported by features such as picnic tables, shaded zones, or clustered seating. Only one bench was available — which could be insufficient given the scale and catchment of the site.

The zip wire appeared to be the most popular and distinctive element.

5.5 St Ives

Hill Rise Play Area saw moderate use (1–9 children), while Hill Rise Skate Park had high use (10–19 children). Crescent and Dunnock Way (not HDC) were unoccupied during observation, suggesting potential issues with appeal or suitability. Hill Rise Play Area served toddlers through KS2, and Hill Rise Skate Park accommodated KS1 through young adults. Crescent and Dunnock Way focused on younger children, with limited older-child or inclusive provision.

Only Hill Rise Skate Park attracted teenagers and young adults, though it was not designed for inclusive youth or family use. Internal surfacing was generally smooth at Hill Rise Play Area and Crescent, but external access was limited. Dunnock Way's stairs-only entry restricted access, while the Skate Park had ramped access but limited shade and some graffiti.

Hill Rise Play Area had one partially accessible item and open space for manoeuvrability. Surfaces were mostly soft, but Crescent and Dunnock Way had inconsistencies limiting accessibility.

5.5.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

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Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Hill Rise Play Area	Moderate use, some spatial inclusivity	No inclusive equipment; no shade or dedicated seating
Hill Rise Skate Park	Highest use observed; appeals to teenagers; shaded bench available	No fencing; limited suitability for younger users; minor maintenance issues
Crescent (not HDC)	Secure fencing; internal soft surfacing	No accessible entry path; no seating; no inclusive equipment; cleanliness issues
Dunnock Way (not HDC)	Bench provision; residentially located	No proper fencing; access via stairs; inaccessible layout; no inclusive features

Hill Rise Skate Park featured a low ramp that may be more accessible to younger or less mobile children. While some movement space was available, meaningful engagement for disabled children was minimal, limiting alignment with Equality Act 2010 and PSA duties.

5.5.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Hill Rise Play Area	Open space; some sensory equipment; good internal surfacing	Limited inclusive equipment; no shelter; only minimal social play encouragement
Hill Rise Skate Park	High usage across age groups; accessible low ramp; shaded shelter present	No fencing; informal layout; not inclusive for non-skating children or disabled users

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Crescent	Soft surfacing internally; secure fencing; tidy layout	No inclusive features; no seating; no sensory or imaginative elements; poor external access
Dunnock Way	Distinct zones for different age groups; benches available	Below-street entry; no accessible pathways; no shelter; no accessible equipment

- Observed family engagement varied by site:
  - Hill Rise Play Area showed moderate engagement (1–9 children observed), but family interaction was largely supervisory rather than interactive. The adjacent open space provided some informal potential for shared activity.
  - Hill Rise Skate Park had the highest observed use (10–19 children and young people). It functioned more as a youth space than a family play area, with limited appropriateness for younger children or co-play.
  - Crescent and Dunnock Way had no children present during observation. Both sites lacked features to attract or support family-based use.

- Hill Rise Skate Park stood out as the most dynamic space, supporting extended engagement for older children and teens. However, its value for younger children and family groups was limited.

5.6 St Neots

Observations across the district revealed a wide range of usage patterns. Riverside Park, both adjacent to the car park and café and along River Road, experienced high use, with 20–29 children present, reflecting strong community engagement. Moderate use was seen at sites such as Henbrook Linear Park, Great High Ground, and the BMX/skate park, particularly among older children. In contrast, many local estate parks, including Weston Court, Maule Close, Furrowfields, and Top Birches, had no children present during observation, likely reflecting limited equipment or hyperlocal design.

Larger central parks, such as Riverside, Priory Park, and Great High Ground, catered to a broad age range from early years to KS4 and beyond, while smaller neighbourhood sites typically served only toddlers and KS1, restricting their wider appeal. Most sites lacked equipment specifically designed for disabled users, with only occasional features, such as bucket swings or wide entry climbing zones, present; these were sometimes unsupported by inclusive layouts or continuous surfacing. The majority of parks were located within residential areas and easily walkable. Overall maintenance was generally good, with minimal litter or vandalism observed, though shading and seating were inconsistently available across sites.

5.6.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Riverside Park (car park side)	High engagement; varied age use; location near café supports family use	No inclusive pathways; limited accessible equipment
Hennrook Linear Park	Spatially accessible; includes partial inclusive features	No designated sensory/fantasy play
Great High Ground	Broad challenge range; inclusive social seating zone	Surface (sand) may impact full accessibility
BMX/Skate Park	Strong youth use; tiered ramps; shaded seating	Not designed for children with disabilities or very young children
Priory Park Spinney	Naturalistic location and spatial interest	Steep access, uneven surfaces, and no clear pathways – inaccessible for many users
Weston Court / Maule Close	Safe, clean, hyperlocal provision	No shade/shelter or inclusive features; usage extremely low or absent

Social play design across the observed sites was inconsistent. Larger parks, such as Great High Ground, Riverside Park, and Woodridge, facilitated group play through shared equipment like large boats, swings, and sand features. Skate and MUGA facilities, including BMX parks and Kester Way, also supported social interaction for older users, though these spaces were neither fully inclusive nor accessible to all.

In contrast, smaller estate parks offered little intentional support for social play. Equipment was typically single-user, and no sites included structured games or communication boards to encourage interaction across different abilities. Opportunities for creative and imaginative play were similarly limited, with notable exceptions at Top Birches, which used a train theme to stimulate imaginative engagement, and Woodridge, where zip lines and fantasy-inspired climbing units provided potential for creative play.

5.6.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	**Strengths**	**Gaps**
Riverside Park (River Road)	Broad age range, large user numbers, grouped play zones	Elevated features: adult support needed; no sensory elements
Great High Ground	High challenge range, group swing, shelter, inclusive layout	Sand and surface transitions may limit access for some; no dedicated inclusive equipment
Hennrook Linear Park	Safe surfacing, swings with bordered seating, clean	No sensory zones; limited shade; basic equipment only
Bowlins Loves Farm	Painted games on ground, inclusive open layout, central location	No equipment; minimal challenge or sensory play
Top Birches – Loves Farm	Train-themed play, accessible to some children with disabilities	No clear surfacing or structured pathways; minimal shade or challenge
Woodridge – Loves Farm	Range of equipment, group swing, some social zones	Woodchip surfacing, limited accessible play equipment, no clear inclusivity

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Maule Close / Hull Way / Furrowfields	Basic safety; hyperlocal provision	No sensory, inclusive, or imaginative equipment; limited challenge or appeal beyond toddlers
Kester Way MUGA	Youth provision, social shelter	No inclusive gym or basketball design; low play value for younger or disabled users
Priory Spinney	Natural environment, age-spanning layout	Steep, inaccessible terrain; no surfacing; wooden-only equipment not suited to disabled users

5.7 Yaxley

Observations at Crocus Way and Shackleton Way showed these sites catered to a broad age range, from toddlers through KS3, with a mix of play equipment to support varied play experiences. In contrast, Scott Drive focused exclusively on early years, primarily serving babies and toddlers. Across all three sites, there was little evidence of intergenerational or teenage-oriented design, and no youth or adult fitness elements were present. No children were present at the time of observation across all three sites. While this could reflect temporary conditions (e.g., time of day, weather), it may also indicate limited community uptake, particularly for smaller or estate-based parks.

None of the parks met expectations for inclusive design, with equipment lacking sensory or physical accessibility features. Scott Drive did provide spacing between equipment that would allow movement with assistive devices, but offered no meaningful play opportunities for children with disabilities. All three sites were clean and litter-free at the time of visit, reflecting positively on local maintenance and potentially supporting family confidence in using these spaces.

5.7.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Scott Drive	High-quality surfacing, clear design for toddlers	No inclusive play features, no shelter

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Crocus Way	Clean site, secure fencing	No path from road, inaccessible to wheelchairs, no seating
Shackleton Way	Wide age range catered for, good internal space	No inclusive equipment, informal-only shade, no sensory features

Across all three sites, inclusive design was a significant gap. Children using mobility aids could enter some of the spaces but had no meaningful opportunities to engage in play.

5.7.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	**Strengths**	**Gaps**
Shackleton Way	Spacious, clear zoning by equipment type, some scope for social interaction via swing/climb	No inclusive equipment, limited sensory value, "coolest" feature (zip wire) inaccessible
Scott Drive	Clean, soft surface, compact design for younger children, small interactive feature (noughts and crosses)	No shelter, minimal sensory or inclusive provision, limited range of play types
Crocus Way	Soft surfacing within play zone, tidy site	No direct access path, missing swings, no inclusive or sensory features, no seating or shade

Across the three Yaxley sites observed (Crocus Way, Scott Drive, Shackleton Way), family engagement was consistently low at the time of visit. No families were observed using the spaces for shared activities, and equipment design generally did not encourage family-based interaction.

5.8 SWOT analysis

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
87% of sites feature safe surfacing; most are clean and well-maintained (92%).	Over 50% of sites lack accessible pathways; many still rely on grass-only or uneven surfaces.

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Several large flagship sites (e.g. Riverside, Hinchingbrooke) successfully attract broad age ranges.	Inclusive equipment is rare – only 17 sites fully accessible; sensory elements present at just 9 sites.
Provision for toddlers and KS1 is strong and widespread.	Limited provision for older children/teenagers; family-friendly features (shade, seating) often absent.
Many sites encourage social play through design (group swings, climbing).	Inconsistent inclusivity across villages, with rural/estate-based sites underused or inaccessible.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Target investment in under-served villages (e.g. Yaxley, Sawtry, Crescent, Dunnock Way) to address accessibility gaps.	Risk of long-term underuse of inaccessible or poorly equipped sites, leading to wasted assets.
Expand inclusive design (ramps, sensory zones, universally accessible equipment) to meet Equality Act and PSA standards.	Over-reliance on a handful of popular parks could create overcrowding and uneven community provision.
Develop intergenerational and youth-focused features (e.g. fitness zones, shaded family areas).	Disengagement of older children may push them into spaces designed for younger children, reducing safety and appeal.
Engage communities to co-design improvements, building ownership and better alignment with needs.	Ongoing maintenance or safety concerns (e.g. vandalism, broken equipment) risk undermining trust in provision.

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6. Gap Analysis

This Gap Analysis Report forms part of HDC's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. Its purpose is to identify where play provision across the district falls short in terms of access, quality, safety, inclusivity, and overall sufficiency. The findings draw on site audits, community engagement, and geospatial analysis to support evidence-led planning and future investment.

A total of 38 sites were assessed through professional Health and Safety audits, and additional sites were explored through surveys, interviews, and focus groups with children, parents, carers, and stakeholders. It should be noted that these Health and Safety audits were carried out by Handsam, an education and play compliance firm, whose standards and frameworks differ to those used by HDC's current auditors. The results of this additional check should be understood as an additional, independent, and supplementary analysis, and not as an overwrite of internal health and safety checks.

According to this external analysis, while many parks are well-used and well-loved, the analysis reveals various challenges and opportunities across the district.

Key findings include:

- Uneven Access in Specific Areas: Some communities, particularly in rural villages and recently developed housing areas, experience limited access to walkable, local play provision. In many cases, this reflects historical development patterns or local preferences regarding maintenance responsibilities.
- Maintenance and Equipment Condition: Audit observations identified a small number of sites where issues such as worn surfacing, missing signage, or ageing equipment were noted. These issues are already known to the Council and are being managed through routine inspection schedules and planned upgrades. In some lower-use areas, alternative approaches such as consolidation may represent better long-term value.
- Inclusive Play Opportunities: While many play areas were designed before current inclusive design standards, there is an opportunity to improve access and usability over time. Just under a third of assessed sites currently include features specifically designed for children with disabilities, and HDC continues to incorporate accessible elements where feasible as part of wider refurbishment efforts.

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- Provision for Older Children: Equipment for teenagers is comparatively limited in many parks, where early years provision has historically been prioritised. Feedback from young people points to a growing demand for more adventurous, sociable, and age-appropriate play opportunities.
- Supporting Amenities: The lack of toilets, benches, lighting, and shaded areas at some sites can limit dwell time, particularly for families with very young children, disabled users, or intergenerational groups. Addressing these supporting features could help broaden appeal and accessibility at key strategic sites.
- Community Feedback and High-Use Sites: Comments were received on sites such as Hill Rise Park, Priory Park, and Riverside Park. These are among the district's busiest locations, and feedback largely reflects the impact of high footfall and ageing infrastructure. These sites are already prioritised for investment and form part of ongoing improvement planning.

Complete findings are presented in a comprehensive Gap Analysis Table, including RAG ratings, one based on audit results. These feed directly into the Strategic Improvement Plan, which sets out prioritised actions to address sufficiency gaps and raise the overall quality and equity of play in Huntingdonshire.

6.1 Consultation and stakeholder engagement

6.1.1 Surveys

Overall, the survey findings underscore a pattern of uneven distribution, age-based drop-off in engagement, and accessibility barriers that contribute to play insufficiency in specific localities. The strong preferences for certain types of equipment and natural spaces, alongside reports of disrepair or lack of inclusion, present clear areas for strategic investment.

Survey insights have been cross-referenced with geographic data, focus group findings, and health and safety evaluations to prioritise areas and populations for intervention. The resulting Gap Analysis Table will highlight where need is greatest and inform a pipeline of strategic investments.

6.1.2 Interviews

Interviews confirm and deepen findings from other data sources, particularly in areas such as inclusivity, age-appropriateness, infrastructure quality, and geographic equity. The lived experience

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shared by childminders reflects significant systemic gaps, even in well-used spaces, and shows that a park's presence alone is insufficient without functionality, safety, and design that serves all users.

6.1.3 Focus groups

The parent and carer focus groups reinforce many of the issues identified in other data strands while offering unique insight into lived experience. They make clear that sufficiency cannot be measured solely by proximity or quantity of parks. Instead, play spaces must be designed and maintained with specific attention to infrastructure, inclusivity, age range, gender, and daily usability. Their reflections will be integrated into the overall gap analysis synthesis and used to inform the strategic improvement plan, ensuring that the voices of those most involved in children's daily lives are central to the shaping of future provision.

6.2 Health and safety evaluations

As part of the broader assessment of play sufficiency across Huntingdonshire, independent Health and Safety (H&S) audits have been undertaken for a representative sample of play areas by Handsam Ltd. These detailed site inspections evaluate compliance against EN 1176 playground safety standards and general best practice, identifying potential hazards, infrastructure deterioration, and recommended actions for improvement.

The audits provide a crucial technical layer of data that complements the observational, qualitative, and usage data gathered through community engagement and mapping. Each audited site receives a physical condition score and itemised action plan, prioritising necessary repairs, refurbishments, and site management improvements.

6.3 Park Gap Analysis Table

Each park entry includes location, audit score (where available), a summary of current physical condition, insights gathered from surveys, interviews, and focus groups (where applicable), identified issues from the H&S audit, recommended actions, and a rating based on the audit score and the nature of issues identified in the Handsam site assessments. This provides an objective technical safety and compliance rating. The RAG ratings are:

- Green — high-performing site with full or near-full compliance. No significant safety or maintenance issues. Score of or above 93% according to Handsam.

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- Amber — generally compliant but with minor to moderate issues (e.g. wear, missing signage, surface wear). Score of 85-92.99% according to Handsam.
- Red — Site has significant safety concerns or multiple compliance failures. Urgent action needed. Score below 85% according to Handsam.

This table should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Improvement Plan in the following section, which translates these findings into recommended actions, proposed timescales, and resource planning. The parks identified as Red represent high-priority cases where safety, usability, or sufficiency are significantly compromised. Amber sites require investment to prevent further deterioration or to enhance underperforming but valued spaces. Green sites are broadly compliant but may still benefit from routine enhancements or inclusive design upgrades.

It should be noted that this table is based on the observations and H&S reports made during the project. Some of these issues have been addressed at the time of project completion. Where relevant, this has been noted. The original RAG and H&S scores are still presented to give an accurate representation on the data collected.

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Park Name	Location	Audit Score (%)	Condition Summary	Community Insight	Identified Issues from H&S	Recommended Actions	H&S RAG
Bawlins	St Neots	95.81%	Structurally sound; limited safety concerns		Missing installation certificate; gate closure too slow; raised manhole cover	Obtain installation certificate; adjust gate closure mechanism; cordon off area around raised manhole	**Amber**
Bevan Close	Huntingdon	73.44%	Poor overall condition; multiple areas fenced off. It should be noted that this park has since been improved.		Equipment fenced off; missing installation certificate; trip hazards from ongoing works; no warning signs at substation; missing D bolt load indicators. It should be noted that	Repair or remove out-of-use equipment; provide certificate; install Chapter 8 barriers; add substation signage; mark D bolts. It should be noted that this	**Red**

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					this park has since been improved.	park has since been improved.	
Crocus Way	Yaxley	61.58%	The full site needs a full refurbishment .		Missing installation certificate; missing manufacturer's plates on equipment	Obtain installation certificate; affix manufacturer's plates	**Red**
Furrowfields	St Neots	90.17%	Generally good condition with no major hazards		Missing installation certificate; wooden borders need maintenance; flaking paint; missing manufacturer's plates	Provide installation certificate; maintain wooden posts; repaint surfaces; affix missing ID plates	**Amber**
Grassland Area	Huntingdon	96.53%	Very good condition; minor		BBQs showing signs of age	Consider replacing BBQ units	**Amber**

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			aesthetic concern noted				
Great High Ground	St Neots	94.16%	Good condition; no physical issues noted		Missing installation certificate	Obtain original installation certificate	**Green**
Henbrook Linear Park	St Neots	90.79%	Generally functional; minor safety concerns		No installation certificate; damaged seesaw spring; worn rocker handles; worn swing seats; minor surfacing damage	Provide certificate; repair or replace damaged equipment; monitor surfacing	**Amber**
Hill Rise Park	St Ives	86.12%	Functioning but with multiple safety issues	Negative reception; concerns on play quality; vandalism; unsafe	Broken fencing; loose gate stop; missing fixings; uneven surfacing; equipment	Replace fencing; fix gate and surface; add plates; monitor and repair	**Amber**

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					wear; missing documentation	damaged elements	
Hill Rise Skate Park	St Ives	72.93%	Generally compliant; minor wear and structural issues	Negative reception; concerns on play quality; vandalism; unsafe	Missing installation certificate; movement in grind rail; worn surfaces; graffiti; trip hazard from edge	Provide documentation; address loose fittings; resurface entry/exit; remove graffiti	**Red**
Hinchingbrooke Park Main Playground	Huntingdon	86.22%	Satisfactory condition with several significant remedials	Regular visits; children enjoy it; site of recent injury due to uneven surfacing; safety hazard near large slide and café area	Missing installation certificate; damaged see saw; illegible ID plate; unsafe gates (finger traps); splintering wooden fence; unclear D bolt load markings	Provide certificate; replace see saw; make pivot safe in interim; replace gates and wooden fence; mark load-bearing D bolts clearly	**Red**

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Hinchingbrooke Park Old Playground	Huntingdon	74.26%	Unsatisfactory condition; ageing infrastructure		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage; deteriorating wooden elements; no fencing or gates	Provide certificate and signage; monitor and plan to replace decaying timber; consider secure enclosure for safety	**Red**
Hinchingbrooke Park Outdoor Gym Equipment	Huntingdon	95.95%	Very good condition; minor equipment issues		Missing installation certificate; two missing equipment units; trip hazard from base plates	Provide installation certificate; replace missing gym items; address trip hazard from plate edges	**Green**

Hinchingbrooke Park Sensory Play Area	Huntingdon	89.58%	Satisfactory condition; key item currently quarantined	Occasionally visited; valued for nature and considered safe; large site and limited access split groups; not buggy-friendly	Missing installation certificate and signage; main swing padlocked and out of use;	Repair swing and reinstate safely; provide installation certificate; install safety signage including contact details; affix manufacturer ID plates	**Amber**
Hinchingbrooke Park Woodland Play Area	Huntingdon	92.17%	Well-maintained with minor documentation and signage issues		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage;	Provide original installation certificate; install safety signage with name and contact number; affix manufacturer ID plates	**Amber**

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Hull Way (24 & 25)	St Neots	94.46%	High standard; minimal non-compliance noted		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage	Provide missing certificate and install safety signage	**Green**
Kester Way (MUGA)	St Neots	94.81%	Good condition; structurally sound with minimal issues		Missing installation certificate; area not secure out of hours	Obtain installation certificate; consider out-of-hours security options	**Amber**
Maryland Avenue	Huntingdon	90.74%	Good overall condition with multiple minor issues		Missing installation certificate; incomplete fencing; gates fail to close; trip hazards from soft pour; worn slide; unsuitable surface under climbing frame	Provide certificate; repair fencing and gates; fix surface and fall zones; monitor and maintain slide condition	**Amber**

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Maule Close	St Neots	92.90%	Well-maintained; generally safe		Missing installation certificate; no manufacturer plates; gate lacks auto closer; undulating surface near equipment	Obtain certificate; fix gate auto closer; install ID plates; repair surfacing to address trip hazard	**Amber**
Mayfield Crescent	Huntingdon	87.62%	Satisfactory overall; minor damage and surfacing issues		Missing installation certificate; trip hazards from undulating surface; missing D bolt load markings	Provide certificate; address surface hazards; clearly mark load-bearing bolts	**Amber**
Oxmoor Lane	Huntingdon	93.08%	Satisfactory overall with minor remedials required		Missing installation certificate; surface degradation causing trip hazard; unclear D bolt load indicators	Provide certificate; repair soft pour surface; label load-bearing D bolts	**Amber**

Priory Park St Neots	St Neots	86.56%	Generally satisfactory; localised damage	Popular for natural play; supports demand for outdoor; no inclusive features; not safe for toddlers	Missing zip wire sleeves; missing installation certificate; loose gate; damaged surfacing	Replace sleeves; fix gate; install ID plates; resurface to remove trip hazards	**Amber**
Riverside Park	Huntingdon	90.48%	Good condition; minor compliance and surface issues		Missing installation certificate; gate not lockable; unclear D bolt markings; surface shrinkage causing trip hazards	Provide certificate; fix gate locking mechanism; label D bolts; repair surface to remove trip risks	**Amber**
Riverside Park (Indoor Bowls Club)	St Neots	85.94%	Mixed condition; multiple		Missing installation certificate; tree overgrowth; fast-closing gate; surface shrinkage; paint/rust issues;	Provide installation certificate; conduct tree survey; adjust gate	**Amber**

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			remedial needs		missing load-bearing indicators	timing; resurface shrunken areas; repair paint/rust; ensure bolts meet standards	
Riverside Park Coneygeare	St Neots	56.84%	Poor condition: safety issues identified. It should be noted that many repairs have since been made.	Popular for younger children; limited inclusivity and enclosure. It should be noted that many repairs have since been made.	Missing installation certificate; no ID plates; damaged see saw and swings; surface trip hazards. It should be noted that many repairs have since been made.	Obtain certificate; affix plates; repair or remove unsafe equipment; resurface key areas. It should be noted that many repairs have since been made.	**Red**
Riverside Park St Neots	St Neots	80.68%	Mixed condition; several areas need repair	Highly favoured; varied accessibility, low for wheelchair	Missing installation certificate; worn surfacing; loose swing	Tighten bars; refill surfaces; replace swing parts; install	**Red**

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				users; toilets far away	roller; missing bolts and ID plates	plates; monitor wear	
Rowell Way	Sawtry	63.99%	Well-maintained; issues with documentation and fixings		Missing installation certificate; manufacturer's plates not visible; surface fixings exposed	Provide certificate; affix ID plates; repair surface bolts	**Red**
Sapley Fields	Huntingdon	94.73%	Well-maintained with minor compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; exposed metal drain; missing load-bearing indicators on bolts	Provide certificate; repair/cap exposed drain; ensure D bolts are clearly marked	**Amber**
Scott Drive	Yaxley	98.14%	Fully compliant; recently		Missing installation certificate; no manufacturer's plates on equipment	Provide installation certificate; affix	**Green**

			installed equipment			manufacturer's plates	
Shackleton Way	Yaxley	87.08%	Functional but aging; moderate repair needs		Missing installation certificate; overgrown foliage; gate not auto-closing; damaged surfaces; trip hazard	Address gate timing; clear foliage; repair surfacing; ensure smooth travel run; install ID plates	**Amber**
Signal Road	Ramsey	90.31%	High compliance with minor maintenance needs		Missing installation certificate and manufacturer's plates; weeds; surface wear	Provide documentation; remove weeds; monitor surfacing condition	**Amber**
Stokes Drive	Godmancheste r	86.32%	Satisfactory overall; some surfacing and		Missing installation certificate; overgrown bushes; insufficient bark	Provide certificate; trim vegetation; top up bark to 100mm;	**Amber**

			compliance issues		surfacing; unclear D bolt markings	label load-bearing D bolts	
Stukeley Meadows	Huntingdon	90.59%	Structurally sound with multiple minor compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; gate finger trap risk; surface gaps; missing steel caps; exposed bolts; cable wear	Provide certificate; correct gate stopper; infill surface; replace caps; protect bolts; monitor cables	**Amber**
The Whaddons	Huntingdon	84.07%	Satisfactory condition but impacted by cleanliness and wear		Missing installation certificate; no signage; loose bolts; trip hazards; rotting seating; surface damage; litter and sharp waste	Provide certificate and signage; tighten bolts; repair surface and seating; increase inspection frequency to manage waste	**Red**

Top Birches	St Neots	77.90%	Very good condition; compliant structure		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage	Provide required documentation and install signage	**Red**
Weston Court	St Neots	92.88%	Generally good condition with minor hazards		Missing installation certificate	Provide original installation certificate; replace or repair broken fence panels at rear; remove leaf mulch under swings to eliminate slip hazard	**Amber**
Wigmore Farm Infant	Godmancheste r	95.31%	Good condition with limited minor issues		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage; unclear D bolt markings	Provide certificate; install appropriate signage; clearly	**Amber**

						mark load-bearing D bolts	
Wigmore Farm Junior	Godmancheste r	92.48%	Good condition with minor compliance concerns		Missing installation certificate; slow-closing gates; unclear D bolt markings; minor surfacing damage	Provide certificate; service gates for 4–8s closure; label D bolts; repair soft pour trip hazard	**Amber**
Woodridge	St Neots	Not listed	Functionally compliant with moderate risks		Surface damage; missing certificate; no safety signage; fencing damage; missing plates	Repair surfacing; install ID plates; replace fencing; provide certificate and signage	**Red**

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6.4 Geographic

This Geographic Gap Analysis forms a key component of HDC's Play Sufficiency Assessment. Its purpose is to assess the alignment between current play provision and community need across the district, with a particular focus on geographic equity, accessibility, and strategic sufficiency. Drawing on a village-by-village synthesis of Health and Safety audits, observational usage data, and demographic profiling, the report delivers a place-based evaluation of play access and quality. Each locality has been assigned a strategic Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating to guide future planning, investment, and policy development.

The findings are defined by three core themes:

6.4.1 A Diverse Estate of Play Provision

Observation and engagement data point to a diverse pattern of use across the district. A small number of large, well-equipped "destination" parks, such as Hinchingbrooke Country Park in Huntingdon and Riverside Park in St Neots, consistently attract families from a wide catchment area and are widely appreciated as key community assets.

In contrast, a broader range of smaller, neighbourhood-level sites are used more variably. During assessment visits, around 40% of sites had no users present at the time of observation, while over half recorded fewer than ten users. This does not necessarily reflect disuse or disinterest; usage levels often depend on time of day, weather, and surrounding context, but it does suggest an opportunity to better understand local preferences and to tailor provision accordingly.

6.4.2 Gaps and Opportunities in the Current Offer

The analysis highlights three areas where targeted improvement could enhance sufficiency and inclusivity across the district's play estate:

- **Inclusive Play Opportunities**: Of the 52 assessed sites, 17 featured equipment accessible to children with physical disabilities. A smaller number offered integrated features that actively support play between children with differing needs. This reflects the fact that many sites were designed prior to the introduction of inclusive design standards. HDC continues to improve

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accessibility where possible, but full retrofits can be challenging within current budgets and site layouts.

- **Provision for Older Children and Teenagers**: Engagement with young people indicates that existing equipment such as MUGAs and fitness stations is often underused, with a preference instead for adventurous, social, and self-directed features such as pump tracks, zip lines, and shelters. These preferences offer a clear direction for future design and investment, especially in areas of high youth population.

- **Site Documentation and Compliance**: During audits, several sites were found to have missing documentation such as installation certificates or manufacturer plates. This does not necessarily indicate safety concerns, as routine inspections and remedial works are regularly carried out. However, improved documentation processes could help streamline compliance and future maintenance planning.

6.4.3 Targeted Investment to Support Equity

Play provision across Huntingdonshire reflects the district's complex geography, diverse settlement patterns, and historical development context. However, some areas, particularly those with higher levels of deprivation and larger child populations, tend to rely on older or less well-equipped sites. These patterns are often the legacy of past planning frameworks or resource constraints, rather than present neglect.

Addressing these imbalances through thoughtful, community-led investment can help ensure that all children have access to high-quality, inclusive play. Targeting resources to the areas of greatest need offers an opportunity to strengthen cohesion, promote wellbeing, and reduce barriers to participation in outdoor recreation.

The table below summarises sufficiency across the district's seven key localities, based on a triangulated assessment of need, quantity, and quality. These locality-level ratings feed directly into the Strategic Improvement Plan and should be read in conjunction with site-specific findings set out in the Gap Analysis Table.

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Village/Town	Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating	Justification
Godmanchester	Amber	Local provision is well-used and generally safe, but demand from a growing child population is outpacing the variety and quantity of existing play equipment. Inclusive features are limited, reflecting legacy design, though improvements could be prioritised in future upgrades.
Huntingdon	Amber	Provision is mixed. While some parks are strategic assets and receive regular use, certain neighbourhood sites would benefit from modernisation and improved accessibility. Areas of higher deprivation may require targeted investment to reduce localised inequalities.
Ramsey	Amber	One centrally located park serves much of the town, and while well-maintained, it lacks dedicated youth provision. There is an opportunity to expand or diversify the offer for older children and teenagers through co-designed enhancements.
Sawtry	Green/Amber	The main park is centrally located, visible, and offers a wide range of equipment for different age groups. Although some natural features were flagged in earlier assessments, feedback from families is positive and the site remains well-used. Pathways and landscaping could be improved further over time.
St Neots	Amber	The town benefits from several well-used parks, but some sites are ageing and may require scheduled improvements. The scale of the town and child population creates higher baseline expectations; planned investment will help sustain quality and accessibility.

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Yaxley	**Red**	Provision is currently limited in both quantity and inclusivity. The largest site suffers from repeated vandalism, and while safe at the time of inspection, is not well-used. There is clear justification for a comprehensive review or redesign.
St Ives	**Amber**	HDC operates only a small number of play assets here, such as Hill Rise Park and Skate Park. Other local parks are under the remit of St Ives Town Council. Strategic collaboration may support more consistent quality and accessibility across the town.

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7. Proposed Strategic Plan

Play provision across Huntingdonshire reflects a varied landscape of assets shaped by historic development, demographic growth, and evolving community expectations. While flagship parks such as Hinchingbrooke and Riverside continue to attract high levels of use and appreciation, many smaller neighbourhood sites experience more variable usage. This reflects a range of factors, including location, design age, and surrounding infrastructure, rather than quality alone.

Routine Health and Safety audits have identified a number of sites where surfacing, equipment condition, or signage may require attention. These issues are already being addressed through scheduled maintenance or targeted investment. In some locations, lower levels of use, observed at over 40% of sites during visits, suggest opportunities to consolidate provision, realign with current demand, or reimagine underutilised spaces in collaboration with local communities.

Accessibility is another area with clear potential for improvement. Of the 52 sites assessed, 17 include at least one item of inclusive equipment. Given Huntingdonshire's EHCP rate of 5.7%, enhancing inclusive features offers a meaningful opportunity to improve experiences for children with additional needs and their families. It is important to note, however, that most sites were installed before current design standards and full retrofits may not be feasible in every case.

In response to these dynamics, the proposed strategy outlines a shift from reactive maintenance to a planned, equity-informed investment model. This approach positions play as essential community infrastructure, integral to child development, family wellbeing, and inclusive public space.

7.1.1 A Vision for Inclusive and High-Quality Play

This strategy proposes a shift in both ethos and delivery: from reactive maintenance and patchwork upgrades to a proactive, place-based investment programme that builds a network of high-quality, inclusive, and resilient play spaces.

The long-term vision is for play to be positioned as a pillar of Huntingdonshire's social infrastructure, on par with transport, housing, and education, as a public good that delivers measurable returns in child development, public health, and social cohesion. To support this, the Council will embed clear quality standards into all future planning and investment decisions.

Investment in high-quality play provision produces benefits that extend far beyond the park boundary. Well-designed public spaces are linked to improved physical and mental health, reduced pressure on NHS services, enhanced social connection, and increased civic pride. For children and families, they offer a safe and stimulating environment to learn, socialise, and thrive. For the Council, this represents a strategic opportunity to deliver lasting value in both financial and social terms.

7.1.2 Delivering on Priorities

This strategic plan aligns directly with the ambitions set out in HDC's Corporate Plan and wider health and wellbeing priorities. The Council has committed to building "a better Huntingdonshire," with a strong emphasis on community health, active lifestyles, and place-based equity. High-quality play provision is a visible and impactful way to deliver on these commitments.

In addressing known safety risks, the strategy supports the Council's priority to create safer, healthier communities. By embedding inclusivity, it promotes equal access to public services and helps close health and opportunity gaps. And by adopting an equity-led investment model, the strategy ensures that resources are directed towards areas of greatest need, particularly where child poverty, social exclusion, or deprivation limit access to safe, enriching environments.

The successful delivery of this plan will provide clear evidence of progress against corporate priorities, reinforce the Council's leadership in place-based planning, and strengthen public confidence in its role as a steward of community assets.

7.2 Strategic Pipeline: Gantt Chart

To shift from a reactive to a planned, equitable, and risk-managed approach, HDC must first address the systemic barriers that currently undermine its play estate. The four foundational projects outlined below are not capital works in themselves, but rather programmes that establish the governance, compliance, equity, and engagement mechanisms needed to ensure all future investment is effective, inclusive, and legally sound. These initiatives are interdependent and must be prioritised before wider refurbishment and new build activity commences. The Gantt Chart is presented on the following page and has been submitted as a pdf document alongside this final report.

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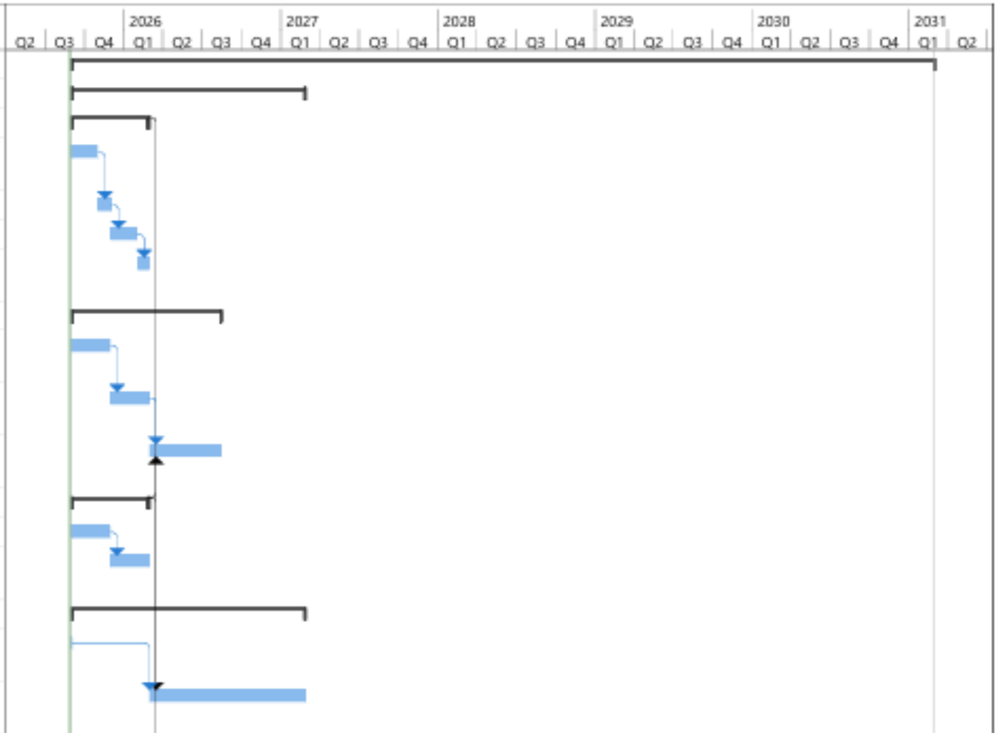
ID	Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
1		**HDC: Strategic Improvement Plan - Play**	**1435 days**	**Mon 01/09/25**	**Fri 28/02/31**
2		**Strategic Pipeline**	**390 days**	**Mon 01/09/25**	**Fri 26/02/27**
3		**Governance & Compliance Overhaul**	**130 days**	**Mon 01/09/25**	**Fri 27/02/26**
4		Commission District-Wide Audit of Council-Managed Play Area Documentation	45 days	Mon 01/09/25	Fri 31/10/25
5		Recreate Missing Asset Records	22 days	Mon 03/11/25	Tue 02/12/25
6		Centralise Asset Records into Digital Register	43 days	Wed 03/12/25	Fri 30/01/26
7		Develop Contractual "Gateway" Protocol requiring H&S Documentation for New Play Area Works	20 days	Mon 02/02/26	Fri 27/02/26
8		**Embedding Inclusive Design Standards**	**250 days**	**Mon 01/09/25**	**Fri 14/08/26**
9		Formal Adoption of the Sensory Trust's Inclusive Play Guidelines as Policy for New/Upgraded Play Areas	65 days	Mon 01/09/25	Fri 28/11/25
10		Develop 'Inclusive by Design' Benchmark Standards for Play Area Works	65 days	Mon 01/12/25	Fri 27/02/26
11		Update Procurement Frameworks to Include New Standards	120 days	Mon 02/03/26	Fri 14/08/26
12		**Equity-Based Capital Investment Framework**	**130 days**	**Mon 01/09/25**	**Fri 27/02/26**
13		Develop and Adopt Capital Prioritisation Matrix	65 days	Mon 01/09/25	Fri 28/11/25
14		Weight Funding Decisions based on Deprivation and Associated Metrics	65 days	Mon 01/12/25	Fri 27/02/26
15		**Youth Provision Co-Design Programme**	**390 days**	**Mon 01/09/25**	**Fri 26/02/27**
16		Pause Further Investment in Youth Provision Pending Development of New Strategy	1 day	Mon 01/09/25	Mon 01/09/25
17		Develop and Launch Youth Provision Co-Design Programme in High-Needs Areas	260 days	Mon 02/03/26	Fri 26/02/27



Project: HDC Strategic Improvement Plan - Play Date: Thu 28/08/25	Task		Project Summary		Manual Task		Start-only		Deadline	
	Split		Inactive Task		Duration-only		Finish-only		Progress	
	Milestone		Inactive Milestone		Manual Summary Rollup		External Tasks		Manual Progress	
	Summary		Inactive Summary		Manual Summary		External Milestone			

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7.2.1 Governance and Compliance Overhaul

7.2.1.1 Purpose

To de-risk the play estate by establishing a baseline of documentation and safety compliance across all sites, enabling transparent asset management and audit readiness.

7.2.1.2 Rationale

Some sites lack installation certificates and manufacturer ID plates; key documentation required to evidence compliance with EN1176 safety standards.

7.2.1.3 Key Actions

- Commission a district-wide documentation audit across all council-managed play areas. Where documentation is missing, recreate asset records and upload them into a centralised digital register.
- Embed a new contractual “Gateway” protocol: final contractor payments for new works or refurbishments will be contingent upon receipt and verification of all Health and Safety documentation, including EN1176 certification.

Timescale: 0–6 months

Estimated Budget: £15,000–£20,000

Expected Outcomes

- Full EN1176 documentation coverage across the estate
- Reduced legal and insurance risk
- A reliable data foundation for lifecycle costing, budgeting, and capital planning

7.2.2 Embedding Inclusive Design Standards

7.2.2.1 Purpose

Overcome any barriers to play for disabled children by adopting inclusive design as a default standard across all new and refurbished provision.

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7.2.2.2 Rationale

At the time of inspection, 17 of the 52 audited sites currently include any accessible play equipment.

7.2.2.3 Key Actions

- Formally adopt the Sensory Trust's inclusive play guidelines as policy for all new and upgraded play spaces.
- Update procurement frameworks to require all new installations to meet a defined 'Inclusive by Design' benchmark. This could include continuous soft-pour surfacing, step-free paths, integrated equipment, and sensory features that promote social play.

Timescale: Policy adoption within 3 months; ongoing integration into project delivery

Estimated Budget: Officer time only for policy development; capital implications integrated into individual refurbishment budgets

Expected Outcomes

- Clear compliance with the Equality Act 2010
- Improved accessibility and increased usage by disabled children and families
- Strengthened community inclusion and equity

7.2.3 Youth Provision Co-Design Programme

7.2.3.1 Purpose

To reimagine adolescent provision by engaging young people directly in the design and development of public play and recreation spaces.

7.2.3.2 Rationale

Consultation has shown that older children seek social and dynamic spaces like pump tracks, zip lines, and shaded seating. A youth-led co-design process is more likely to produce spaces that are relevant, well-used, and socially valuable.

7.2.3.3 Key Actions

- Pause further investment in traditional youth provision pending the development of a new strategy

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- Launch a co-design programme in partnership with schools and youth groups in high-need areas (e.g. Huntingdon, St Neots, Yaxley), giving young people a central role in shaping design outcomes

Timescale: 6–12 months

Estimated Budget: £10,000–£15,000 (covering facilitation, materials, and youth honorariums)

Expected Outcomes

- A youth-endorsed strategy that reflects current needs and aspirations
- Higher engagement and positive use of public spaces by adolescents
- Long-term public health and community safety benefits through improved provision

7.2.4 Equity-Based Capital Investment Framework

7.2.4.1 Purpose

To ensure that future investment in play is targeted to areas of highest need, based on transparent, data-driven prioritisation criteria.

7.2.4.2 Rationale

In some areas, the poorest communities, often with the highest child populations, have provision in need of review. Key Actions

- Develop and adopt a Capital Prioritisation Matrix, informed by international best practice (e.g. Minneapolis Park Board's 23-point equity model)

- Weight funding decisions based on deprivation (IDACI), child population density, provision quality (RAG rating), and sufficiency against Fields in Trust benchmarks

Timescale: 6 months

Estimated Budget: Officer time only

Expected Outcomes

- A consistent and defensible model for allocating investment
- Optimised return on capital through targeted interventions

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- Demonstrable progress on reducing inequalities in access to quality play

7.2.5 Priority Phase 1 (Years 1–2): Urgent Safety and Strategic Stabilisation

The first phase addresses urgent Health & Safety risks and delivers flagship interventions in the most disadvantaged, under-served areas. The aim is to stabilise the estate and demonstrate the Council's commitment to inclusive, equitable provision.

Project 1.1 – Targeted Safety Remediation

Deliver focused works to address priority items identified through routine Health & Safety audits. This includes repairing surfaces, replacing worn components, and ensuring signage and access meet agreed standards. Most remedial works are minor in nature and will build on the Council's established inspection and repair programme.

Project 1.2 – Yaxley Park Overhaul: Feasibility and Design

Yaxley has a large child population but limited provision. This project will explore options for a mid-scale, inclusive park through feasibility studies and community co-design, ensuring the design reflects local priorities and addresses recurring challenges such as vandalism.

Project 1.3 – Ramsey Youth Provision (Co-Design Output)

Ramsey lacks dedicated teenage provision. This project will deliver the first outcome of a youth co-design process, potentially including a pump track, youth hub, or alternative activity space, shaped by young people's voices.

Project 1.4 – Huntingdon North Equity Refurbishment

Targeted investment in a key neighbourhood site (such as The Whaddons) to deliver a refreshed and inclusive park aligned with new design standards. Where recent investment has already been made (e.g. Bevan Close), resources will focus on complementary improvements.

7.2.6 Priority Phase 2 (Years 2–4): Strategic Enhancement and Expansion

With immediate priorities addressed, Phase 2 focuses on Amber-rated areas, continuing the roll-out of inclusive design and addressing broader gaps in provision and accessibility.

Project 2.1 – Godmanchester Inclusive Upgrade

Upgrades at Wigmore Farm (Junior Zone) will add more physically challenging equipment and improve inclusivity. At Stokes Drive, woodchip surfacing will be replaced with unitary surfacing to improve accessibility and usability.

Project 2.2 – St Ives Accessibility and Play Value

In partnership with St Ives Town Council, targeted improvements at Crescent and Dunnock Way parks will increase accessibility and play value. Works may include ramped access at Dunnock Way and the addition of features for a wider range of users.

Project 2.3 – St Neots Estate Park Renewal

St Neots benefits from well-used destination parks but some smaller neighbourhood sites are under pressure from age and heavy use. One site in an area of higher need will be selected for a full community-led redesign.

Project 2.4 – Sawtry Site Re-engineering

Sawtry's main park is popular but would benefit from improvements to accessibility and landscaping. This project will fund a full redesign to address topographical challenges and incorporate community feedback.

7.2.7 Priority Phase 3 (Years 4–5): Consolidation and Innovation

The final phase focuses on sustaining gains made through the programme, embedding inclusive design more widely, and piloting innovative approaches to broaden the reach and long-term resilience of the play estate.

Project 3.1 – Inclusive Equipment Retrofit Programme

Install inclusive equipment (e.g. wheelchair-accessible roundabouts, sensory panels, flush trampolines) at 5–10 existing sites in good overall condition. This ensures incremental improvement without requiring full-scale redevelopment.

Project 3.2 – Natural and Adventurous Play Pilot

Develop a community co-designed natural play site in a high-population area such as Huntingdon or St Neots. This could incorporate landscaping, water/sand play, and planting, responding to demand for more imaginative and nature-based experiences.

Project 3.3 – Establishing a Lifecycle Renewal Fund

Using asset data generated during Phase 2, prepare a business case for a dedicated lifecycle renewal fund. This will support proactive investment in repairs and upgrades, helping to sustain quality and avoid future cycles of decline.

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Huntingdonshire District Council

Play Sufficiency Assessment: Implementation Guidelines

Private & Confidential

August 2025

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1. Executive Summary

To support the recommendations of the 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment, Premier Advisory Group (PAG) has developed an equity-led framework for investment and delivery. The framework ensures resources are allocated transparently, strategically, and in line with the Council's corporate priorities, while recognising the strong track record HDC already has in maintaining a large play estate safely with limited budgets.

Key elements include:

- Capital Prioritisation Matrix – a weighted scorecard combining safety audits, deprivation indices, sufficiency data, and community feedback to help direct investment towards areas of greatest need and potential social impact.
- Principles for Excellence in Play – embedding standards for inclusive, sustainable, and age-appropriate design. This includes accessible surfacing, integrated equipment for children of all abilities, sensory play elements, sustainable materials, climate-resilient features, and provision for older children and teenagers co-designed with young people.
- Robust Execution and Governance – strengthening procurement through a mandatory 'Gateway' handover protocol that withholds final payments until contractors supply safety certifications, warranties, and maintenance schedules. This ensures new assets are safe, auditable, and durable.

This Implementation Guide provides Huntingdonshire District Council with the tools to take the next step in play sufficiency: moving from responsive maintenance towards a sustainable, inclusive, and strategically aligned estate. By targeting investment where it is needed most, and embedding governance safeguards, the Council can continue to deliver high-quality play opportunities that improve child wellbeing, strengthen community cohesion, and enhance Huntingdonshire's reputation as a great place to live.

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2. Framework

2.1 Introduction

The Play Sufficiency Assessment highlighted opportunities to improve equity across the district. While flagship parks such as Hinchingbrooke and Riverside are well-used and highly valued, some neighbourhood sites – particularly in areas with higher levels of deprivation or population growth – would benefit from further investment in accessibility, inclusivity, or play value.

To address this, PAG recommends that capital investment in play provision be guided by a formal, equity-based framework. This will ensure resources are allocated in a transparent, defensible, and data-driven way, maximising social impact and supporting the Council's corporate commitment to building a better Huntingdonshire for all residents.

2.2 Capital Prioritisation Matrix

To implement an equity-led approach, every potential capital project should be assessed and ranked using the Capital Prioritisation Matrix. This weighted scorecard provides a consistent methodology for evaluating projects against the Council's strategic objectives and reflects the dual priorities of safety and community value.

The matrix is designed to blend quantitative data (e.g. Health & Safety ratings, deprivation indices, child population density) with qualitative insights (e.g. community feedback, usage patterns). For example:

- A site rated H&S Amber may still be prioritised if community feedback highlights recurring issues of vandalism or perceived safety concerns.
- A site rated safe may nevertheless warrant investment if it lacks inclusive features in an area with a high population of children with additional needs.

By balancing these inputs, the matrix offers a holistic and defensible way to prioritise projects, ensuring that decisions reflect both technical evidence and community perspectives.

The matrix scores projects against four weighted criteria, set out in Table 1 below.

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Criterion	Weighting	Scoring Metric	Rationale
Safety & Risk	40%	Based on the site's most recent independent Health & Safety (H&S) RAG rating. Red = highest score Amber = medium score Green = lowest score	The Council has a duty of care to ensure public safety. This prioritises immediate remediation of sites with significant safety concerns or compliance failures, mitigating legal liabilities and addressing the high number of Red-rated sites.
Equity & Need	30%	Composite score based on: Sufficiency RAG rating of the locality Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) decile of the LSOA served. Projects in the top 30% most deprived areas receive the highest score.	Aligns capital investment with deprivation indicators, ensuring resources are targeted to communities where access to high-quality public space is most vital for child wellbeing.
Sufficiency	20%	Score reflects: Density of child population (ages 0–14) in the catchment area Severity of sufficiency gaps, e.g., lack of facilities or inadequate provision for key demographics.	Ensures investment is proportional to latent demand and addresses critical gaps in scale and type of provision, such as areas with large child populations but limited or unsuitable facilities.
Community & Strategic Alignment	10%	Based on: Volume/severity of negative community feedback (surveys, focus groups, interviews) Alignment with strategic pilots, such as stewardship models or natural play design.	Ensures resident perceptions and lived experience inform decisions, while also enabling investment to pilot innovative models that can be scaled district-wide for greater strategic value.

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2.3 Decommissioning Thresholds

While the Council remains committed to maintaining a wide estate of local play areas, there may be instances where continued investment does not represent best value for money. In these cases, decommissioning can serve as a strategic tool for reinvestment rather than cost-cutting, enabling resources to be redirected into better-used, higher-quality, and more inclusive sites.

A site may be formally evaluated for decommissioning if it meets all of the following criteria:

- It is identified through audits as requiring significant investment to bring to modern standards.
- Observations and engagement show consistently low or minimal community use.
- Consultation confirms the site is not valued or needed locally.
- Analysis shows that children and families would be better served through nearby, alternative provision.

This approach ensures that decisions are evidence-led, transparent, and focused on maximising benefit for children and communities.

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3. Principles for Excellence in Play

To ensure that every new and refurbished play area becomes a genuine community asset, all projects should adhere to a set of core design principles. These standards translate the Council's strategic goals for inclusivity, sustainability, and age-appropriateness into tangible, non-negotiable specifications for all design and build contracts.

3.1 'Inclusive by Design'

PAG recommends that inclusivity be treated as a fundamental, guiding principle for all provision.

All projects should adhere to the following:

- All designs must demonstrate compliance with a set of inclusive play guidelines, which address physical, sensory, and social accessibility.
- Specific HDC Requirements as per the Gap Analysis
    - Accessible Surfacing: Continuous, step-free accessible surfacing (e.g., poured rubber) is mandatory throughout all primary play zones and on pathways connecting entrances to all equipment.
    - Integrated Equipment: Procurement should focus on equipment that enables children of all abilities to play together. This counters the practice of isolating accessible items, which can reinforce exclusion.
    - Sensory and Imaginative Play: Every new or fully refurbished site should include a variety of sensory and imaginative play features to support neurodivergent children and provide richer play experiences for all.

To ensure consistent implementation, project managers and contractors must complete and sign off the compliance checklist provided in Table 2 at the design and pre-handover stages.

Requirement	Compliance Check (Y/N)	Evidence / Notes
1. Access & Circulation		
1.1 Step-free, accessible pathway from site entrance to all play zones and equipment.		
1.2 Continuous, accessible safety surfacing (e.g., poured rubber) throughout all primary play zones.		

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1.3 Sufficient circulation space around equipment for mobility aid users and carers.		
2. Play Equipment & Features		
2.1 At least one piece of equipment enabling integrated group play (e.g., flush roundabout, basket swing).		
2.2 At least one piece of equipment accessible to a wheelchair user (e.g., wheelchair-accessible trampoline, raised sand/water table).		
2.3 Inclusion of a minimum of two distinct sensory play elements (e.g., tactile panels, musical features, aromatic planting).		
2.4 Provision of varied physical challenges catering to different ability levels.		
3. Site Amenities		
3.1 Provision of accessible seating with backrests and armrests, located within play zones.		
3.2 Clear, easy-to-read signage with pictorial symbols.		
4. Policy Compliance		
4.1 Design formally reviewed against Sensory Trust's inclusive play guidelines.		

3.2 'Sustainable by Design'

This standard embeds the principles of the Council's Sustainability Strategy into every project, ensuring that play spaces are durable, cost-effective over their entire lifecycle, and environmentally responsible.

Procurement should prioritise materials with proven longevity and low maintenance requirements. These include:

- Recycled HDPE: Warrantied for 30+ years, weather-resistant, and low-maintenance.
- FSC-Certified Hardwoods: Species such as Robinia offer excellent durability without chemical treatments.

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- Galvanised or Stainless Steel: The most robust option for high-wear components and structural elements.

Recognising the impacts of climate change, all designs should incorporate:

- Shade Provision: A combination of natural shade from large-canopy deciduous trees and artificial shade structures (e.g., fabric sails) to mitigate heat risks.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): The integration of features such as playable swales, rain gardens, and permeable surfacing to manage stormwater, prevent waterlogging, and enhance play value.

In line with the Environment Act 2021, all new designs should contribute to the Council's 10% BNG target. This will be achieved through features such as wildflower meadows, native species planting, insect hotels, and other habitat creation measures.

3.3 'Age-Appropriate by Design'

This standard is designed to prevent shortfall in engaging provision for older children and teenagers, a gap identified through both observational data and direct feedback from young people.

- Youth Co-Design Mandate: All projects specifically targeting the 11–17 age group should be developed through the formal Youth Co-Design Programme.
- Exploration of New Typologies: The standard encourages the exploration of innovative and dynamic features that young people have expressed a desire for, including pump tracks, parkour and climbing installations, and informal outdoor social hubs with integrated seating, lighting, and device charging points.
- Gender-Aware Design: Drawing on feedback from parent focus groups which highlighted the need for spaces where teenage girls feel safe and comfortable, designs should incorporate principles from campaigns such as "Make Space for Girls". This includes features like circular or social seating arrangements that facilitate conversation, adequate lighting to improve perceived safety after dark, and locating facilities away from enclosed or intimidating areas.

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4. Project Execution and Governance

Documented execution protocols are essential to ensure that the Council's strategic design standards are delivered on the ground and that the long-term risks associated with poor contract management are eliminated.

3.1 Procurement Based on Whole-Life Value

Procurement policy should shift from an emphasis on minimising initial capital outlay to a model that prioritises total lifecycle value. Tender evaluations should be weighted to favour bids that demonstrate superior long-term durability, lower maintenance costs, and extended warranties for materials and components. This approach is designed to prevent "false economies", where cheaper, short-lived solutions can result in higher long-term costs and the proliferation of high-risk play areas.

3.2 The Mandatory 'Gateway' Handover Protocol

The council should implement final checks and balances to prevent issues in documentation and certifications. This could take the form of a mandatory 'Gateway' protocol embedded into the payment terms of all future design and build contracts. This protocol would establish a "hard gate" for final payment. The final tranche of the contract value (e.g., 10-15%) will be withheld and will not be released until the contractor has submitted a complete Asset Information Pack to the Council's designated officer for verification and approval.

This pack should include, as a minimum:

- A certificate of compliance with BS EN 1176 standards from an independent, accredited body.
- All original manufacturer installation certificates for every piece of equipment.
- Manufacturer warranties for all equipment and surfacing.
- A full schedule of required maintenance and inspection tasks.

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5. Community Partnership and Engagement

Meaningful community involvement is critical to the success and long-term sustainability of play spaces. This charter formalises the Council's commitment to engaging residents at every stage of the project lifecycle, from initial concept design to ongoing stewardship.

5.1 A Spectrum of Engagement

The level of community engagement should be tailored to the scale and context of each project, following a defined spectrum:

- Consultation (Standard for all projects): All projects should involve a baseline level of public consultation. This may include surveys on design preferences, public displays of concept plans, and feedback sessions.
- Co-Design (Mandatory for specific projects): A deeper, more collaborative co-design process should be used for all youth-focused projects (as part of the Youth Co-Design Programme). It is also recommended for major redesigns in areas where community trust has been eroded by historic neglect.
- Stewardship (A pathway for all communities): The Council will actively support communities who wish to take on a long-term stewardship role for their local park post-completion.

5.2 Involving the 'Friends of the Park' Model

To facilitate long-term community stewardship, the Council should support and include local 'Friends of the Park' groups in consultations. These voluntary groups work in partnership with the Council's Parks and Countryside team to enhance and care for their local play space.

The role of a 'Friends of the Park' group should include:

- Acting as local ambassadors and champions for the park.
- Supporting routine monitoring by flagging emerging maintenance issues or instances of vandalism to the Council.
- Organising community events and activities to encourage positive use and foster a sense of local ownership.

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- Undertaking appropriate low-level maintenance tasks, such as litter picking, weeding, or bulb planting.

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Huntingdonshire District Council

Geographic Gap Analysis of Play Sufficiency

Private & Confidential

September 2025

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1. Executive Summary

This Geographic Gap Analysis forms a key component of Huntingdonshire District Council's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. Its purpose is to assess the alignment between current play provision and community need across the district, with a particular focus on geographic equity, accessibility, and strategic sufficiency. Drawing on a village-by-village synthesis of Health and Safety audits, observational usage data, and demographic profiling, the report delivers a place-based evaluation of play access and quality. Each locality has been assigned a strategic Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating to help guide future planning, investment, and policy development.

The findings highlight both the strengths of Huntingdonshire's play network and opportunities for further improvement. The district benefits from a broad estate of play spaces that are regularly inspected and generally well-maintained, with flagship sites such as Hinchingbrooke Country Park in Huntingdon and Riverside Park in St Neots attracting high levels of use and positive feedback. At the same time, the analysis identifies a number of areas where provision could be enhanced to ensure that all children and families benefit equally. Three themes emerge:

1.1 A Varied Estate of Play Provision

Observation and consultation data show a contrast between large, high-quality "destination" parks and smaller neighbourhood sites where usage is more variable. More than 40% of observed sites had no users present at the time of assessment, and over half recorded fewer than ten users. This does not necessarily reflect poor quality—usage is often shaped by factors such as weather, location, or visibility—but it does point to opportunities for more tailored design and investment to increase local engagement.

1.2 Opportunities to Strengthen Sufficiency

The analysis highlights three areas where future investment could make the greatest difference:

- **Inclusive play**: Of the 52 assessed sites, 17 currently include equipment accessible to children with physical disabilities, with fewer offering features that actively support co-play between children of all abilities. Many sites were designed before inclusive design standards were introduced, and incremental improvements offer a clear opportunity to broaden access over time.

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- **Teenage provision**: Consultation with young people emphasised a desire for adventurous and social spaces. While traditional facilities such as MUGAs and fitness stations are present, they were less well-used. Future provision could respond to this demand with co-designed features such as pump tracks, zip lines, and informal gathering areas.
- **Governance and documentation**: In some cases, installation certificates or manufacturer plates were missing from site records. While this does not indicate unmanaged safety issues—regular inspections and repairs are in place—strengthening documentation processes would support efficient management and public confidence.

1.3 Addressing Geographic Inequity

Provision across Huntingdonshire reflects the district's rural geography, settlement patterns, and the legacy of past development frameworks. Some areas with higher deprivation or larger child populations are more reliant on older or less inclusive facilities. By targeting investment towards these localities, the Council has an opportunity to ensure equitable access and to align provision more closely with community need.

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Village/Town	Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating	Justification
Godmanchester	Amber	Local provision is well-used and generally safe, but demand from a growing child population is outpacing the variety and quantity of existing play equipment. Inclusive features are limited, reflecting legacy design, though improvements could be prioritised in future upgrades.
Huntingdon	Amber	Provision is mixed. While some parks are strategic assets and receive regular use, certain neighbourhood sites would benefit from modernisation and improved accessibility. Areas of higher deprivation may require targeted investment to reduce localised inequalities.
Ramsey	Amber	One centrally located park serves much of the town, and while well-maintained, it lacks dedicated youth provision. There is an opportunity to expand or diversify the offer for older children and teenagers through co-designed enhancements.
Sawtry	Green/Amber	The main park is centrally located, visible, and offers a wide range of equipment for different age groups. Although some natural features were flagged in earlier assessments, feedback from families is positive and the site remains well-used. Pathways and landscaping could be improved further over time.
St Neots	Amber	The town benefits from several well-used parks, but some sites are ageing and may require scheduled improvements. The scale of the town and child population creates higher baseline expectations; planned investment will help sustain quality and accessibility.
Yaxley	Red	Provision is currently limited in both quantity and inclusivity. The largest site suffers from repeated

		vandalism, and while safe at the time of inspection, is not well-used. There is clear justification for a comprehensive review or redesign.
St Ives	Amber	HDC operates only a small number of play assets here, such as Hill Rise Park and Skate Park. Other local parks are under the remit of St Ives Town Council. Strategic collaboration may support more consistent quality and accessibility across the town.

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2. District-Wide Perspective on Play Provision

2.1 Current Usage and Community Engagement

Observational data and community consultation highlight an uneven pattern of engagement with play spaces across the district. A "honeypot" effect is evident, with high-profile destination parks such as Hinchingbrooke Play Area, Riverside Park (St Neots), and Priory Park consistently attracting large numbers of users. These sites were among the most frequently visited and most positively rated in both surveys and interviews, praised for their design, variety, and perceived safety. They serve a broad age range and act as anchor assets within the wider play network.

Neighbourhood-level sites, particularly smaller parks in villages or peripheral estates, tended to show more variable levels of use. During observation visits, around 40% of sites recorded no users and over half had fewer than 10 children present at that moment in time. These figures may reflect external factors such as weather, time of day, or nearby competing attractions, rather than lack of demand alone. Consultation findings suggest that families sometimes bypass local parks in favour of larger sites with a broader play offer, highlighting that geographic proximity does not always equate to sufficiency.

Engagement also provided insight into user preferences. While traditional equipment such as swings and climbing frames remains popular, children and young people expressed a desire for more adventurous and socially oriented features. Younger children identified sensory and imaginative play as important, while older children and teenagers favoured elements such as zip lines, pump tracks, and informal gathering areas. Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and outdoor gym equipment were observed to be less popular, suggesting that current youth provision could be better aligned with user preferences through future co-design.

2.2 Accessibility and Inclusivity Landscape

The majority of sites are broadly walkable and well-connected, with 88% rated as accessible by foot or public transport. However, consultation and audit data indicate that once on site, experiences can vary, particularly for children with additional needs.

- Pathways and surfacing: Approximately 63% of sites rely on grass-only or partially surfaced routes, which can present challenges for users of mobility aids, wheelchairs, or

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prams. While 87% of sites offer some soft surfacing, only 23% provide comprehensive coverage, limiting accessibility in some locations.

- Inclusive equipment: Of the 52 assessed sites, 17 include equipment designed to support children with physical disabilities. Many older sites were installed before inclusive standards became commonplace, and incremental improvements are already being introduced where feasible.
- Sensory features: Just nine sites currently include sensory elements such as tactile panels or musical play, indicating scope to strengthen provision for neurodivergent children.

Consultation highlighted that the presence of inclusive assets does not always guarantee ease of use. For example, at Hinchingbrooke Park's Sensory Play Area, a specialist wheelchair-accessible swing was locked at the time of observation. The Council is working with the manufacturer to resolve design and safety issues, but the example illustrates that practical adjustments (e.g. clearer signage or access protocols) are as important as the equipment itself.

2.3 Demographic and Socio-Economic Context

Huntingdonshire has a high and growing child population, with particularly dense clusters in wards such as Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and St Neots Eynesbury. These areas represent strong latent demand for play facilities.

Overlaying this with socio-economic data highlights areas of vulnerability. According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), ten of Huntingdonshire's 106 Lower Super Output Areas fall within the bottom three deciles for child income deprivation. These are concentrated in Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and The Stukeleys—communities where access to safe, engaging public space is particularly valuable.

The need for inclusive design is further reinforced by local SEND data. Cambridgeshire's EHCP rate stood at 5.7% in 2024, above the national average of 4.71%, indicating a substantial cohort of children who would benefit from accessible and inclusive play environments. Aligning future investment with both demographic growth and inclusivity needs will ensure play provision continues to serve all families equitably.

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3. Village-by-Village Analysis

3.1 Godmanchester

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots is home to 1,891 children aged 0–14, with the largest cohort (537) aged 8–11. Socio-economic indicators suggest relative affluence, with local LSOAs ranking in the least deprived national deciles for both IMD and IDACI. Strategic need here centres on quality, inclusivity, and age-appropriate variety rather than deprivation.

The three District Council-managed play areas (Stokes Drive, Wigmore Farm Infant, and Wigmore Farm Junior) are rated Amber. Wigmore Farm provides a good range and secure fencing, though accessibility is limited and features such as the zip wire are not usable by all. Stokes Drive has more limited equipment and surfacing that restricts mobility access. Observed use was moderate to low, reflecting the neighbourhood scale of these facilities.

Identified Opportunities

- Provision is weighted toward younger children; more challenge for 8–11s could be added.
- Surfacing and equipment could be improved to broaden accessibility.
- Investment could focus on upgrading equipment, expanding capacity, and embedding inclusive design.

3.2 Huntingdon

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

Huntingdon has the district's highest child population (2,171 in Huntingdon North alone) and contains areas of both relative affluence and high deprivation. Its play estate must therefore serve universal needs while addressing more complex social contexts.

The town contains the largest number of sites, with 22 observed and 14 audited. Hinchingbrooke Country Park acts as a key district-level destination. Other neighbourhood sites, such The Whaddons, would benefit from further investment in surfacing, furniture, and accessibility. While observational data recorded some sites with no users at the time of visit, others were well used, reflecting variation in location, design, and catchment.

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Identified Opportunities

- Prioritise improvements at sites in higher-need areas, ensuring equitable access across Huntingdon.
- Strengthen inclusive design across the estate, including enhancing usability of the sensory park.
- Continue targeted investment to raise standards in neighbourhood parks while maintaining popular flagship sites.

3.3 Ramsey

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

Ramsey has a child population of 1,889 and is more geographically isolated than other towns. While relatively less deprived, limited local infrastructure increases the importance of strong neighbourhood provision.

One main Council-managed site serves most of the community. It is partially accessible and moderately used, though provision for older children is limited. Three of ten play items are placed on grass without accessible surfacing, restricting ease of use.

Identified Opportunities

- Explore options to expand or diversify play for a child population of nearly 1,900.
- Introduce features for older children and teenagers through co-design.
- Improve surfacing and layout to enhance inclusivity.

3.4 Sawtry

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Green/Amber

Sawtry has a moderate child population (1,124 aged 0–14) and is among the district's more affluent areas. Provision remains important to meet local demand.

Rowell Way, the only Council-managed site, shows signs of wear and is affected by the sloped grassy setting. While moderately used, the lack of pathways, fencing, or shelter limits accessibility for disabled users, pushchairs, or toddlers.

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Identified Opportunities

- Improve pathways, surfacing, and seating to make the site more accessible.
- Explore options for enhancing play variety and resilience against weather/wear.
- Consider longer-term redesign or additional provision to meet future demand.

3.5 St Ives

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

St Ives has a large and growing child population (2,740 aged 0–14). It is a generally affluent town, with demand driven more by population growth and diversity of age groups than deprivation.

HDC manages a small number of play sites directly (Hill Rise Play Area and Hill Rise Skate Park), while other sites such as Crescent and Dunnock Way are Town Council-managed. The skate park is well used but would benefit from refurbishment. At Dunnock Way, stair-only access limits inclusivity.

Identified Opportunities

- Refurbish Hill Rise Skate Park to maintain its popularity and safety.
- Work with the Town Council to enhance accessibility and inclusivity at secondary sites.
- Introduce inclusive equipment to broaden provision across the town.

3.6 St Neots

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

St Neots is the district's largest town, with 6,105 children aged 0–14. It includes areas of both affluence and deprivation, creating diverse needs.

The town has the largest portfolio in the district, with 18 observed and 15 audited sites. Destination parks like Riverside and Priory are popular and highly valued. Some neighbourhood sites, such as Riverside Coneygeare and Woodridge, were identified as priorities for improvement, with repairs already in hand.

Identified Opportunities

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- Address maintenance and accessibility at selected neighbourhood parks, particularly in higher-need areas.
- Enhance inclusivity across the estate, ensuring large-scale sites reflect the diversity of the population.
- Conduct a town-wide review to balance investment between destination parks and local sites.

3.7 Yaxley

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber/Red (Priority for Improvement)

Yaxley is home to 2,036 children aged 0–14, making it the district's second-largest child population. Moderate deprivation increases the importance of effective local provision.

Three sites were assessed: Crocus Way, Scott Drive, and Shackleton Way. Crocus Way has experienced high levels of vandalism and remains underused. Scott Drive and Shackleton Way provide local provision but would benefit from investment in inclusivity and appeal. Observations recorded low use across all three, though this may be influenced by time of day and other factors.

Identified Opportunities

- Redesign Crocus Way to address vandalism challenges and enhance accessibility.
- Introduce inclusive equipment and pathway improvements at all sites.
- Explore options for a larger, community-led play space to meet the needs of Yaxley's significant child population.

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Huntingdonshire District Council

Thematic Gap Analysis

Private & Confidential

July 2025

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1. Executive Summary

This Gap Analysis Report forms part of Huntingdonshire District Council's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. Its purpose is to highlight strengths in the current play offer and identify opportunities to further enhance access, quality, inclusivity, and overall sufficiency. The findings draw on site audits, community engagement, and geospatial analysis to inform future planning and investment.

A total of 38 sites were assessed through professional Health and Safety audits carried out by Handsam, complemented by surveys, interviews, and focus groups with children, parents, carers, and stakeholders. The assessment confirms that many parks are well-used, popular, and generally safe, while also pointing to practical areas where targeted improvements could add further value.

Key findings include:

- Many play areas are well maintained and provide valued opportunities for families, with evidence of high levels of local use and satisfaction.
- Some rural villages and new housing developments would benefit from additional accessible, walkable play areas.
- Health and Safety inspections identified issues such as worn surfacing, signage, or ageing equipment at some sites, but urgent risks are managed promptly through established inspection processes.
- There is clear opportunity to increase the consistency of accessible and inclusive play features across the district.
- Facilities for younger children are well established, with scope to grow provision that meets the needs of older children and teenagers.
- Toilets, seating, lighting, and shade are highly valued and could be extended to encourage longer visits and wider use.
- A small number of sites were raised in community feedback as needing improvement, aligning with audit findings and providing clear priorities for action.

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All findings are summarised in a comprehensive Gap Analysis Table. These feed directly into the Strategic Improvement Plan, which sets out proportionate, prioritised actions to enhance sufficiency, equity, and long-term sustainability of play in Huntingdonshire.

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2. Introduction

This Gap Analysis Report forms a central component of Huntingdonshire District Council's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. It identifies where current play provision falls short in meeting the needs, rights, and preferences of children and young people across the district, with a view to informing future planning, investment, and improvement strategies.

Underpinning this analysis is the principle that play is a fundamental aspect of childhood. Access to safe, inclusive, and stimulating play environments contributes directly to children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, social development, and sense of belonging in their communities. The Welsh Government's statutory framework for play sufficiency, while not directly mandated in England, provides a useful model in recognising the need for multidimensional, locally responsive approaches to assessing and improving play opportunities.

In line with this approach, the gap analysis has been designed to evaluate not only the quantity and geographic distribution of play spaces, but also the quality, inclusivity, accessibility, and sufficiency of these spaces from both a technical and experiential perspective. The analysis has been guided by a core question: Do children in Huntingdonshire have access to high-quality, inclusive, and welcoming play opportunities, regardless of where they live, how old they are, or what their needs may be?

As part of the consultation, respondents referenced a number of play areas not managed by HDC. These have been retained to give a holistic view of the wider play landscape, but are identified below:

- Judith's Field
- Butcher Drive
- Millfields Park
- Warboys Park
- Roman's Edge
- Alconbury
- Crescent

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- Dunnock Way

The maintenance and planning of these parks does not fall within the remit of Huntingdonshire District Council. However, they should be considered within council-wide strategic planning through collaboration with the relevant authorities where possible, in order to provide the best possible landscape of play provision for the communities served by HDC.

2.1 Methodology Overview

This report draws upon multiple data sources, including:

- Health and Safety (H&S) Audits: Detailed site inspections by Handsam Ltd, assessing physical safety, maintenance, compliance with EN1176 standards, and remedial needs.
- Community Engagement: Surveys with children (Early Years through to KS4), parents, carers, childminders, and key stakeholders, including open-text feedback on park quality and access.
- Qualitative Research: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with parents, carers, and professionals working with children and families.
- Observational Analysis: Onsite observations to assess play distribution, walkability, and proximity to areas of need (e.g., deprivation, rural isolation, new developments).

This mixed-methods approach enables both a granular, site-specific analysis and a high-level synthesis of systemic issues affecting play sufficiency across the district.

2.2 Scope and Limitations

While this analysis includes 38 audited sites and draws upon engagement from hundreds of local respondents, it does not yet include all play spaces within the district. Some areas may not have been captured through engagement or audit due to resource or time constraints. Further, community perception data is richer in urban centres and areas of recent development, while feedback from more rural or isolated communities was more limited.

Despite these constraints, the analysis offers a strong and representative evidence base for identifying strategic priorities and urgent needs. It also lays a clear foundation for future play audits, community engagement, and co-design processes.

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3. Findings from Observational and Geographic Analysis

3.1 Overview of Geographic and Demographic Distribution

A separate geographic gap analysis is given in the Geographic Gap Analysis of Play Sufficiency.

3.2 Observed Use Patterns and Spatial Demand

Observations of 52 play areas, conducted between 14–17 April 2025, revealed clear differences in levels of use. Popular destinations such as Hill Rise Skate Park (St Ives), Hinchingbrooke, and Riverside Park frequently attracted 20–29 users during visits, demonstrating strong community demand and high visibility. Other sites were observed to have lower footfall, with more than 40% showing no children present at the time of the visit. These patterns may reflect local demographics, the timing of observations, or the limited appeal of equipment, and point to opportunities for increasing the relevance and attractiveness of provision in some areas.

The early years cohort (babies to KS1) was consistently the most visible age group, aligning with national trends in play behaviour. Older children, particularly those in KS3 and above, were less frequently observed. Youth-focused features such as MUGAs and fitness areas were often underused, suggesting scope to refresh or co-design spaces that better meet the preferences of teenagers and young people.

3.3 Quality, Accessibility, and Inclusivity of Provision

From the combined observational and dataset analysis, accessibility emerges as an area of both strength and opportunity. Seventeen of the 52 observed sites offered equipment accessible to children with physical disabilities, though provision was inconsistent across the district. Some inclusive features, such as the wheelchair swing at Hinchingbrooke Sensory Park, illustrate positive practice but were not always fully usable at the time of observation. Surfacing was generally strong, with 87% of sites offering some form of soft surfacing, although only a quarter provided full-coverage surfaces suitable for mobility-impaired users.

Sensory and imaginative play features are available in several locations but remain limited overall. Just nine sites offered intentional sensory elements such as tactile panels or musical features, suggesting scope to enhance provision for neurodivergent children and those with sensory processing needs. In addition, many of the most desirable play features — such as tall slides or zip lines — remain

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inaccessible to children with restricted mobility, reinforcing the need for a more consistently inclusive design approach.

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4. Findings from Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Survey Responses

The survey responses provide valuable insights into the lived experiences, preferences, and perceived barriers regarding children's play in Huntingdonshire. The breadth of respondents, including children across age groups, early years carers, and stakeholders, enables a rich analysis of play sufficiency from multiple perspectives.

4.1.1 Patterns of Use and Preferred Spaces

Across all age groups, playgrounds with equipment remain the most popular settings for play, with particularly high preference among Key Stage 1 (KS1) and under 5s. Naturalistic spaces such as grassy areas, woodlands, and places with trees also featured prominently, especially among older children (KS3–KS4), indicating a desire for more informal and self-directed outdoor environments. Access to bike/scooter/skate parks and sports pitches was more significant for older children, aligning with their developmental needs for active, independent, and social recreation.

Frequency of park usage varied by age. While many KS1 children reported visiting parks twice a week or more, KS3–KS4 respondents showed reduced frequency, with a substantial proportion only using parks occasionally.

4.1.2 Access and Inclusivity

Survey results revealed strong evidence of geographic and transport-based inequity. While a majority of children in all age groups reported being able to walk or cycle to their preferred parks, a notable number relied on adults for transport – especially under 5s and KS1 children. For a small but important minority, parks were perceived as not being nearby or not safe enough to access independently, raising questions about local distribution and connectivity of provision.

The accessibility of facilities for children with disabilities emerged as a major concern in both the childcare provider and stakeholder surveys. Comments highlighted the lack of inclusive equipment (such as wheelchair-accessible swings), inaccessible surfaces, and limited provision for children with sensory or mobility impairments. Some childcare professionals described having to avoid certain parks entirely due to poor design or maintenance, which limits equitable access.

4.1.3 Quality, Condition, and Safety

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A recurring theme in all surveys was the concern over aging or poorly maintained equipment. Specific locations like Stukeley Meadows and Slepe Park were cited multiple times as having damaged or inaccessible play structures, with broken climbing frames and missing pieces noted. These quality concerns were linked not only to safety but also to reduced usage, as children avoid equipment that is boring, broken, or perceived as unsafe.

Survey data also revealed safety perceptions varied by age group. While most younger children and their carers felt safe in parks "most of the time," responses from older children were more mixed. Some mentioned antisocial behaviour, lack of lighting, or insufficient visibility as contributing to unease – particularly in underused or poorly overlooked spaces.

4.1.4 Equipment Preferences and Unmet Needs

Swings consistently emerged as the most popular equipment type across all age groups, followed by climbing frames, slides, and spinning equipment. Conversely, seesaws and metal climbing frames were frequently mentioned as underused or unsuitable, especially where they were outdated or not age appropriate.

Older children expressed a desire for more adventurous, active, and social spaces, such as trampolines, obstacle courses, outdoor gyms, or shelters. Meanwhile, under 5s and their carers requested more toddler-friendly, sensory, and imaginative equipment. Across several surveys, respondents advocated for age-segregated spaces to avoid conflict and to better meet different developmental needs within the same site.

4.1.5 Stakeholder and Provider Perspectives

Stakeholders reinforced many of these findings, noting limited variety in provision, lack of targeted equipment for older children, and missed opportunities to incorporate inclusive or community-building features like table tennis, musical play items, or nature-based features. Childcare providers highlighted that overcrowding in popular parks – particularly those with limited alternative sites nearby – creates strain and reduces quality of experience for users.

4.2 Data from one-to-one interviews

In-depth interviews with three local childminders provided detailed, place-based insights into the barriers and enablers of play in Huntingdonshire. Their feedback focused heavily on specific parks, revealing patterns in usage, access, maintenance, inclusivity, and design that speak directly to sufficiency and equity across the district.

4.2.1 High-use Parks with Infrastructure Gaps

Several parks were frequented due to their proximity and basic functionality, yet all presented issues undermining their full potential. Coneygear Park and Burley Hill Park, both used frequently by childminders, were reported to have issues with enclosure, essential amenities like toilets and seating, and surfacing.

4.2.2 Access Barriers and Spatial Inequities

Access constraints emerged as a major theme. Parks such as Pitts Park and Wheatfields Park – despite being within geographic reach – are practically inaccessible due to poor surfacing or lack of pedestrian infrastructure. A park on a new estate was described as too distant and disconnected for regular use, particularly for childminders travelling on foot with pushchairs or multiple children.

4.2.3 Safety and Site Avoidance

Reported safety concerns led to certain parks being entirely avoided. Hill Rise Park was described in distressing terms due to past vandalism, broken equipment, and traumatic associations. Priory Park, while the focus of a local improvement campaign, was deemed inappropriate for younger children due to outdated, unsafe, and high-level metal equipment.

4.2.4 Inclusive Play: Persistent Gaps and Isolated Success

Across all interviews, inclusivity was a prominent concern. Few parks provided any features accessible to children with additional needs. Warner's Park was the only site recalled as once had having an accessible swing – now broken. In contrast, Howitts Lane Park stood out as the only park described as truly inclusive, offering positive, multigenerational play for all abilities.

4.2.5 Design Quality and Age Appropriateness

Several parks were appreciated for overall design but still failed in meeting specific age group needs. For example, Loves Farm Parks were praised for aesthetics and material choice but fell short in accessibility for toddlers due to high platforms and poor surfacing transitions. Similarly, Papworth Park's splash pad and large equipment appealed to older children but lacked enclosure and sat adjacent to roads and ditches.

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4.2.6 Innovative Models and Cross-boundary Use

Childminders referenced other play spaces outside the immediate HDC area as both aspirational and practically necessary. Parks in Sandy and Abbott's Lee were mentioned, with the latter noted for its enclosure and green setting but described as under-maintained. One childminder drew attention to a New Zealand-based community-funded park, highlighting the potential of co-designed, locally led models that could be replicated within Huntingdonshire to deliver more inclusive and imaginative play environments.

4.3 Findings from focus groups

The focus groups with parents and carers in Huntingdonshire offer rich qualitative insight into how families experience local play provision. These discussions reveal both recurring strengths and persistent challenges, especially when considering the day-to-day realities of accessing and using local parks with children of varying ages and needs.

4.3.1 High-use Parks with Infrastructure Limitations

Several parks, including Riverside Park, Coneygear Park, and the Boat Park in St Neots, were described as central to family routines, benefiting from location, equipment variety, or proximity to social amenities. Riverside Park in particular forms part of what was described as the "holy trifecta" of St. Neots play areas, frequented due to its accessibility and the presence of nearby cafés. However, despite high use, these parks commonly lack essential infrastructure. At Riverside Park, the distance between play zones and toilet facilities was flagged as particularly problematic for families with younger children. Coneygear Park, while appreciated for its recent improvements and play value, was reported to have safety concerns, with lighting and the former condition of key features like the bridge undermining confidence in the site. The "Boat Park", though valued for catering to multiple age groups, was seen as potentially insufficient as children grow older and seek more diverse or challenging experiences.

4.3.2 Age and Gender Inclusivity in Play Design

Parents consistently noted that existing provision tends to meet the needs of children up to about the age of eight or nine, but fails to offer sufficient stimulation or safe social environments for older children. The issue of age-appropriateness was compounded by gendered differences in how children engage with space. Rocket Park, for example, was praised for including a sandpit and swing circle suitable for younger children and older girls. However, concerns were raised about lighting,

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cleanliness, and the lack of public toilets, which limit how older children – especially girls – can use the space independently or comfortably. These reflections align with external campaigns such as "Make Space for Girls" and international models from Germany and Sweden, where park design explicitly considers how teenage girls and other less-dominant groups use public space. Participants in both groups articulated a need for more considered, inclusive design features, including circular seating areas, informal hangout zones, and lighting that supports safe, extended use.

4.3.3 Access, Parking, and Site Maintenance

Although parents generally reported good walkability to their nearest parks, often within ten minutes, accessibility was not always equitable or practical. Sites like Hinchingbrooke Park and Loves Farm were flagged for poor or confusing parking, while others lacked sufficient gates or enclosure to make parents feel secure when supervising younger children. Ackerman Street Park was cited as a site with limited visual appeal and minimal facilities, with some equipment appearing worn or insubstantial. Cleanliness, durability, and the capacity of spaces to accommodate families for more than brief visits were seen as defining features of a quality play environment. Where these were lacking, families reported reduced enjoyment or outright avoidance of those sites.

4.3.4 Sanitation and Toilet Provision

The absence of toilets was a major source of frustration, especially for those with younger children. This was not isolated to rural or low-traffic parks, but was also reported at well-used spaces like Rocket Park and the unnamed "*Jeep Park*" near the football ground. In some cases, parents noted that toilet blocks were too far from the actual play areas to be usable in urgent situations. In others, the issue was not only distance but also lack of cleanliness or accessibility.

4.3.5 Inclusivity

Participants in both groups commented on the lack of wheelchair-friendly paths, ramps, or equipment. Although some swings and sensory elements existed, these were generally not maintained or visible in the majority of parks discussed. Parents described this as a "*massive gap*," noting that the district is falling short of offering equitable opportunities for children with disabilities.

4.3.6 Desire for Aesthetic and Imaginative Design

Across both groups, there was a clear appetite for more aesthetically engaging and creatively designed play areas. Parents criticised the uniformity of many local parks, describing them as "*samey*" –

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dominated by metal and plastic equipment in primary colours with minimal landscaping or variety. In contrast, external sites such as Burley House and Anglesey Abbey were praised for their natural materials, large wooden structures, and imaginative layouts. These sites were seen as aspirational, offering opportunities for risky play, imaginative engagement, and experiences that evolve as children grow.

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5. Findings from Health & Safety Evaluations

As part of the broader assessment of play sufficiency across Huntingdonshire, independent Health and Safety (H&S) audits have been undertaken for a representative sample of play areas by Handsam Ltd. These detailed site inspections evaluate compliance against EN 1176 playground safety standards and general best practice, identifying potential hazards, infrastructure deterioration, and recommended actions for improvement.

The audits provide a technical layer of data that complements the observational, qualitative, and usage data gathered through community engagement and mapping. Each audited site receives a physical condition score and itemised action plan, prioritising necessary repairs, refurbishments, and site management improvements. For example, Priory Park scored 86.56%, with actions including replacement of a damaged zip wire sleeve and repairs to surface trip hazards. Crocus Way scored significantly lower at 61.58%, with key concerns including incomplete signage, deteriorating surfacing, and lack of certification documentation. Hull Way, in contrast, was assessed at 94.46% and deemed safe with only minor remedial suggestions, highlighting its suitability as a model of good practice.

These findings reinforce and validate user-reported concerns about safety, access, and infrastructure quality across the estate. Where qualitative data highlighted feelings of neglect or discomfort at specific sites, the audits often uncovered corresponding material safety risks or deficiencies. These audits should be considered alongside the council's internal health & safety audits before being actioned.

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6. Conclusions

This synthesis brings together insights from observational fieldwork, mapping, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and technical audits to highlight district-wide opportunities for strengthening play sufficiency. While many sites are well-used and demonstrate strong practice, the combined evidence also points to recurring themes where targeted action could deliver the greatest impact.

6.1.1 Geographic Disparities and Transport Barriers

Provision is unevenly spread across the district. Families in new housing areas and rural settlements often have fewer local play options, sometimes relying on car travel. In places such as St Ives and Godmanchester, older sites are less walkable for families with prams or multiple children. By contrast, urban centres benefit from higher walkability. Improving connections — through better pedestrian routes and more accessible estate layouts — would extend safe, independent access to play.

6.1.2 Infrastructure Deterioration and Safety Concerns

Health and Safety audits and community feedback highlighted maintenance issues such as surfacing, toilet access, and fencing at some sites. Even well-used parks like Coneygear and Riverside were reported as needing improvements in supporting infrastructure. Concerns raised around sites such as Priory and Hill Rise underline the value of a consistent maintenance plan, which could further enhance community confidence and ensure parks remain welcoming, safe spaces for all users.

6.1.3 Insufficient and Uneven Inclusive Design

Inclusive play is an emerging strength in a small number of parks, such as Howitts Lane, but is not yet consistent across the district. Families of children with disabilities highlighted the need for more accessible surfacing, sensory play features, and equipment that promotes social inclusion across age groups. Addressing these gaps represents a clear opportunity to extend dignity, equity, and enjoyment to more children.

6.1.4 Age Appropriateness and Play Value Gaps

Provision for early years is strong and widely valued, but older children and teenagers have fewer options. MUGAs, skate ramps, and outdoor gyms are sometimes underused, reflecting a need for more engaging, co-designed youth spaces. At the other end of the spectrum, toddlers occasionally

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face barriers when equipment is not suitably adapted. Expanding variety and imaginative features across age groups would maximise play value and long-term engagement.

6.1.5 Facilities, Toilets, and Dwell-Time Constraints

Amenities such as toilets, seating, lighting, and shade were consistently highlighted as priorities by families. Even at otherwise popular parks like Riverside and Coneygear, limited facilities shorten visits and reduce accessibility, particularly for carers with multiple children or additional needs. Modest improvements in amenities would significantly enhance comfort, safety, and dwell time, allowing play areas to function as more inclusive community hubs.

6.1.6 Maintenance, Visibility, and Confidence in Provision

Responsive maintenance is a visible marker of quality. Community feedback indicated that broken or ageing equipment, even if not unsafe, can undermine perceptions of care and reduce use. This is most critical in high-deprivation areas where reliance on public play spaces is greatest. Consistent communication and timely repairs can help sustain community trust, ensuring that play areas are not only safe but also perceived as well cared-for and valued.

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7. Gap Analysis Table

This section presents a detailed summary of individual play sites audited as part of the Huntingdonshire Play Sufficiency Assessment. It draws together data from Handsam Health and Safety inspections, community and stakeholder engagement activities, and site observations. The table provides a structured, evidence-based comparison of each park's physical condition, compliance with safety standards, and alignment with community expectations and experiences.

Each park entry includes location, audit score (where available), a summary of current physical condition, insights gathered from surveys, interviews, and focus groups (where applicable), identified issues from the H&S audit, recommended actions, and a RAG rating.

7.1.1 Rationale and Structure

The rationale behind this table is to synthesise complex, multi-source data into a clear decision-making tool that supports prioritisation, funding, and strategic improvement planning. While some parks are technically compliant, they may still be failing to meet local needs due to design, age-inappropriateness, lack of amenities, or accessibility gaps. Conversely, parks flagged as high priority may have strong community value but face serious safety or maintenance concerns.

This format allows the Council to not only identify physical deficits but also understand how these intersect with lived experience, equity of access, and sufficiency outcomes. In doing so, the table supports both reactive (repairs, resurfacing, signage) and proactive (inclusion, co-design, redesign) planning.

7.1.2 RAG Rating System

The H&S RAG rating is based solely on audit score and the nature of issues identified in the Handsam site assessments. This provides an objective technical safety and compliance rating. The RAG ratings are:

- Green — high-performing site with full or near-full compliance. No significant safety or maintenance issues. Score of or above 93% according to Handsam.
- Amber — generally compliant but with minor to moderate issues (e.g. wear, missing signage, surface wear). Score of 85-92.99% according to Handsam.

- Red — Site has significant safety concerns or multiple compliance failures. Urgent action needed. Score below 85% according to Handsam.

7.1.3 Using the Table

This table should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Improvement Plan, which translates these findings into recommended actions, proposed timescales, and resource planning. The parks identified as Red represent high-priority cases where safety, usability, or sufficiency are significantly compromised. Amber sites require investment to prevent further deterioration or to enhance underperforming but valued spaces. Green sites are broadly compliant but may still benefit from routine enhancements or inclusive design upgrades.

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Park Gap Analysis Table

Park Name	Location	Audit Score (%)	Condition Summary	Community Insight	Identified Issues from H&S	Recommended Actions	H&S RAG
Bawlins	St Neots	95.81 %	Structurally sound; limited safety concerns		Missing installation certificate; gate closure too slow; raised manhole cover	Obtain installation certificate; adjust gate closure mechanism; cordon off area around raised manhole	**Amber**
Bevan Close	Huntingdon	73.44 %	Poor overall condition; multiple areas fenced off		Equipment fenced off; missing installation certificate; trip hazards from ongoing works; no warning signs at substation; missing D bolt load indicators	Repair or remove out-of-use equipment; provide certificate; install Chapter 8 barriers; add substation signage; mark D bolts	**Red**

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Crocus Way	Yaxley	61.58 %	The full site needs a full refurbishment.		Missing installation certificate; missing manufacturer's plates on equipment	Obtain installation certificate; affix manufacturer's plates	**Red**
Furrowfields	St Neots	90.17 %	Generally good condition with no major hazards		Missing installation certificate; wooden borders need maintenance; flaking paint; missing manufacturer's plates	Provide installation certificate; maintain wooden posts; repaint surfaces; affix missing ID plates	**Amber**
Grassland Area	Huntingdon	96.53 %	Very good condition; minor aesthetic concern noted		BBQs showing signs of age	Consider replacing BBQ units	**Amber**

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Great High Ground	St Neots	94.16 %	Good condition; no physical issues noted		Missing installation certificate	Obtain original installation certificate	**Green**
Henbrook Linear Park	St Neots	90.79 %	Generally functional; minor safety concerns		No installation certificate; damaged seesaw spring; worn rocker handles; worn swing seats; minor surfacing damage	Provide certificate; repair or replace damaged equipment; monitor surfacing	**Amber**
Hill Rise Park	St Ives	86.12 %	Functioning but with multiple safety issues	Negative reception; concerns on play quality; vandalism; unsafe	Broken fencing; loose gate stop; missing fixings; uneven surfacing; equipment wear; missing documentation	Replace fencing; fix gate and surface; add plates; monitor and repair damaged elements	**Amber**
Hill Rise Skate Park	St Ives	72.93 %	Generally compliant; minor wear and	Negative reception; concerns on play quality; vandalism; unsafe	Missing installation certificate; movement in grind rail; worn surfaces;	Provide documentation; address loose fittings; resurface entry/exit; remove graffiti	**Red**

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			structural issues		graffiti; trip hazard from edge		
Hinchingbrooke Park Main Playground	Huntingdon	86.22 %	Satisfactory condition with several significant remedials	Regular visits; children enjoy it; site of recent injury due to uneven surfacing; safety hazard near large slide and café area	Missing installation certificate; damaged see saw; illegible ID plate; unsafe gates (finger traps); splintering wooden fence; unclear D bolt load markings	Provide certificate; replace see saw; make pivot safe in interim; replace gates and wooden fence; mark load-bearing D bolts clearly	**Red**
Hinchingbrooke Park Old Playground	Huntingdon	74.26 %	Unsatisfactory condition; ageing infrastructure		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage; deteriorating wooden elements; no fencing or gates	Provide certificate and signage; monitor and plan to replace decaying timber; consider secure enclosure for safety	**Red**
Hinchingbrooke Park Outdoor	Huntingdon	95.95 %	Very good condition; minor		Missing installation certificate; two missing	Provide installation certificate; replace missing gym items;	**Green**

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Gym Equipment			equipment issues		equipment units; trip hazard from base plates	address trip hazard from plate edges	
Hinchingbrooke Park Sensory Play Area	Huntingdon	89.58 %	Satisfactory condition; key item currently quarantined	Occasionally visited; valued for nature and considered safe; large site and limited access split groups; not buggy-friendly	Missing installation certificate and signage; main swing padlocked and out of use;	Repair swing and reinstate safely; provide installation certificate; install safety signage including contact details; affix manufacturer ID plates	**Amber**
Hinchingbrooke Park Woodland Play Area	Huntingdon	92.17 %	Well-maintained with minor documentation and signage issues		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage;	Provide original installation certificate; install safety signage with name and contact number; affix manufacturer ID plates	**Amber**

Hull Way (24 & 25)	St Neots	94.46 %	High standard; minimal non-compliance noted		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage	Provide missing certificate and install safety signage	**Green**
Kester Way (MUGA)	St Neots	94.81 %	Good condition; structurally sound with minimal issues		Missing installation certificate; area not secure out of hours	Obtain installation certificate; consider out-of-hours security options	**Amber**
Maryland Avenue	Huntingdon	90.74 %	Good overall condition with multiple minor issues		Missing installation certificate; incomplete fencing; gates fail to close; trip hazards from soft pour; worn slide; unsuitable	Provide certificate; repair fencing and gates; fix surface and fall zones; monitor and maintain slide condition	**Amber**

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					surface under climbing frame		
Maule Close	St Neots	92.90 %	Well-maintained; generally safe		Missing installation certificate; no manufacturer plates; gate lacks auto closer; undulating surface near equipment	Obtain certificate; fix gate auto closer; install ID plates; repair surfacing to address trip hazard	**Amber**
Mayfield Crescent	Huntingdon	87.62 %	Satisfactory overall; minor damage and surfacing issues		Missing installation certificate; trip hazards from undulating surface; missing D bolt load markings	Provide certificate; address surface hazards; clearly mark load-bearing bolts	**Amber**

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Oxmoor Lane	Huntingdon	93.08 %	Satisfactory overall with minor remedials required		Missing installation certificate; surface degradation causing trip hazard; unclear D bolt load indicators	Provide certificate; repair soft pour surface; label load-bearing D bolts	**Amber**
Priory Park St Neots	St Neots	86.56 %	Generally satisfactory; localised damage	Popular for natural play; supports demand for outdoor; no inclusive features; not safe for toddlers	Missing zip wire sleeves; missing installation certificate; loose gate; damaged surfacing	Replace sleeves; fix gate; install ID plates; resurface to remove trip hazards	**Amber**
Riverside Park	Huntingdon	90.48 %	Good condition; minor compliance and surface issues		Missing installation certificate; gate not lockable; unclear D bolt markings; surface shrinkage causing trip hazards	Provide certificate; fix gate locking mechanism; label D bolts; repair surface to remove trip risks	**Amber**

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Riverside Park (Indoor Bowls Club)	St Neots	85.94 %	Mixed condition; multiple remedial needs		Missing installation certificate; tree overgrowth; fast-closing gate; surface shrinkage; paint/rust issues; missing load-bearing indicators	Provide installation certificate; conduct tree survey; adjust gate timing; resurface shrunken areas; repair paint/rust; ensure bolts meet standards	**Amber**
Riverside Park Coneygeare	St Neots	56.84 %	Poor condition: safety issues identified	Popular for younger children; limited inclusivity and enclosure	Missing installation certificate; no ID plates; damaged see saw and swings; surface trip hazards	Obtain certificate; affix plates; repair or remove unsafe equipment; resurface key areas	**Red**
Riverside Park St Neots	St Neots	80.68 %	Mixed condition; several areas need repair	Highly favoured; varied accessibility, low for wheelchair users; toilets far away	Missing installation certificate; worn surfacing; loose swing roller; missing bolts and ID plates	Tighten bars; refill surfaces; replace swing parts; install plates; monitor wear	**Red**

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Rowell Way	Sawtry	63.99 %	Well-maintained; issues with documentation and fixings		Missing installation certificate; manufacturer's plates not visible; surface fixings exposed	Provide certificate; affix ID plates; repair surface bolts	**Red**
Sapley Fields	Huntingdon	94.73 %	Well-maintained with minor compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; exposed metal drain; missing load-bearing indicators on bolts	Provide certificate; repair/cap exposed drain; ensure D bolts are clearly marked	**Amber**
Scott Drive	Yaxley	98.14 %	Fully compliant; recently installed equipment		Missing installation certificate; no manufacturer's plates on equipment	Provide installation certificate; affix manufacturer's plates	**Green**

Shackleton Way	Yaxley	87.08 %	Functional but aging; moderate repair needs		Missing installation certificate; overgrown foliage; gate not auto-closing; damaged surfaces; trip hazard	Address gate timing; clear foliage; repair surfacing; ensure smooth travel run; install ID plates	**Amber**
Signal Road	Ramsey	90.31 %	High compliance with minor maintenance needs		Missing installation certificate and manufacturer's plates; weeds; surface wear	Provide documentation; remove weeds; monitor surfacing condition	**Amber**
Stokes Drive	Godmanchester	86.32 %	Satisfactory overall; some surfacing and compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; overgrown bushes; insufficient bark surfacing; unclear D bolt markings	Provide certificate; trim vegetation; top up bark to 100mm; label load-bearing D bolts	**Amber**

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Stukeley Meadows	Huntingdon	90.59 %	Structurally sound with multiple minor compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; gate finger trap risk; surface gaps; missing steel caps; exposed bolts; cable wear	Provide certificate; correct gate stopper; infill surface; replace caps; protect bolts; monitor cables	**Amber**
The Whaddons	Huntingdon	84.07 %	Satisfactory condition but impacted by cleanliness and wear		Missing installation certificate; no signage; loose bolts; trip hazards; rotting seating; surface damage; litter and sharp waste	Provide certificate and signage; tighten bolts; repair surface and seating; increase inspection frequency to manage waste	**Red**
Top Birches	St Neots	77.90 %	Very good condition; compliant structure		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage	Provide required documentation and install signage	**Red**

Weston Court	St Neots	92.88 %	Generally good condition with minor hazards		Missing installation certificate	Provide original installation certificate; replace or repair broken fence panels at rear; remove leaf mulch under swings to eliminate slip hazard	**Amber**
Wigmore Farm Infant	Godmanchester	95.31 %	Good condition with limited minor issues		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage; unclear D bolt markings	Provide certificate; install appropriate signage; clearly mark load-bearing D bolts	**Amber**
Wigmore Farm Junior	Godmanchester	92.48 %	Good condition with minor compliance concerns		Missing installation certificate; slow-closing gates; unclear D bolt markings; minor surfacing damage	Provide certificate; service gates for 4–8s closure; label D bolts; repair soft pour trip hazard	**Amber**

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Woodridge	St Neots	Not listed	Functionally compliant with moderate risks		Surface damage; missing certificate; no safety signage; fencing damage; missing plates	Repair surfacing; install ID plates; replace fencing; provide certificate and signage	**Red**

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8. Appendices

Stakeholder Engagement Tables

Table 1 Specific parks mentioned in the surveys

Park Name	Survey Source(s)	Perceived Quality/Use	Geographic Context	Notes
Riverside Park	KS1, KS3–KS4, Under 5s	Highly favoured; wide use; accessible	St Neots	Model site for inclusive, high-quality provision; use as benchmark for urban investment
Priory Park	KS3–KS4	Popular for natural play and open space	Huntingdon area	Supports demand for naturalistic, older-child-friendly play
Hill Rise Park	KS3–KS4	Mentioned negatively; “not very good”	St Ives	Qualitative concerns; potential site for targeted improvement
Coneygear Park	Stakeholder	Popular, especially for younger children	Huntingdon North (high deprivation)	Performs well in deprived area; ensure maintenance and age-range inclusivity

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Spider Park	Stakeholder	Strong for younger children; lacks features for older users	Godmanchester	Highlights age-appropriateness gap; potential for youth-oriented retrofit
Millfields Park	KS3–KS4	Positive mention	Ramsey (high need area)	Effective in a deprived area; maintain and monitor for increasing demand
Hen brook Park	KS1, Under 5s	Noted as used	Little Paxton area	Community reliance suggests need for quality monitoring and potential upgrade
Hail Weston (Rocket Park)	KS3–KS4	Cited as used by older children	Hail Weston (rural area)	Indicates rural use pattern; assess for transport/access gaps
Willow Bridge / Brookfields Way	KS1, Under 5s	Mentioned by name; limited data	Possibly smaller estates or local greenspace	Community dependence likely; potential micro-scale investment opportunity
Pocket Park (unspecified)	KS1, KS2	Mentioned positively	General	Suggest local value in smaller spaces; further mapping needed to assess equity

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Table 2 Specific parks mentioned in interviews

Park Name	Mentions & Observations	Issues Identified	Notes
Coneygear Park	Closest to home; used frequently due to walkability	Not enclosed (next to road); deteriorating surfacing; unsafe for non-walkers; no toilets or benches	Lacks enclosure, safety and amenities despite high usage; priority for safety and accessibility
Pitts Park	Used due to open space and some sensory equipment	Inaccessible for young children; stone driveway; difficult pushchair access	Accessibility and suitability concerns for younger children and children with additional needs
Hartford School Park	Within walking distance; includes roundabout for sensory play	Uneven surfacing with a large hole; swing removed and misused; unsafe elements	Urgent maintenance and age-appropriate improvements needed
Hill Rise Park	Avoided due to vandalism and unsafe environment	Glass, broken equipment, burnt tree, unsafe nature area	High-priority for safety and restoration; significant deterrent to use

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Hill Rise Park (mention 2)	Avoided due to past trauma and lack of amenities	Perceived as unsafe; no toilets; no shade	Poor perception and inadequate facilities may suppress use; requires safety and comfort investment
Hinchingbrooke Park	Valued for nature-based activities (pond dipping, open water)	Shared with dog training classes, no published schedules, safety concerns	Highlight shared space conflict and need for coordinated scheduling and information sharing
Hinchingbrooke Park (mention 2)	Regular visits; children enjoy it; site of recent injury due to uneven surfacing	Grounding is poor; uneven surfaces causing falls; safety hazard by large slide and café area	Safety and maintenance priority; high-use site justifies investment
Hinchinbrooke Park (mention 3)	Occasional visit via two buses; only feasible in holidays	Transport barriers make access difficult with small children	Highlights the need for more localised quality provision in St Ives
Riverside Park	Accessible, enclosed, includes various slide sizes	Not suitable for wheelchair users; inaccessible equipment; locked toilets; allergen exposure risks	Mixed-quality site; accessible for some but fails on inclusivity and amenities

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Riverside Park (mention 2)	Frequently used	Not detailed in this interview	Inclusion in triangulated high-use parks; further cross-checking required
Papworth Park	Visited in the past; splash pad and large equipment appealing for older children	Not enclosed; adjacent to road and ditch; uncertain scheduling of splash pad use	Underscores need for better communication, enclosure, and multi-age suitability
Grafham Water	Previously used for bike hire and extended outings	Bike hire discontinued; now inaccessible for full-day activities with younger children	Illustrates loss of valuable infrastructure; potential for reactivation or alternative provision
Burley Hill Park	Most frequently visited; accessible and green; valued for little ones' independent play	Surfacing lifting due to water ingress; trip hazard; limited shade; only one bench; needs more inclusive features	High-usage site with safety and amenity gaps; strong candidate for targeted infrastructure upgrade
Wheatfields Park	Nearby but avoided due to lack of path and outdated features	No access path; must cross muddy field; unsafe equipment (e.g. high climbing frame, worn roundabout)	Accessibility and quality concerns suggest it's failing for target age group

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Warner's Park	Previously had accessible swing (now broken)	Lack of maintained inclusive equipment; swing has been broken for a long time	Unmet need for inclusive provision in this area
Unnamed New Estate Park	New estate park visited once; too far with young children on foot	Poor geographic access; inadequate public transport	Illustrates spatial play desert in new developments without supporting infrastructure
Priory Park	Avoided due to disrepair; not friendly for small children; active local efforts to improve via charity	Equipment removed; metal structures too high; unsafe for toddlers; no inclusive features	Significant age-appropriateness and inclusivity gaps; community co-production opportunity
Loves Farm Parks	Praised for wooden equipment and design	Slides hard to access for toddlers; rope climbs too high; poor platform design for early years	Valued spaces but poor design for younger children; refine equipment to support full age range
Howitts Lane Park	"Best park in the area"; inclusive for all ages and abilities	None identified in this interview	Model example of inclusive design; ideal benchmark for future development

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Sandy Area Parks	Mentioned as part of wider usage	Not specified	Possible inter-authority usage; check provision coordination if in another district
Abbott's Lee Park	Naturally enclosed grass area noted positively	Described as "looking very old"; unsure if HDC-managed	Suggests a potentially under-maintained site outside HDC's scope; still relevant for rural access
Unnamed New Zealand Park (external)	Cited as inspiring example of community-funded park with engraved fences	Not local; used as an ideal model	Opportunity to pilot community co-designed park model in Huntingdonshire

Table 3 Parks mentioned in focus groups

Park Name	Mentions & Observations	Issues Identified	Notes
Riverside Park	Most frequently used; part of the "holy trifecta" of St Neots play areas;	Toilets located far from some play zones; accessibility for sudden toilet	High-use site with good location but lacks adequate toilet access; importance of closer

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	10,min walk; multiple playgrounds; amenities like ambience café nearby	needs is poor; shared use of space by varied age groups	amenities and infrastructure for families with young children
Coneygear Park	Used regularly; seen as a novelty after a gap; has a "spinny thing" liked by children	Previously had broken bridge (long repair time); now fixed; some lighting and safety concerns; perceived as more suited for younger children	Popular, but historically under-maintained; requires consistent investment in infrastructure and lighting for comfort and perceived safety
Hinchingbrooke Park	Occasionally used for forest school; known for dispersed play features (e.g. duck and zip line)	Parking is a major issue during peak times; large site means children split between areas, hard for parents to supervise	Design appreciated but practical constraints hinder usage; highlights value and complexity of larger multi-feature parks
Hinchingbrooke Park (mention 2)	Occasionally visited; valued for nature; considered safe and well-maintained	Not buggy-friendly; limited public transport; large layout splits groups; parking issues at peak times	Valued, but practical access and supervision challenges; highlights need for multi-age design
Boat Park (St Neots)	Regularly visited; next to ambience café and parking; offers variety of equipment for different ages	Only one picnic bench; potential crowding; equipment caters well for	Well-used and centrally located; could benefit from expanded seating and diverse equipment for growing children

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		now but may not suffice as children age	
Rocket Park (St Neots)	Known for sandpit and swing circle; good for younger children; older girls like swings	Poor lighting; limited toilets; older equipment and cleanliness issues (bird droppings)	Gender-sensitive design highlighted; sanitation and lighting improvements would improve experience
Ackerman Street Park	Occasionally used; perceived as small and plasticky	Equipment longevity questioned; only one bench; fenced-off parts noted in past	Moderate use with safety and comfort concerns; equipment materials and facilities need reassessment
Loves Farm Park	Occasionally used; includes "big prior chips"	Parking is difficult; design does not reflect inclusive or gender-aware guidance	Access and inclusivity barriers noted; model for revisiting inclusive design standards
Unnamed Park by Football Ground (Jeep Park)	Identified by feature (wobbly jeep); close to Rocket Park	Swings under trees often dirty; old, metal slides perceived as risky; overall feel is "not favourite"	Perceived age and condition suggest need for maintenance and design refresh

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Burley House (external)	Praised for scale and wooden equipment; considered imaginative and suitable for a range of ages	None directly noted (external site)	Serves as a benchmark for aspirational design; use of natural materials and adventure play noted
Anglesey Abbey (external)	National Trust park with high-quality wooden play equipment	Not local; referenced positively	Cited as inspiration for layout and material use; encourages consideration of natural aesthetics and risk-based play
Somersham Park	Main park used due to locality; includes skate ramp, exercise equipment, and green space	Basic infrastructure only; perceived as boring for older children; limited seating and no toilets	Lacks age-appropriate provision for 10–18s; limited facilities reduce dwell time and engagement
Hill Rise Park	Used in the past; currently avoided	Repeated sewage issues; antisocial behaviour; no toilets or refreshments; unsafe and unsupervised	High-priority for safety and infrastructure renewal; perception of neglect and disrepair

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	Huntingdonshire District Council's Play and Skate Parks	Postcodes	Age of site
	Huntingdon :-		
1	Garner Court, Huntingdon	PE29 1GE	**33 years**
2	Sapley Playing Fields, Huntingdon	PE29 1SD	**19 years**
3	The Whaddons, Huntingdon	PE29 1NN	**20 years**
4	Riverside Park, Huntingdon (adjacent to car park)	PE29 3RP	**27 years**
5	Maryland Avenue, Huntingdon	PE29 1PX	**30 + years**
6	Oxmoor lane, Huntingdon (adjacent to St. Johns school)	PE29 7BB	**30 +years**
7	Bevan Close, Huntingdon	PE29 1TH	**30 +years**
8	Outdoor Gym Kit, Hinchingbrooke Country Park (1/6)	PE29 6DB	**8 years**
9	Grassland Area, Hinchingbrooke Country Park (2/6)	PE29 6DB	**3 years**
10	Wetland Area, Hinchingbrooke Country Park (3/6)	PE29 6DB	**3 years**
11	Old Play Area, Hinchingbrooke Country Park (4/6)	PE29 6DB	**17 years**
12	Sensory Play Area, Hinchingbrooke Country Park (5/6)	PE29 6DB	**3 years**
13	Woodland Play Area, Hinchingbrooke Country Park (6/6)	PE29 6DB	**3 years**
14	Beech Close Embankment, Huntingdon	PE29 7BB	**30 +years**
15	Mayfield Crescent, Huntingdon	PE29 1UH	**30+years**
16	Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon (off Rydal Close)	PE29 6UF	**30 +years**
	St Neots :-		
17	Riverside Park, St Neots (adjacent to car park & Café) (1/4)	PE19 7SD	**26 years**
18	Riverside Park, River Road, St Neots (adjacent to indoor bowls club) (2/4)	PE19 7AD	**27 Years**
19	Riverside Park, River Road, St Neots (adjacent to skate park) (3/4)	PE19 7AD	**18 years**
20	Weston Court, St Neots	PE19 7JX	**22 years**
21	Riverside Park,Coneygeare Playing Field, St. Neots (4/4)	PE19 2ED	**30+ Years**
22	Priory Park Trim Trail, St Neots (1/3)	PE19 1DY	**26 years**
23	Priory Park Spinney, St Neots (2/3)	PE19 1DY	**16 years**
24	Priory Park, St Neots (3/3)	PE19 1DY	**30 + Years**
25	Henbrook Linear Park, St. Neots (off duck lane)	PE19 2ED	**22 years**
26	Great High Ground, Loves Farm, St Neots	PE19 6GL	**14 years**
27	Hull Way, Loves Farm, St Neots	PE19 6GS	**14 years**
28	Furrow fields, Loves Farms, St Neots	PE19 6GU	**14 years**
29	Bawling, Loves Farms, St Neots	PE19 6GD	**13 Years**
30	Kester Way, Loves Farm, St Neots (MUGA)	PE19 6SL	**14 years**
31	Woodridge, Loves Farm, St Neots	PE19 6BQ	**12 years**
32	Top Birches, Loves Farm, St Neots	PE19 6BD	**12 years**
33	Maule Close, off Barford Road, Eynesbury, St. Neots	PE19 2HJ	**20 Years**
34	Barford Road, Eynesbury	PE19 6DB	**23 years**
	St Ives :-		
35	Hill Rise Park, St Ives	PE27 6HR	**26 Years**
	Godmanchester :-		
36	Wigmore Farm (LAP), Godmanchester	PE29 2AR	**12 Years**
37	Wigmore Farm (LEAP) Godmanchester	PE29 2AR	**12 Years**
38	Stokes Drive (LAP), Godmanchester (1/2)	PE29 2UW	**15 years**
39	Stokes Drive (LEAP), Godmanchester (2/2)	PE29 2UU	**15 Years**
40	Roman Way, Godmanchester	PE29 2RW	**18 Years**
	Ramsey:-		
41	Signal Road, Ramsey	PE26 1NG	**17 Years**

	Yaxley:-		
42	Crocus Way, Yaxley	PE7 3WP	**30+**
43	Scott Drive, Yaxley	PE7 3AD	**8 years**
44	Shackleton Way, Yaxley	PE7 3AB	**8 years**
	Sawtry:-		
45	Rowell Way- Sawtry	PE28 5WA	**9 Years**
	Skate Parks		
46	St Neots – Riverside Park	PE19 7AD	**36**
47	St Ives – Hill Rise Park	PE27 6HR	**25 +**