

# DYNAMIC SMART CITY

A lower carbon city with greater digital connectivity for all – more and better jobs – more local people with better qualifications and skills – a stronger city centre with more businesses, housing, and cultural opportunities – more and better housing.

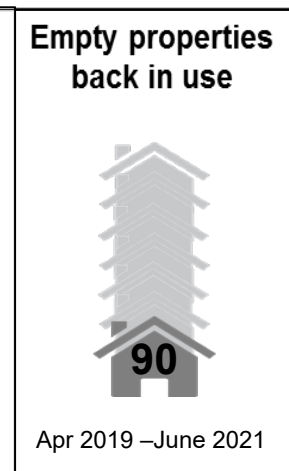
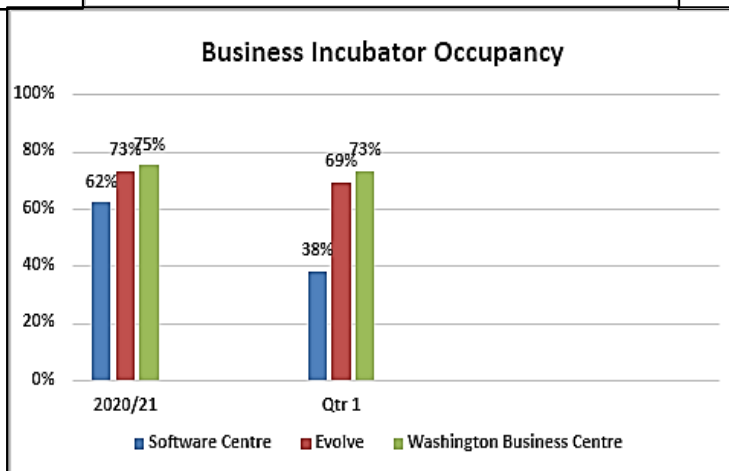
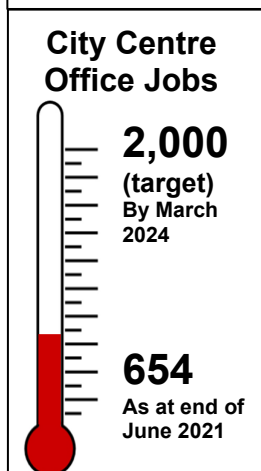
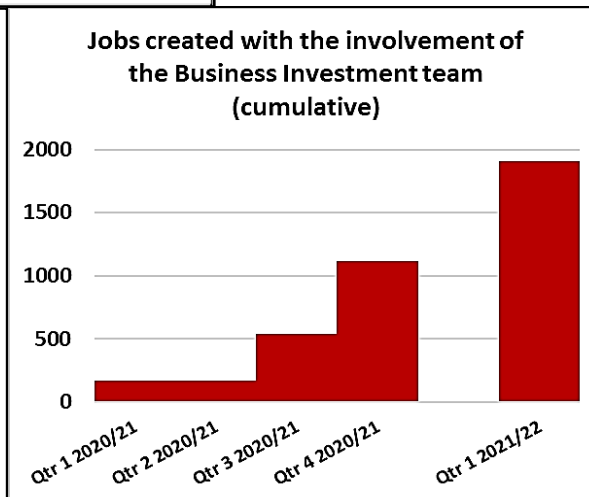
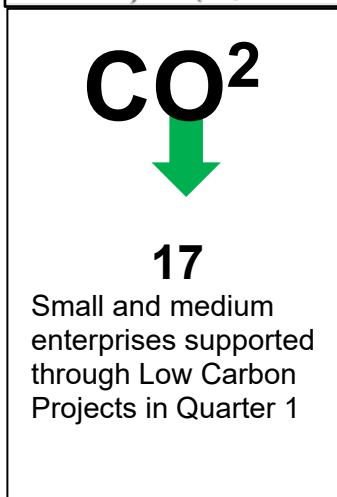
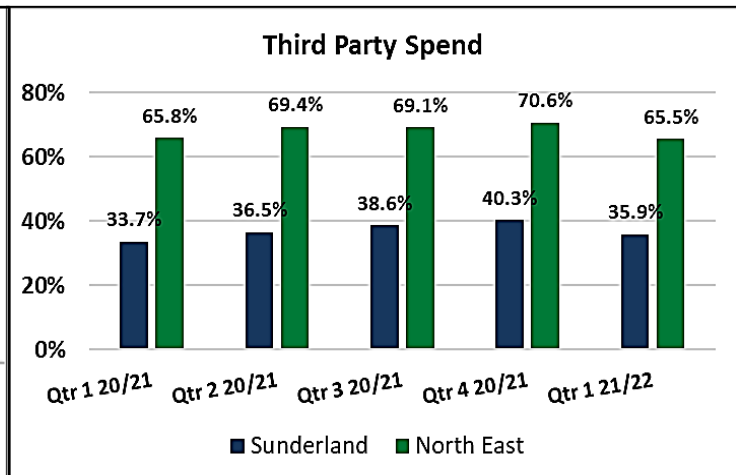
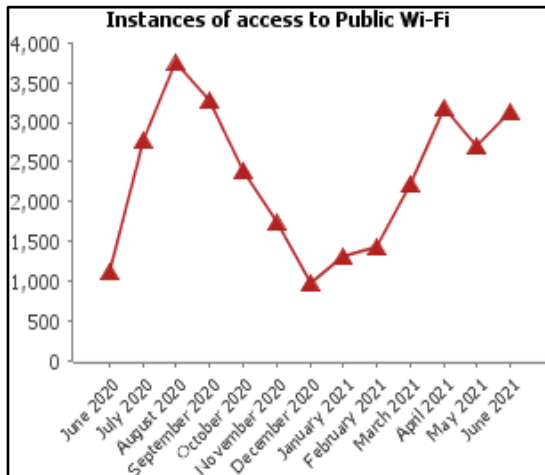


## CITY CONTEXT

	COMPARATIVE DATA	SUNDERLAND TREND
% of properties with ultrafast broadband June 2021: 65.1%	UK 66.8%	Improving (June 2020: 62.7%)
CO2 emissions estimates for Sunderland (per capita) 2019/20: 4.2 tonnes	NE 5.5, England 4.9	Improving (2015/16: 4.8 tonnes)
Employment rate Apr 2020 – Mar 2021: 68.8%	NE 71.2%, GB 74.8%	Declining (Apr 2019- Mar 2020: 70.3%)
Proportion of workers earning below Living Wage Foundation rates 2020: 16.1%	NE 22.5%, GB 20.1%	Improving (2016: 26.4%)
Median wage workers 2020: £525.20	NE £521 GB £586	Improving (2016: £480)
% Population NVQ Level 4 qualification 2020: 29%	NE 34.5% GB 43.1%	Improving (2016: 25.9%)
GCSE - % achieving a grade 4-9 in Maths & English 2018/19 (Exams): 58.6% 2019/20 (Teacher Assessed): 64.2% (Exams & Teacher Assessed not comparable)	NE 61.6% England 64.9% NE 68.6%, England 65.9%	Improving (2017/18 57.3%) N/A
Level 3 (A level & equivalent) attainment by age of 19 in 2019/20: 48.5%	NE 50.9% England 57.4%	Declining (2015/16: 52%)
City Centre new homes Qtr. 1 2021/22: 0	N/A	No change (Qtr. 1 2020/21: 0)
People employed in the City Centre 2019: 11,911	N/A	Increasing (2015: 11,874)
Population of the City 2020: 277,846	N/A	Increasing (2016: 277,307)
Net Internal Migration 2020: -403	N/A	Declining (2016: -381)
New homes-built Qtr.1 2021/22: 195	N/A	Improving (Qtr.1 2020/21: 81)
Completed affordable homes Qtr.1 2021/22: 13	N/A	Declining (Qtr.1 2020/21: 30)

# COUNCIL LED ACTION & PROGRESS

2021/22 Timeline	Status
Increase in economic activity at the Port	Progressing
Onsite development of Sunderland Station	On Track
New City Hall opens on Riverside Sunderland	On Track
Roll out of 5G city-wide	On Track
Increased business take-up of low carbon initiatives	On Track
Deliver connected, automated logistics project	On Track



**A lower carbon city with greater digital connectivity for all** - Our ambition is to lead the way on digital transformation to make Sunderland a Smart City, and through our Smart Cities Strategy we will deliver a range of use cases for smart working and living - with high speed and resilient digital connectivity central to our plans. The proportion of Sunderland properties with ultrafast broadband has seen a continuous upward trend, reaching 65.1% at the end of Quarter 1. Instances of access to public Wi Fi have broadly followed the intensity of COVID restrictions in 2020/21, however, figures have been rising since December 2020 reaching 3,132 in June 2021. With greater digital connectivity there also comes the opportunity to transform our travel patterns, thereby reducing overall emissions. Through our rapid charging station, we continue to support the use of electric vehicles in the city. Transactions were up from 502 in Quarter 4 (and 124 in Quarter 1 of 2019/2020) to 877 transactions in Quarter 1. We are actively working to become Carbon Neutral as a city by reducing our carbon emissions. At 4.2 for 2019/20 (latest data), the CO2 emissions estimate for Sunderland per capita (tonnes per resident) has reduced (compared to 4.5 for 2018/19) and is lower than both the North East (at 5.5) and England (at 4.9). Latest data (for 2019/20) also shows CO2 emissions from local authority operations has reduced by 4,484 tonnes compared with the previous year. The Citywide Low Carbon Framework and Council Action Plan were adopted at the end of 2020/21 and is now operational. The Sunderland element of the North East Low Carbon Support Programme for small and medium-term enterprises (SME's) is in place and 17 SME's have been supported in Quarter 1.

**More and better jobs** – Our focus in our City Plan was on increasing the number of well-paid jobs in the city by promoting growth in key sectors including automotive and advanced manufacturing, financial and customer services, digital and software, as well as increasing professional services in the city centre, and port related activity. As the Coronavirus pandemic hit in 2020, and persisted into 2021, businesses and employment were impacted. Our aim now is to ensure that the city and its residents emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic in a strong and competitive position. Building upon the various business grant support schemes delivered during 2020/21 which saw £73.5m paid to the City's businesses and £42m of additional business rates reliefs awarded, further support to business has continued in 2021/22. In Q1 2021/22, £16.4m has been paid in grants to businesses that have continued to be impacted by the pandemic whilst £23m is estimated to be awarded in additional business rates reliefs in line with the Government's criteria. Through these challenging times for business, we've continued to ensure that our Council activity supports the local economy where possible. 65.5% of all Council third party spend was within the regional economy, and £3,953,702 of social value was secured through our procurement projects in Quarter 1. We are making progress towards our aim to increase economic activity at the Port but increasing the number of tenants at the port has been impacted by circumstances arising from Covid and Brexit. The Port is pursuing several positive commercial opportunities and there is confidence that some of these will come to fruition by March 2022.

**More local people with better qualifications and skills** – Through the City Plan, the aim is to ensure that residents' skills and qualifications enable them to secure good jobs that match the needs of employers in key sectors - thus reducing the gap in the median wage between Sunderland residents and Sunderland workers (with the weekly median wage for Sunderland residents being £28.40 lower than that for workers). With more well-paid jobs, and more local people with better qualifications and skills, our long-term aspiration is that Sunderland will be a Real Living Wage City by 2030. Progress has been made with the percentage of workers living below the living wage foundation rate reduced from 26.4% in 2016 to 16.1% in 2020 – below the NE (at 22.5%) and England at (at 20.4%). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been much disruption to education at all levels in the academic year 2020/2021, with extensive periods of home / online learning due to government restrictions and some students facing further periods of home learning in line with self-isolation requirements following a positive COVID-19 test or contact. The summer exam series in 2020 and 2021 was cancelled and though GCSE and A-level qualifications were awarded to pupils, these were not awarded in the same way as previous years - thus results are not directly comparable. As the city and its residents emerge from the pandemic, we will seek to ensure residents have the skills to be in a strong and competitive position to access employment. We will continue to focus on tackling the

barriers for those least able to access employment through initiatives such as Community Local Led Development. So far 902 individuals have benefitted from the initiative.

**A stronger city centre with more business, housing, and cultural opportunities** – As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic our aspiration is that Sunderland city centre will drive transformational economic growth with Riverside Sunderland clearly demonstrating our investment ambition. Throughout the pandemic we have continued to progress our plans for a range of physical developments in the city and we continue to move forward with these - such as the onsite development of Sunderland station and new station hotel. Through Riverside Sunderland we aim to create a vibrant new city centre residential community of 1,000 sustainable new homes, promoting more city centre living. It will also comprise of 1 million square feet of modern offices, commercial premises, and other employment space, creating new sites for businesses to grow. At the end of Quarter 1, 654 new city centre office jobs have been created since April 2019.

**More and better housing** – Through our city plan we seek to ensure that Sunderland offers the opportunities that families and individuals need to achieve their ambitions – with a housing offer that reflects the homes that people aspire to live in. This includes larger family and high-status homes as well as more affordable homes. This will be achieved through the delivery of key housing sites. Work on the Seaburn site has now come to fruition with occupation of the first residential property in Quarter 1. Figures previously published for out migration show a slowing from a net of -722 in 2018 to -511 in 2019. Latest published figures for out migration show a further slowing from a net of -511 in 2019/20 to -403 in 2020/21. Whilst the latest figure is higher than the five-year long-term trend figure of -381 for 2016/17, the 2016/17 figure was the lowest figure reached before figures declined substantially in 2017/18 (to -748) and then began reducing year on year. In Quarter 1, there were 153 additional homes in the city (including new and conversions) - of which 89 are in council tax bands C-G. There have been 13 completed affordable homes in Quarter 1. Alongside this, we are committed to ensuring that the housing we have is of quality - with 16 empty properties brought back into use in Quarter 1 (taking the total since April 2019 to 90), and 96 privately rented properties inspected for hazards. Following the impact of Covid, the number of properties inspected for hazards has increased and. As a result of these inspections, 7 properties were identified to have Category 1 hazards of which 5 properties had more than 1 Category 1 hazard. Action has been taken by officers to work with owners of the properties which has seen 9 Category 1 hazards resolved in the period. Further information on empty properties being brought back into use is being presented to Area Committees in September.

# HEALTHY SMART CITY

Reduce health inequalities enabling more people to live healthier longer lives – access to equitable opportunities and life chances – people enjoying independent lives – a city with great transport links – cleaner and more attractive city and neighbourhoods.

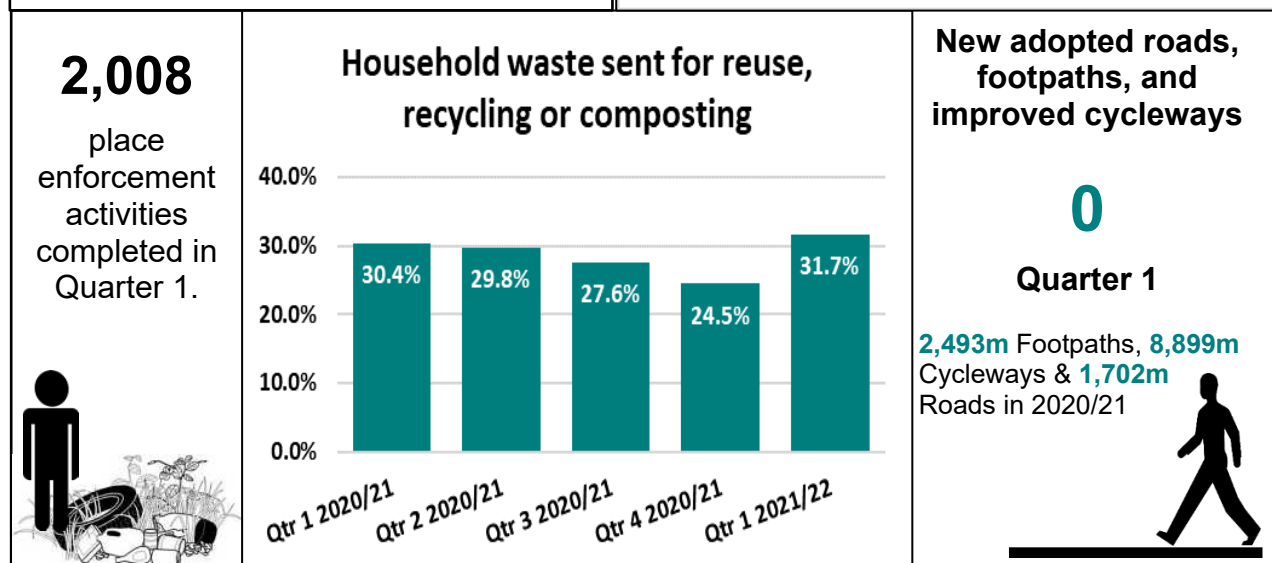
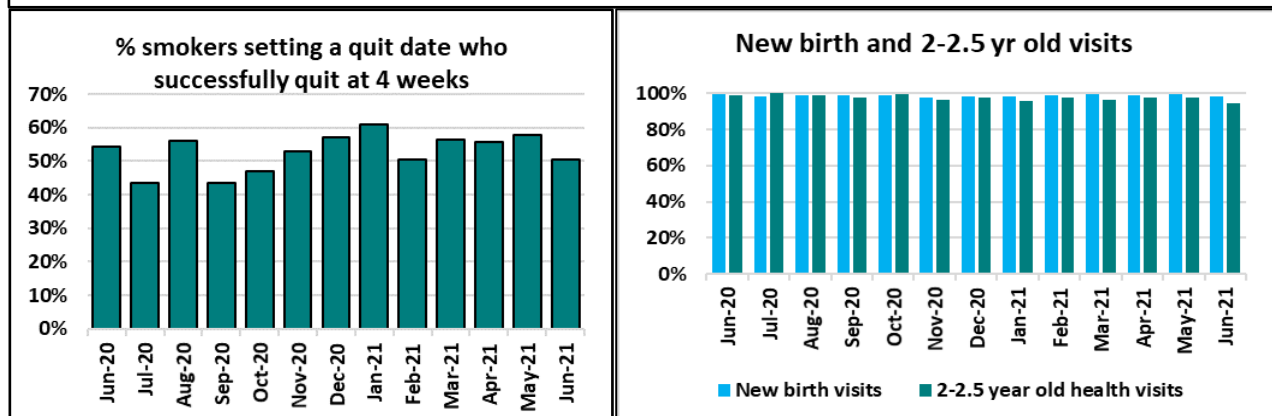
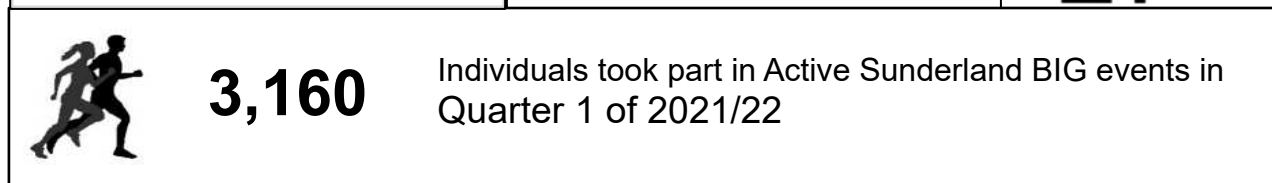
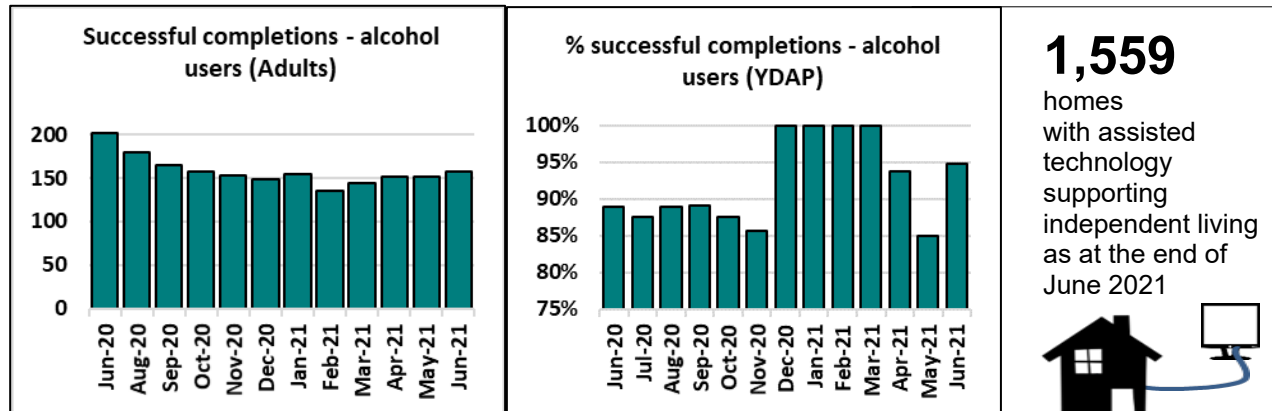


## CITY CONTEXT

	COMPARATIVE DATA	SUNDERLAND TREND
<b>Healthy Life Expectancy at birth 2017-2019 as at 2020/21:</b> <b>Female: 57.3 yrs.</b> <b>Male: 57.5 yrs.</b>	England 63.5 yrs. NE 59 yrs. England 63.2 yrs. NE 59.7 yrs.	Declining (2014-2016: 59.3 yrs.) Declining (2014-2016: 58.8 yrs.)
<b>Admission episodes for alcohol-related (Broad) (Persons) 2018/19: 3,197 (per 100,000 pop) (2019/20 data release delayed)</b>	England 2,367, NE 2,927	Declining (2014/15: 2,482)
<b>Smoking prevalence: 2018/19: 16%</b>	England 13.9%, NE 15.3%	Improving (2014/15: 21.5%)
<b>The proportion of adults who are overweight or obese 2019/20: 73.5%</b>	England 62.8%, NE 67.6%	Declining (2015/16: 70.1%)
<b>Prevalence of overweight (incl. obese) among children in Year 6 2019/20: 36.7%</b>	England 35.1%. NE 37.5%	Improving (2015/16: 39.8%)
<b>% of people that are fairly active / active (Active Lives – Public Health) 2019/20: 74.4%</b>	England 77.1%, NE 75.4%	Improving (2015/16: 73.3%)
<b>Women who smoke at time of delivery Qtr. 4 2020/21: 13.7%</b>	England 8.9% NE 12.7%	Improving (Qtr. 4 2019/20: 21.7%)
<b>EYFSP Good level of development 2018/19: 72.6% (2019/20 data release cancelled)</b>	England 71.8%, NE 71.8%	Improving (2014/15: 66%)
<b>Teenage pregnancy (under 18 conception rate) rolling year: Qtr. 4 2019/20: 21.9</b>	England 15.3, NE 20.7	Improving (Qtr. 4 2018/19: 29.8)
<b>Proportion of people (18+) living independently (without social care services) Qtr. 1 2021/22: 98.4%</b>	N/A	Improving (Qtr.1 2020/21 98.2%)
<b>Litter - % of relevant land &amp; highways with deposits that fall below an acceptable level Qtr. 1 2021/22: 10.4%</b>	N/A	Declining (Qtr.1 2020/21: 0.63%)

# COUNCIL LED ACTION & PROGRESS

2021/22 Timeline	Status
Deliver Sunderland Covid-19 Health Inequalities Action Plan	On Track
New Primary School opens	Completed
SSTC3 (Northern Spire to City Centre) opens	On Track





**Reduce health inequalities enabling more people to live healthier longer lives** – Our City Plan recognises the need to ensure that health and wellbeing outcomes are significantly improved, with healthy life expectancy at birth in Sunderland (at 57.5 years for males and 57.3 for females for the pooled period of 2017-2019), lower than the North East and England and declining. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, brought a new health challenge to the city. In response, our Public Health team led on managing outbreaks in line with the COVID-19 control plan and worked with environmental health and trading standards to provide advice and guidance on compliance with restrictions. The council continues to provide local trace arrangements for positive COVID cases and has been tasked with contact tracing 2,141 cases (with a 92% success rate) between the commencement of the local scheme (Local 0) on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. As positive cases began rising in June, and continued in July, staffing capacity was increased, but the increasing number of cases could not be met, resulting in a delay for our residents. The success rate is therefore expected to fall for Quarter 2. A decision was made to change to a hybrid model (in which the council only receive positive cases that the national team have been unable to contact after 24 hours), however, we are recruiting additional resource to return to the local service.

In addition to the impacts of infection, we know that the pandemic will have wider health implications in relation to behaviours that can cause harms to health such as smoking, alcohol consumption, inactivity, and poor diet (leading to obesity). We will continue to work, with our partners, on areas where we can support people to make healthy choices. Our Step-up Sunderland App aims to encourage residents to stay active and in Quarter 1 there were 313 downloads and 418 million steps taken by app users. Alongside this 801 disadvantaged young people have been supported through the Street Games programme and 2,477 activity packs delivered over the Easter holiday by Active Sunderland. 14 schools received in-school delivery from the Change for Life Programme, with 151 sessions delivered and 3,950 pupils engaged. The programme offer for schools has been enhanced through a new initiative and a weigh and measure programme for secondary schools. A working group has been established to develop a children and young people maintaining healthy weight pathway. Wider work has been undertaken on obesity and healthy weight with the development of a Healthy Weight Alliance three-year plan and the implementation of opportunities to influence the local food environment. We continue to promote healthy choices by our own people with 8,187 contacts with employees through our Employee Wellness Programme in Quarter 1. Latest data published in September 2020, for the 2017-2019 period, shows the suicide rate for Sunderland as 12.4 per 100,000 (age 10+), above the England average of 10.1 and North East of 11.6. We will continue to work with our partners to support and enable residents to access mental health services where needed. As a Council we are currently conducting a needs assessment to sign up to the Mental Health Concordat (that will include an action plan with key deliverables).

**Access to equitable opportunities and life chances** – We will take a life course approach to health and wellbeing starting with the early life stages of preconception to early years and adolescence under this commitment. Latest data on women who smoke at time of delivery (for Quarter 4 of 2020/21) shows an improvement to 14.7% from 15.2% in the previous quarter. Throughout the pandemic new birth visits and 2.5-year-old checks have been carried out (in line with COVID-19 guidelines) in timescale, and with the target of 95%. In Quarter 1, 98.3% of new birth visits and 94.5% of 2.5-year-old checks have been carried out in timescale. In education, a new primary school building has been completed (Willow Fields Primary School) along with the expansion of another (Benedict Biscop C of E School). Latest data for the year to the end of March 2020 has been published for teenage pregnancy (under 18 conceptions) at 21.9 per 1,000 population, a reduction on the same period in the previous year when the figure was 29.8. Figures are now closer to the North East rate (at 20.7). Under this commitment we seek to address inequalities in opportunities and life chances that exist across geographical areas through a community asset-based approach, as set out in our Neighbourhood Plans. As the needs of our most vulnerable changed through the pandemic we have continued to adapt our Community Hub delivery to respond. We are also working with our partners to enable Social Prescribing to address health issues. We know that the pandemic has affected life in many ways, with harms felt by the most disadvantaged, increasing existing inequalities, whilst new ones have emerged. Having previously agreed the Sunderland Health Inequalities Strategy, we

continue to progress this work through the delivery of the Health Inequalities Strategy Action Plan.

**People enjoying independent lives** – Although 98% of people 18+ in the city live independently (without social care services) based on mid-year population estimates, we remain committed to ensuring people in the city can enjoy independent lives. With the roll out of the assistive technology in the home offer, 1,559 homes had the technology by the end of June 2021. 83% of people who use services have control over their daily lives based on latest figures for 2019/20 (there is no update expected for 2020/21 as the survey was cancelled due to Covid-19). Working with our partners, through the Sunderland Falls Group, we aspire to reduce the number of emergency hospital admissions due to falls (in people aged 65+), with latest figures at 2,628 per 100,000 (compared with 2,412 for the North East and 2,222 for England).

**A City with great transport and travel links** – Our emphasis within this City Plan commitment is about ensuring that people can move around the city with ease through improved transport routes - enabling access to key employment sites. Alongside vehicle transport routes, great travel links is also about having the necessary infrastructure to enable active travel. In Quarter 1 there were no new adopted roads or footpaths and no new or improved cycleways, there are however, planned schemes for delivering additional cycleways later in the year. 1,060 school children have taken part in pedestrian training in Quarter 1, and although cycle training has been impacted by COVID, 94 children took part in cycle training in Quarter 1.

**Cleaner and more attractive city and neighbourhoods** – Our focus here is on promoting environmental responsibility amongst residents to achieve a cleaner and more attractive city. The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting has increased to 31.7% in Quarter 1, up from 30.4% in the same period in the previous year. Work continues to drive improvements to the rate of recycling across the city. The Council is part of a Waste Partnership with Gateshead and South Tyneside Council's formally named South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership (STWWMP) and recycling and waste contracts are set up to focus on maximising recycling rates. As part of the STWWMP a Waste and Recycling Visitor and Educational Centre (WRVEC) was commissioned to be built and operated at Campground for all three local authorities – including the provision of a full time Education Coordinator. The Coordinator works with our local communities and schools to improve waste and recycling education and awareness. To date since 2014 there have been over 36,000 engagements at the centre. We are developing a 'state of the art' HWRC that will address all recycling streams and provide a facility for all recycling needs. This is progressing well but has been hit with delays due to the availability of materials in the market. The scheme is now scheduled for completion on 1 December 2021. A full Comms plan is currently being developed so that residents are fully informed of the details of the new HWRC. There are two new Officers in the service who will play an enforcement and education role working with Recycling & Refuse Crews and data collected to target households who are not recycling. Officers have been recruited and are already impacting on recycling rates at the recycling transfer station, more formal structured programmes and enforcement will commence once the wider structure is in place. At the end of Quarter 1, the percentage of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level (at 10.4%) was within target. To encourage communities to take greater responsibility for their environment, we are issuing sanctions where appropriate following enforcement investigations. As at the end of Quarter 1, 2,008 enforcement activities had been carried out. The Quarter 1 enforcement activities included 411 investigations and 1,170 warning letters.

*Note: Litter levels (measured along with detritus, graffiti, and dog fouling) are assessed via surveys conducted four times a year. This indicator helps us understand how effective our street cleansing services are and gives us a basis to review our methods and coverage so we can improve cleanliness. The surveys are based on the code of practice on litter and refuse and the Keep Britain Tidy Local Environmental Quality Surveys system grading guidance. There is no statutory definition of litter. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (s.87) states that litter is 'anything that is dropped, thrown, left or deposited that causes defacement, in a public place'. This accords with the popular interpretation that 'litter is waste in the wrong place'. This is a former statutory indicator linked to the government's 'Cleaner Safer Greener Communities' campaign and provides us with valuable information to assess how clean our streets are.*



# VIBRANT SMART CITY

More resilient people – more people feel safe in their homes and neighbourhoods – more residents participating in their communities – more people visiting Sunderland and more residents informing participating in cultural events, programmes, and activities.

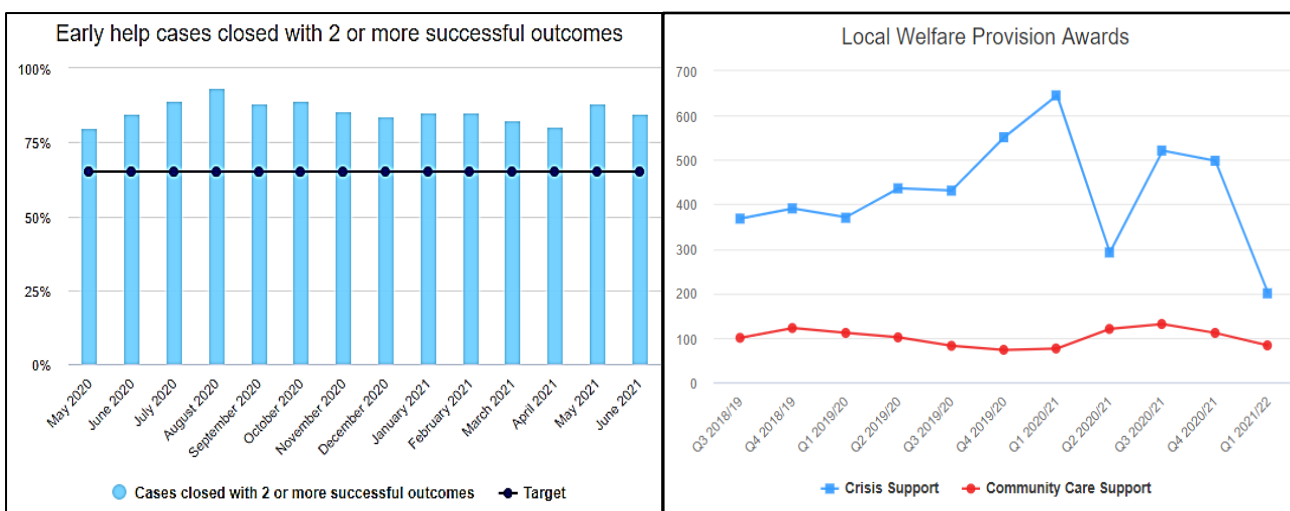


## CITY CONTEXT

	COMPARATIVE DATA	SUNDERLAND TREND
Rate of cared for children (per 10k) June 2021: 107.5	England 67, NE 108, SN 108.7	Improving (June 2020: 109.8)
Rate of CYP subject to a child protection plan (per 10k) June 2021: 77.1	England 42.8, NE 70 SN 61.4	Declining (June 2020: 70)
Rate of Children in Need (per 10k) June 2021: 410.1	England 323.7, NE 462.9 SN 431.8	Declining (June 2020: 386.9)
Residents supported by foodbanks Qtr.1 2021: 3,744	N/A	Improving (Qtr. 1 2020: 4,450)
Crime (recorded incidents): (April – June 2021): 7,205	N/A	Declining (April – June 2020: 6,565)
Residents' feelings of safety (local) Qtr. 4 2020/21: 95%	N/A	Declining (Qtr. 4 2019/20: 96%)
The proportion of people who use services who feel safe 2019/20: 79.7%	England 70.2%, NE 74.7%, SN 72.8%	Improving (2015/16: 71.5%)
Number of visitors to the City 2020: 4,377,000	N/A	Declining (2016: 8,240,000)
Overall spend of visitors to the City 2020: £219m	N/A	Declining (2016: £399m)

# COUNCIL LED ACTION & PROGRESS

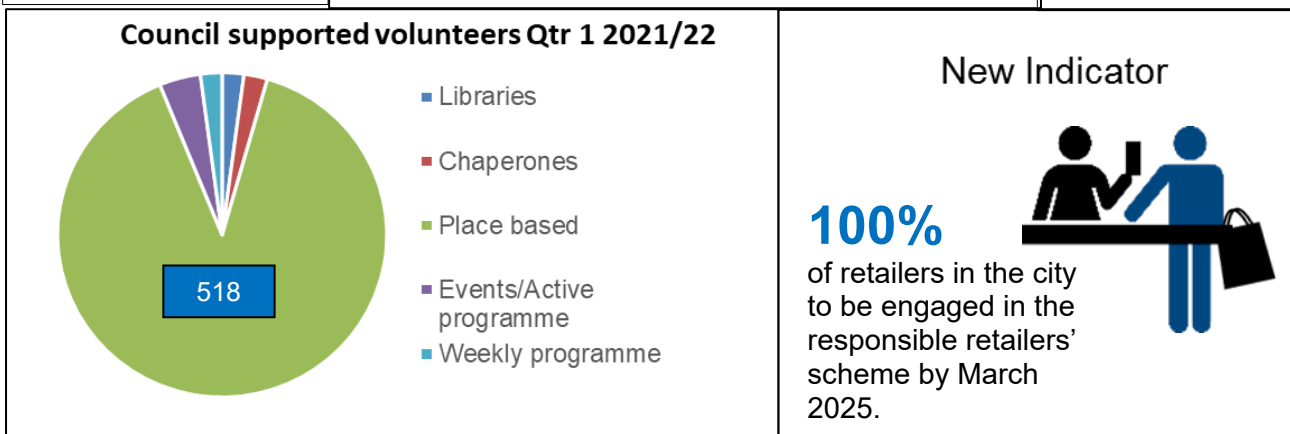
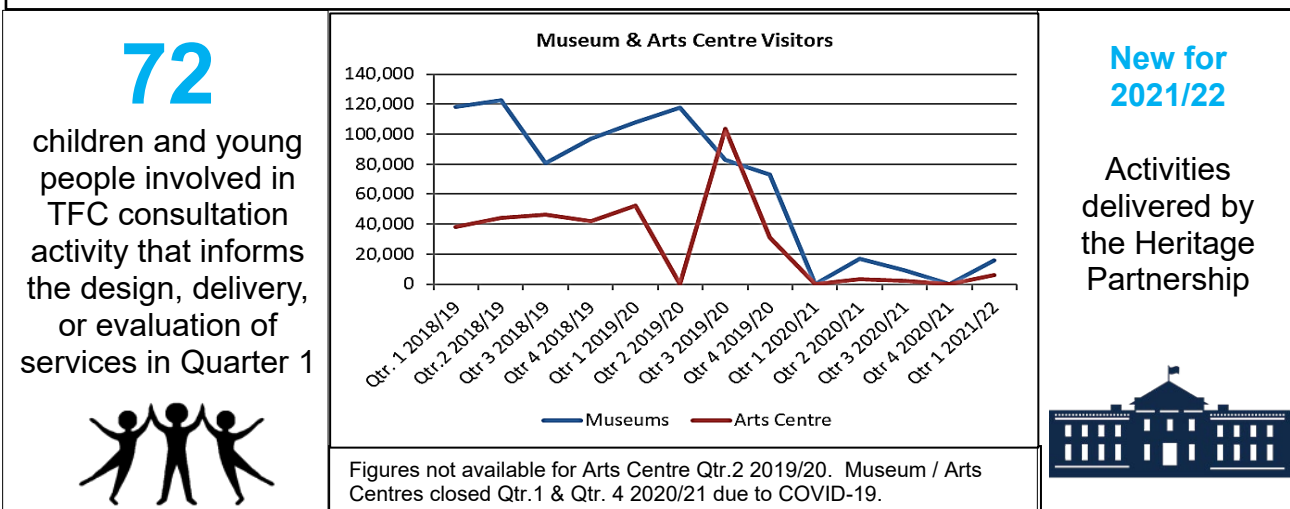
2021/22 Timeline	Status
Commission new domestic abuse services model	On track



## 243 Events

facilitated by the Council, on Council land / in council buildings in **2019/20**

1 event in 2020/21, 5 events in 2021/22 - further events unable to take place due to Coronavirus.



**More resilient people** – We will support families to enable them to be resourceful to respond to challenges and achieve the best possible outcomes for their children. This includes supporting families that require early help, where children are subject to Child Protection or are Cared For. At 410.1 per 10,000 at the end of June, the rate of children in need is below the latest North East comparator figure of 462.9, whilst the rate of Cared For children (at 107.5 per 10,000) is comparable, and has reduced, in comparison with the previous Quarter. The rate of children and young people subject to a child protect plan per 10,000 (at 77.1) remains above latest comparator figures, impacted by the pandemic. The following Children's Service's delivery targets have been met: % of early help cases closed with successful outcomes (at 81.5%), % of children subject to a child protection plan receiving a statutory visit within 20 working days (at 97.6%), % of care experienced young people aged 17-21 in touch with the service within 8 weeks of previous contact (at 93.4%), % of Cared for Children that have an up to date Personal Education Plan (at 99%), and % of Cared for Children that have experienced 3+ placements within the last 12 months (at 9%). 93.1% of all referrals with a decision were within 24 hours at the end of June 2020 (above tolerance of 80%). We will support our people to be more resilient. We know that our communities have been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with increased hardship experienced by some. During the first few months of the pandemic the use of foodbanks more than trebled and high usage has continued throughout 2020/21, with 5,595 residents supported in January to March 2021. In Quarter 1, figures have reduced to 3,744, however, figures in previous years suggest figures may rise again in Quarter 2 due to increased demand over summer months. In Quarter 1 there was a decrease in Crisis Support Awards (at 200) compared with the same period in the previous year (at 645), however, there was a small increase in Community Care Support awards at 83 (compared with 76 in Quarter 1 of 2020/21). A review has been completed in relation to crisis support and changes have been implemented. This has included embedding a sustainable support network (external to the council) with improved relationships and arrangements to enable more people to access support within their communities and to provide an offer that is more than crisis food. One example, is a partnership with Tesco, enabling qualifying families to access Tesco vouchers and emergency food parcels.

**More people feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods** – This commitment relates both to people feeling safe from crime and vulnerable adults who use our services feeling safe. Overall, our residents feel safe in their local area, with the percentage consistently at 96% or above since 2012/13 to early 2020 based on the Northumbria Police Survey. Latest available data is for Quarter 4 of 2020/21 at 95%. Crime for April 2021 to June 2021 (at 7,205 incidents) has increased when compared with the same period in the previous year (6,565 incidents). We are committed to disrupting criminal and anti-social behaviour through intervention and enforcement with 11 intelligence led pro-active disruption activities carried out in relation to licensing in Quarter 1. We hope to engage 100% of retailers in the city in our Responsible Retailers Scheme once it has been possible to launch the scheme, with this having been paused during the pandemic and now expected by the end of the next quarter.

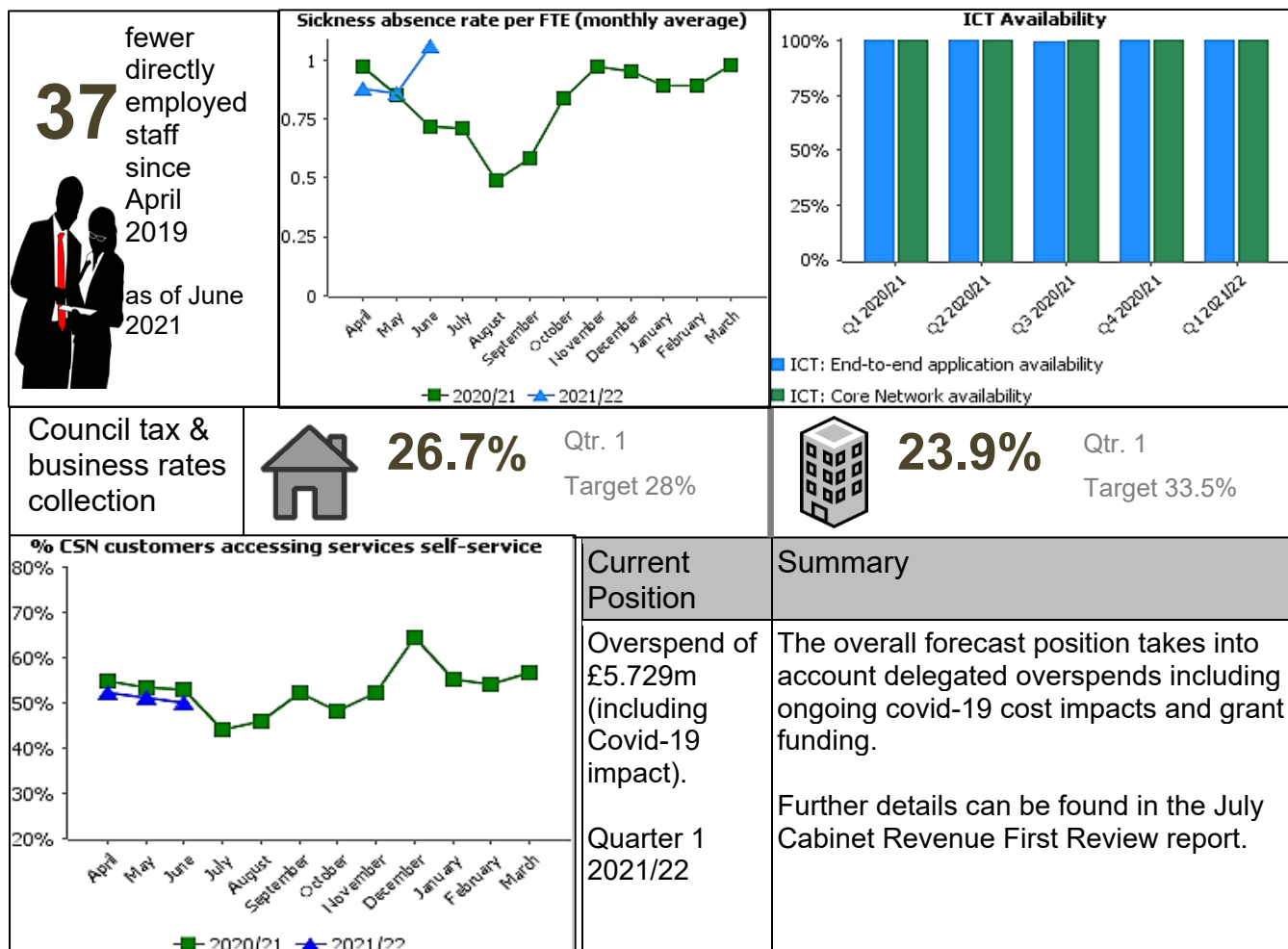
**More residents participating in their communities** – This commitment is about residents, including children and young people, being able to engage with and participate in their communities. In 2019/20 we widened our volunteering opportunities to support more people to volunteer in a more diverse range of volunteering activities. At the end of Quarter 1, there were 518 volunteers registered for volunteering across a range of volunteering activities including place-based activities, Libraries, Volunteer Chaperones, Events & Active Sunderland and other weekly programme activities. The greatest proportion was place based. There were 72 children and young people involved in TFC consultation activities that will inform the design, delivery or evaluation of services. In January 2020 'Crowdfund Sunderland' was launched enabling people to financially support local projects and causes through an online platform. 7 projects have been supported raising £74,472 for Sunderland projects in Quarter 1. We continue to engage people through Sunderland UK social media channels with 21,885 Facebook and 38,536 Twitter followers as at the end of March 2021.

**More people visiting Sunderland and more residents participating in cultural events, programmes, and activities**

– In previous years the number of visitors to the city has shown a continued upward trend. As the Coronavirus pandemic hit the UK in early 2020, however, cultural venues and events were particularly impacted due to the greater challenges of ensuring social distancing and safe delivery. Visitor numbers reduced from 9,490,000 in 2019 to 4,377,000 in 2020 and visitor spend reduced from £500m in 2019 to £219m in 2020. Many cultural and visitor attractions remained closed / cancelled after other sectors began recovery. The Empire Theatre remained closed in Quarter 1 and thus there were no visitors. The Museum and Winter Gardens re-opened mid-way through Quarter 1, on 17<sup>th</sup> May (shop having previously opened on 12<sup>th</sup> April), with 15,590 visitors by the end of June 2021. The Washington Arts Centre re-opened on 18<sup>th</sup> May and had received 5,923 visitors by the end of Quarter 1. There have however, been ways other than physical visits for people to enjoy culture, heritage, and arts in Quarter 1 through online events and exhibitions. There have been 1,875 views of *Paint the Town in Sound*, 70 views of *Heritage at Heart* and 261 views of *Dino Egg Hunt in Quarter 1*. There were 18 sessions of online classes delivered through the Washington Arts Centre engaging 106 people. During Quarter 1, Libraries opened all sites on reduced opening hours. 23,667 physical items were borrowed in this period with 402 new applications for membership during this time. There were over 8,382 digital issues from eBooks/eAudio, with 116 new customers. Libraries services delivered 7 online digital story time sessions and had 2599 views, 210 participants engaged, and a reach of 11,005 (likes and shares on social media). Three films were produced for Local History month with a total reach of 55,438 (Sunderland Antiquarians 338 views, Wearmouth Bridge 111 views & River Wear Commissions 102 views).

# ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

Good organisational health – strong financial management – productive and innovative working – a council ready for the future



**Good organisational health and strong financial management** – At the end of Quarter 1, there were 2,732 directly employed staff, 37 fewer compared with April 2019. We are committed to ensuring that we have a productive and healthy workforce, maintaining lower levels of sickness absence. The rise in sickness absence in Quarter 1 reflects the higher number of COVID cases in the area in the period. In March 2020, we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic swiftly to enable our workforce to work from home wherever possible, along with a wider COVID response. We are also working to deliver an employee engagement strategy that positions Sunderland City Council as an employer of choice. Business Rates Collection (at 23.9%) and Council Tax Collection (at 26.7%) are under the expected levels (of 33.5% and 28%) reflecting the impact of Covid-19 on our businesses and residents. We are enhancing our services to Council Tax and benefits customers by making it easier for customers to tell us about changes in their circumstances through online services with final testing taking place for online benefits change form. We are committed to maximising external funding and financing opportunities. There were 2 reports to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) by the Council in Quarter 1. Investigation for 1 of the 2 cases has been completed, the ICO concluded with no further action. Investigations are ongoing for the other case.



**Productive and innovative working and a council ready for the future** – As a Council we continue to deliver on the organisational change required to optimise productive and innovative working, to counteract financial uncertainty and respond to the new challenges brought by the COVID pandemic. We have been developing a new operating model to ensure that the council is as customer focused and effective as it can be and are currently reviewing all Corporate Support services with improvements being made to HR and ICT Services at present. The adoption and enhancement of digital technologies continues, with all our ICT users able to connect remotely with Windows 10 laptops and we now have 3,340 active Microsoft Teams Users (increased from 3,238 at the end of Quarter 4). We continue to invest in our digital technologies, particularly our website and digital platform to enable more and higher quality digital interaction with our customers, thereby promoting self-serve. During Quarter 1, the fully digitised service for Building Services went into live deployment as did several additional services relating to Taxi Licencing and Houses in Multiple Occupation. In Quarter 1, 51% of our Customer Service Network customers accessed services through self-serve – exceeding the target of 42%.