

## **Report to Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board**

### **Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 Q3 (1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024)**

**Portfolio Holder (CPR):**

Cllr Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

**Officer Contact (CPR):**

Steve Hughes, Assistant Director Strategy & Performance

**Overview Report Author (CPR):**

Gail M. Stott, Performance Improvement Lead, Strategy & Performance

**CPR collated by:** Performance Improvement Team, Strategy & Performance

**Contact:** [StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk)

**Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025

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#### **Reason for decision**

Scrutiny of corporate performance aims to provide assurance that:

- services are aligned to corporate priorities and the needs of our residents (resident focus)
- our services are good, or are on track to good
- any services that are not on track, or have identified risks, are being supported or challenged to rectify this
- any demand indicators or resource pressures are being noted and service provision is being re-assessed accordingly
- the organisation has robust performance management processes in place.

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## Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures for the relevant reporting quarter.

## Recommendations

Scrutiny Board members are asked to:

- note the progress in implementing the business plan objectives
- celebrate areas of consistent good performance
- note the comments on progress
- consider areas for review (good or poor) that could produce learning for the organisation
- note the interconnection of these actions with ongoing activities in other portfolio and Scrutiny Board remits and key projects.

## **Appendix:**

1. Resources CPR - Finance; Legal Services; Corporate Resources

# Report to Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

## Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 for Quarter 3: 1st October to 31st December 2024

**Portfolio Holder (CPR):** Cllr Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

**Officer Contact (CPR):** Steve Hughes, Assistant Director of Strategy & Performance

**Report date: 25th March 2025**

**CPR collated by:** Performance Improvement Team  
[StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk)

# Core Resources

## Key Performance Indicators

<b>RED</b>	KPI underperforming by more than 5%
<b>AMBER</b>	KPI underperforming by less than 5%
<b>GREEN</b>	KPI meeting or outperforming target



# Corporate Resources:

Service areas include:

- Communications and Research (Strategy and Performance)
- Customer Experience (Customer Services and Complaints)
- HR and OD
- IT (Operations)

# Communications & Research

## Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

**Officer Contact:** Smyth Harper (*Interim Head of Communications and Research*)

### Service Summary:

The Communications and Research team strategically plans, manages and delivers all communications and research activity for Oldham Council, focused on achieving agreed corporate priorities. Communications and engagement activity is delivered across a range of digital and traditional channels, including through the press, social media, web content, face to face engagement, out of home collateral and more; all tailored to our diverse external and internal audiences and adapted for the channels they use.

## Communications & Research Strategic priorities

We have four agreed strategic priorities for 2023/24.

These will be fully evaluated as new metrics are available in 2024/25.

Interim activity against each of the measurables is detailed on the following slides, followed by a quarterly snapshot of metrics on our key digital channels.

**Increase pride in the borough** from the Resident Survey of 2022/23. In that survey, 74% of respondents said they were satisfied with their local area but only 35% said they would recommend it as a tourist destination. We'll increase these to at least 79% (LGA average) and 40% by the next Resident Survey.

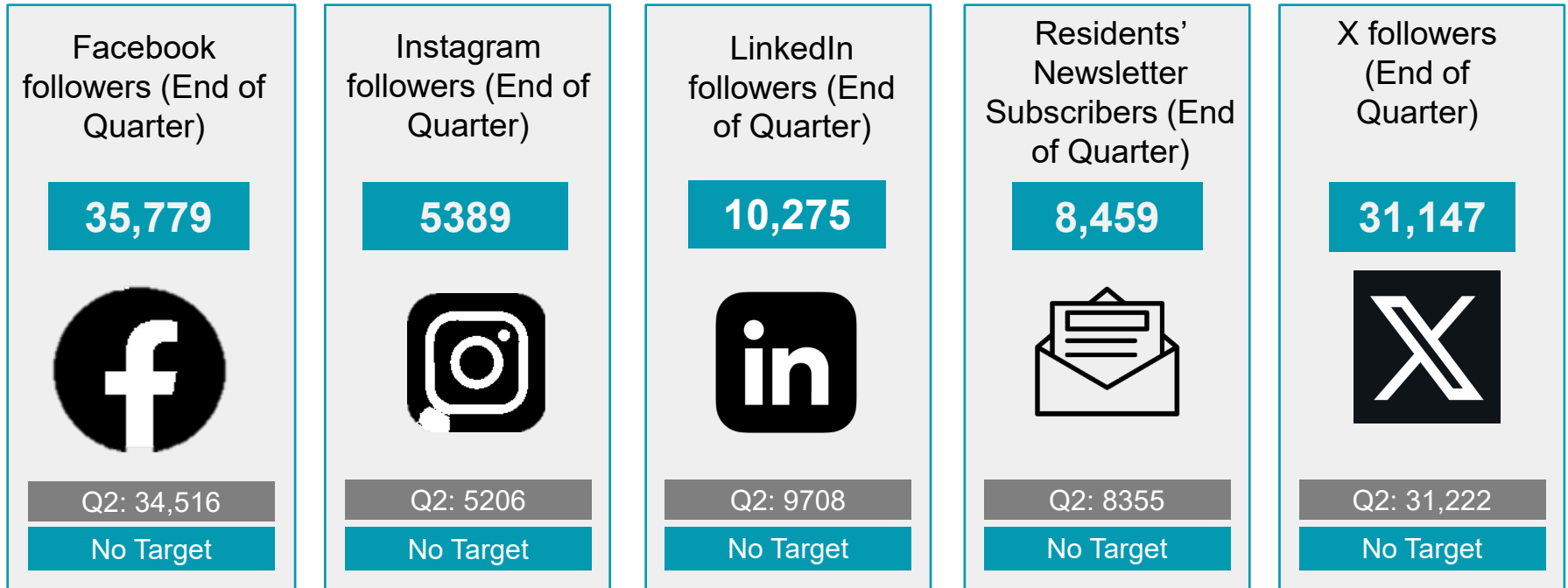
**Increase resident satisfaction with Council communications** - We'll measure this by aiming to reduce the number of people who say they don't receive any information from the Council (21% in the 2022/23 Resident Survey) to less than 20%.

**Improve two-way engagement with our workforce.** In our most recent Staff Survey only 41% of staff said senior management "communicate effectively with me". We aim to improve that to at least 50% by the next Staff Survey via the implementation of a strategic Internal Communications Strategy. The strategy will also act as our 'golden thread' of engagement touchpoints we have with staff in 2023/24.

**Manage key reputational** issues in an honest, transparent and people-focused way. We will ensure our residents have access to factual and timely information and enable media to produce fair and balanced reports.

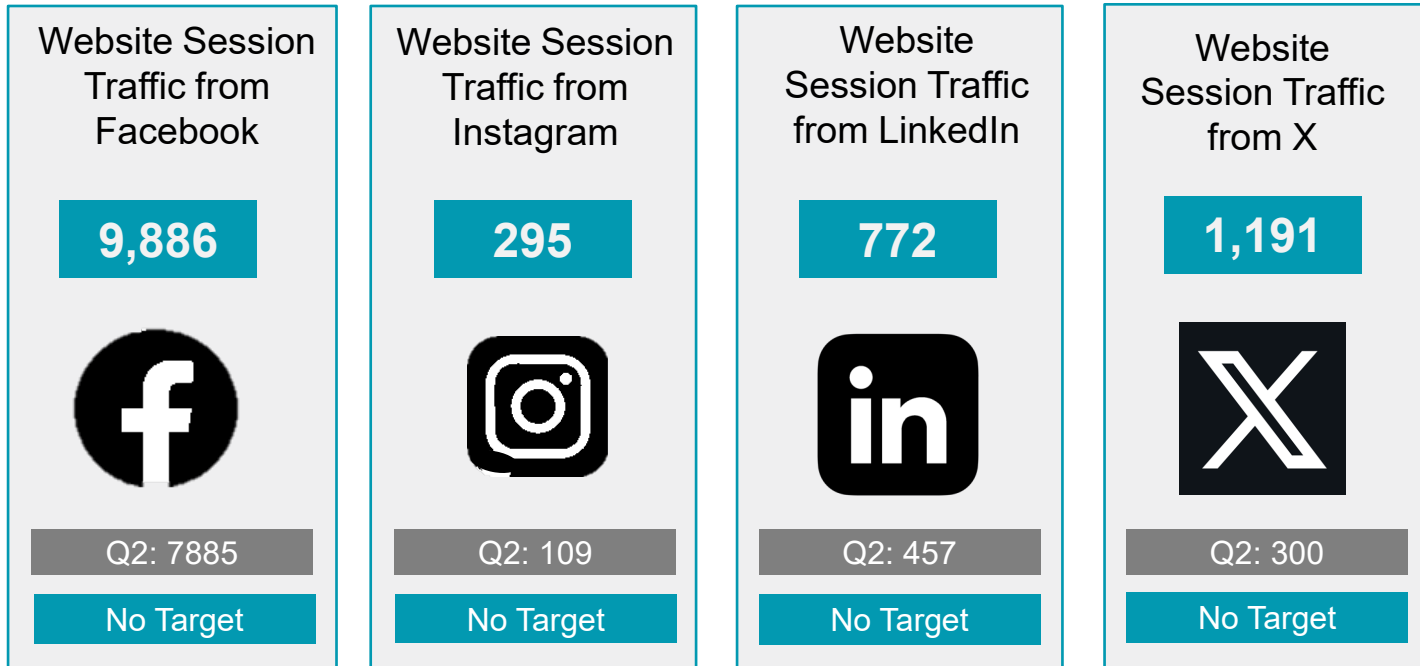
# Communications & Research

## Key Metrics (no targets) - Social Media



# Communications & Research

## Key Metrics (no targets) - Web Figures



\* Figures are an average over 3-month period

# Communications & Research

## Progress Against Key Annual Priorities

<b>Increase pride in the borough</b>	<p>We promoted a range of autumn and winter events including a hugely successful Bonfire Night fireworks in the town centre and an even bigger Christmas lights switch-on event (as part of a wider "Give the Gift of Oldham this Christmas" campaign) which saw thousands of families enjoy the festivities. As well as demonstrating pride in the borough, it also created significant footfall with Spindles seeing a 10% increase in shoppers compared to last year's event. Other events we promoted included fun activities such as Nostalgic Oldham and poignant commemorations to mark Remembrance Sunday.</p> <p>We also had a well-received campaign to celebrate Oldham's 175th birthday.</p>
<b>Increase resident satisfaction with Council Communications</b>	<p>We have had remarkable success on social media when sharing stories about real Oldhamers benefiting from our services. Examples include our Family Hubs where stories such as one about a single father accessing the hubs have not just had good traction on social media but have led to an increase of people using the hubs.</p>

# Communications & Research

## Progress Against Key Annual Priorities

### **Improve two-way engagement with our workforce**

We continue to improve our internal comms channels so staff are regularly updated on key council activities. This quarter included the launch of our new corporate plan and a refresh of our values and behaviours.

We held three budget collaboration sessions which were attended by 200 colleagues. This was on the back of a promise the CEO made that staff would have a forum to discuss ideas for budget savings. Attendees ranged from Spindles staff, front line workers such as social workers and teams who usually work fully remotely. All feedback and a plan of which ideas we'll be taking forward for the next financial year is being developed. We also had two successful staff events to celebrate Oldham's 175th birthday.

### **Managing key reputational issues**

Oldham was at the centre of public discourse around the historical practice of stillborn babies being buried in communal unmarked graves. The council's response was to provide factual information, and also develop a plan to memorialise those stillborn babies, and all other children and adults, laid to rest in unmarked graves in the borough's cemeteries.

# Communications & Research

## Comments

### Q2: Smyth Harper (Interim Head of Communications and Research)

We have successfully embedded a more people-focused approach to social media with positive and inspirational stories about Oldham people.

A number of milestones were reached, including the opening of all of the Family Hubs and the successful launch of the Oldham Gift card.

Preparations underway for a service redesign for the communications service to deliver financial savings and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service which is fully aligned with Council strategic priorities.

### Q3: Smyth Harper (Interim Head of Communications and Research)

This was a busy and successful period for the communications service, promoting our services, celebrating our successes and encouraging staff and residents alike to show pride in our borough.

The formal consultation for the communication service redesign was conducted successfully and Q4 will see the implementation move forward with the new structure operational from 1 April 2025. Given that there is a significant reduction in the service establishment, and the levels of uncertainty and unsettlement restructures always create, it is a credit to the team that they have conducted such a successful quarter in a challenging environment.

Signed Off: 12.02.2025

# Communications & Research

## Portfolio Holder Comment

### **Q2: Cllr Arooj Shah (Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham)**

The people focused comms approach is welcomed, and the Communications team have played vital roles in a number of key milestones for the Council over Q2, including continuing to support our Family Hubs programme and increasing awareness of the services on offer and the launch of the Oldham gift card, increasing the money spent in Oldham.

### **Q3: Cllr Arooj Shah (Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham)**

There has been a reduction in capacity in the Comms team created by both voluntary redundancies and the restructure, but I do not think this has had a material impact on the output as yet. Lots of hard work has gone into continuing to promote Oldham and encourage more pride in our Borough.

Signed Off: DDMMYY

# Customer Experience

## Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Peter Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture

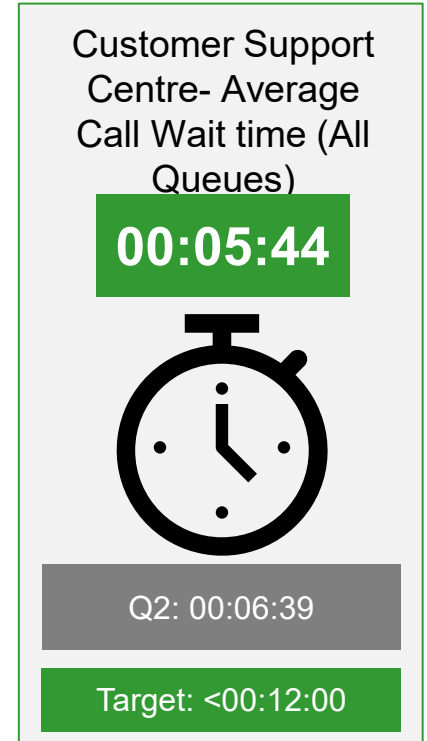
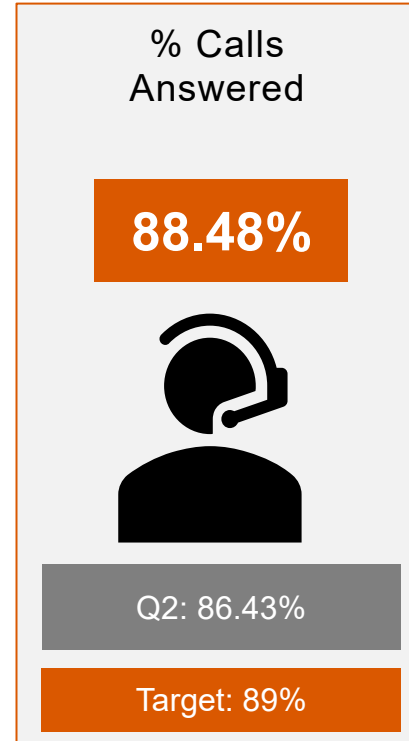
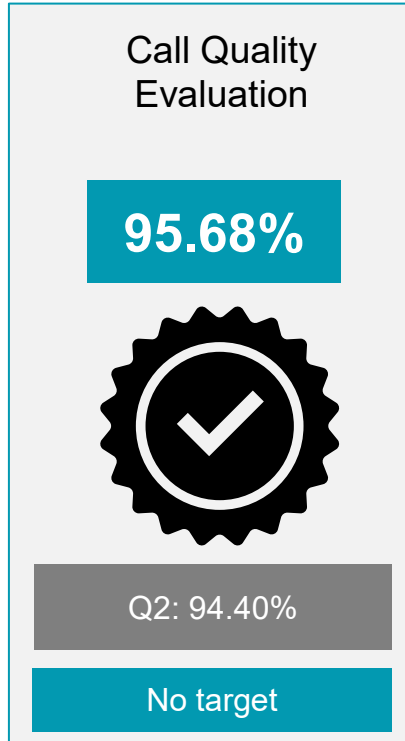
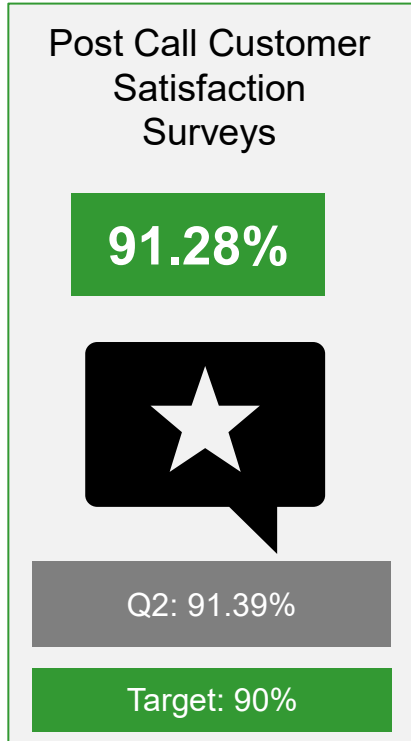
**Officer Contact:** Fran Lautman, Assistant Director of Customer Experience

**Service Summary:** Customer Experience provides the following services:

- Customer Support Centre (Contact Centre)
- Customer Service Centre at Spindles
- Blue Badges
- Local Welfare Provision
- Household Support Fund
- Complaints
- Registrars

# Customer Experience

## Key Metrics (against target where set)



[Green]

[Amber]

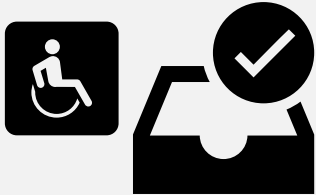
[Green]

# Customer Services

## Key Metrics (no targets)

Blue Badge: Average number of days taken from Application to decision

**33 days**



Q2: 33 days

No target

Blue Badge: Average number of days taken from Referral for IMA to decision

**16 days**



Q2: 15 days

No target

Customer Service Centre - Average wait time (combined services)

**00:10:26**



Q2: 00:07:35

No target

# Complaints

## Key Metrics (against target where set)

**Adults** - Complaints responded within timescales

69%



Q2: 29%

No Target

**Children's** - Complaints responded within timescales

57%



Q2: 50%

No Target

**Resources** - Complaints responded within timescales

83%



Q2: 64%

No Target

**Place** - Complaints responded within timescales

64%



New Measure\*

No Target

**Overall** - Complaints responded within timescales

64%



Q2: 50%

Target: 75%

# Customer Services

## Successes

<b>Customer Support Centre-Call Quality Evaluation</b>	Quarter 3 performance increased by 1.28% compared to Quarter 2.
<b>Blue Badge-Average working days from referral to appointment</b>	Quarter 3's performance has increased by one day from Quarter 2.
<b>Customer Support Centre-Call Wait Times</b>	00:05:44 - Quarter 3 performance was the strongest yet at under 6 minutes
<b>Customer Service Centre-Call wait times</b>	0:10:26 - November and December were both below 8 minutes. Average wait time during October was 15 minutes, 28 seconds with October being the busiest month following the move to the new location in July 2024.

# Customer Services

## Areas for Development (across all metrics)

<b>Customer Support Centre-Customer Satisfaction</b>	Quarter 3 performance dipped by 0.11% compared to Quarter 2.
<b>Calls Answered</b>	Quarter 3 performance narrowly missed target by 0.52%. Target was met during December 2024 with a monthly performance of 90.54%. Quarter 3 performance was 2.05% higher than Quarter 3.

# Customer Services

## Comments

### Q2 Comments: Fran Lautman (Head of Customer and Digital Experience)

The Customer Service Centre based at Spindles opened in July. As the central 'Working for You' site the location includes access to a range of partner services. We have received really positive feedback about the new location.

This period has seen some changes to service alignment. Welfare Rights and Support and Inclusion have moved to Revenues and Benefits due to the synergy with the service area around financial support. Complaints became part of the service in June and Registrars joins Customer Service from 1<sup>st</sup> October.

A service review of Complaints has taken place over the summer. Several areas for improvement have been identified and the Service Manager is working closely with each directorate to support and embed the changes as part of our commitment to work with a resident focus and improvement the quality and timeliness of Complaints.

Moving forward, all teams within Customer Services are preparing for the launch of the council's Winter communications campaign. This includes delivery of Household Support Fund 6 and supporting residents with Pension Credit uptake.

### Q3 Comments: Fran Lautman, Assistant Director of Customer Experience

I am pleased to report marked improvements in complaints performance since Q2: Adults' responses rose from 29% to 69%, Children's from 50% to 57%, Resources from 64% to 83%, and overall from 50% to 64% (target 75%). These gains reflect considerable focus and efforts in this period including implementing improved processes and procedures, delivering training, cleansing historic cases, reorganising corporate complaints into Resources and Place and introducing regular complaint forums in both Children's and Adults' services. We are also finalising self-serve Power BI dashboards for Adults, Childrens, Resources and Place which will provide real-time performance data to further drive transparency and improvement as we work towards achieving the 75% target.

Signed Off: 28/01/2025

# Customer Services

## Portfolio Holder Comments

### **Q2 Comments: Cllr Peter Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture**

There is considerable work to do to ensure compliance to our targets in regards to complaints, this has been raised with Cabinet colleagues and Management Board to ensure we continue to uphold high-standards for the service our residents receive from the Council across portfolios and service areas.

The opening of the central 'Working for You' site in Spindles is important as it gives residents a place to come and resolve seek support/advice in person, which is vital and cannot be underestimated.

### **Q3 Comments: Cllr Peter Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture**

Welcome progress has been made in the performance of responding to complaints since Q2, I'm grateful to Cabinet colleagues and Chief Officers for this but there is still more to do to work towards being a resident focused council.

Signed Off: DD/MM/YY

## Glossary:

- CSC: Customer Support Centre
- LWP: Local Welfare Provision
- IMA: Independent Mobility Assessment
- PERP: Pre-Election Restriction Period

# Human Resources & Organisational Development

## Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability

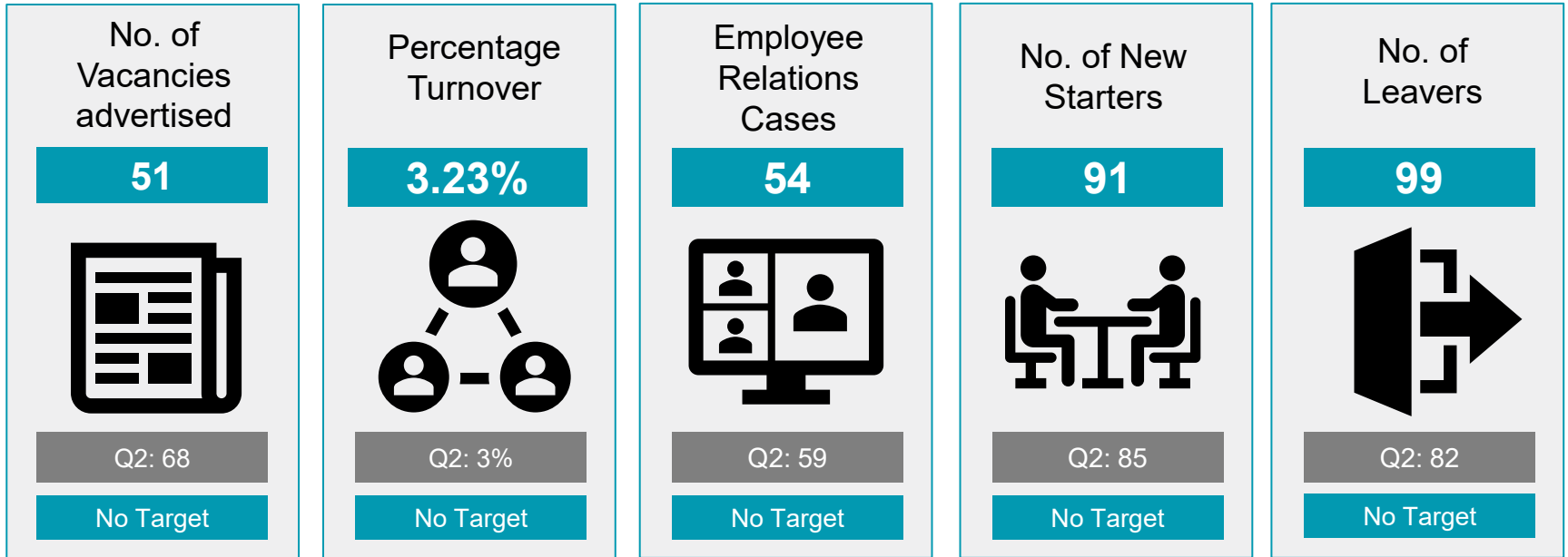
**Officer Contact:** Wendy Jackson, Interim Assistant Director of Human Resources

**Service Summary:** The service provides a range of workforce related functions that support good employment practice and workforce engagement for the Council and external paying customers

- HR advisory, policy & employee relations
- Job Evaluation
- Recruitment
- Workforce systems, workforce data & statutory workforce reporting
- Payroll, pensions & HR transactional
- Learning & Development
- Apprenticeships
- Workforce Wellbeing
- Organisational development & design
- Employee engagement
- Workforce planning

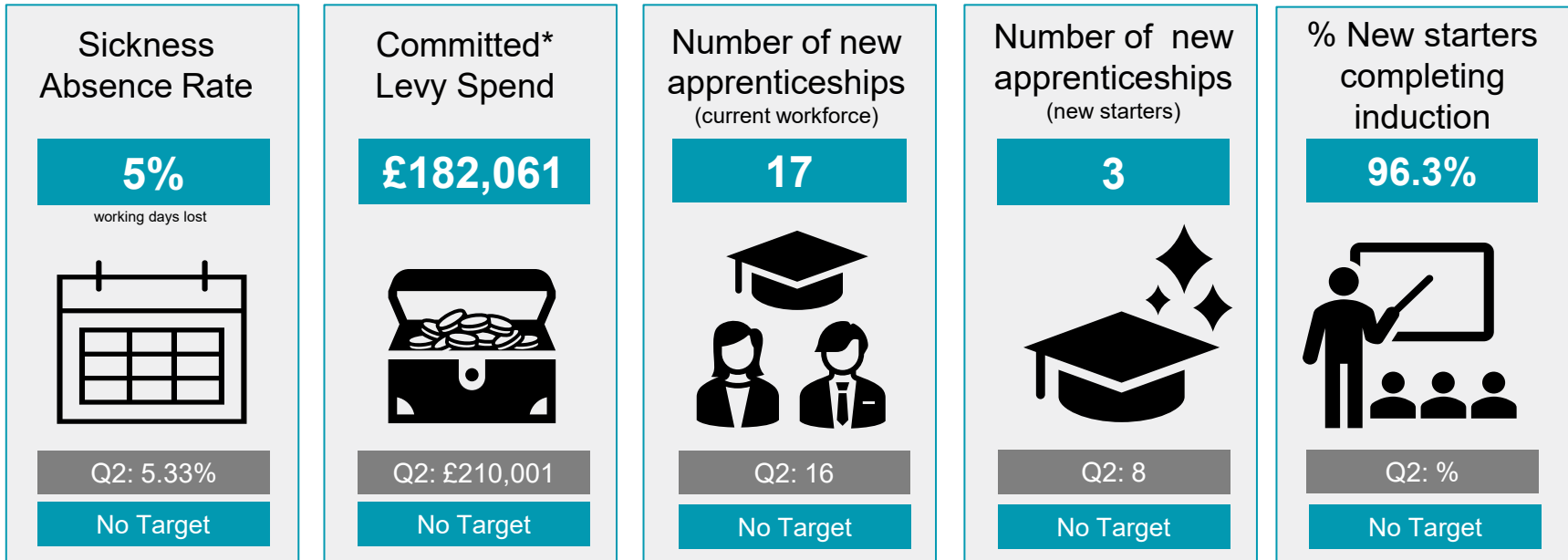
# HR & OD

## Key Metrics (no targets)



# HR & OD

## Key Metrics (no targets)



\*Spend over the duration of the apprenticeships learning programme

# HR & OD

## Successes/Areas of Development

<b>Apprenticeships</b>	As the recruitment freeze has been in place we have seen a drop in new apprenticeship vacancies across the organisation however, there has been an increase on spend due to utilising funds to upskill our current colleagues via the apprenticeship levy. We are still on track to recruit our ambition of 20 new apprentices this year.

# HR & OD

## Comments

### Q2: Wendy Jackson (Interim Assistant Director of Human Resources)

Work is underway to address sickness and absence reporting across teams. Although figure indicating sickness at 5% this is likely to be higher.

### Q3: Wendy Jackson (Interim Assistant Director of Human Resources)

Signed Off: DD/MM/YY

# IT (Operations)

## Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability

**Officer Contact:**

**Service Summary:**

The role of the IT team is to deliver seamless and reliable IT services and projects that drive the success of Oldham Council. IT are committed to enhancing operational efficiency, supporting all departments, and embracing innovation to meet the evolving needs of our organisation.

# IT (Operations)

## Key Metrics (against target where set)

Breached Tickets

**133**



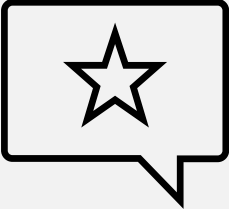
Q2: 121

**Min target: <75**

[Red]

Customer Satisfaction

**98.63%**



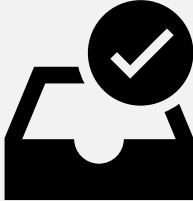
Q2: 99.31%

**Min target: 80%**

[Green]

First Contact Resolution rate (60 min)

**79.35%**




Q2: 82.24%

**Min target: 60%**

[Green]

Service Level Agreement Compliance

**96.02%**




Q2: 96.27%

**Min target: 90%**

[Green]

Contact Centre Telephone Availability

**100%**



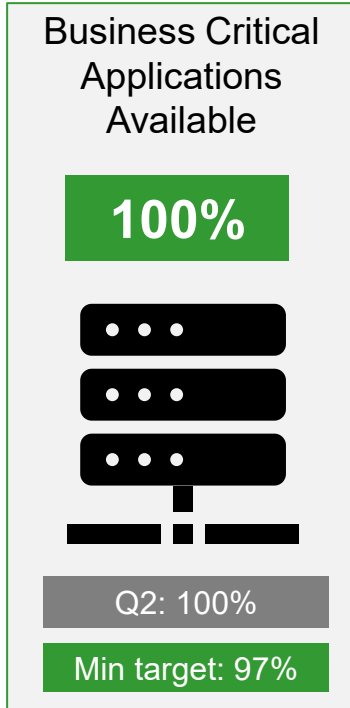
Q2: 99.45%

**Min target: 97%**

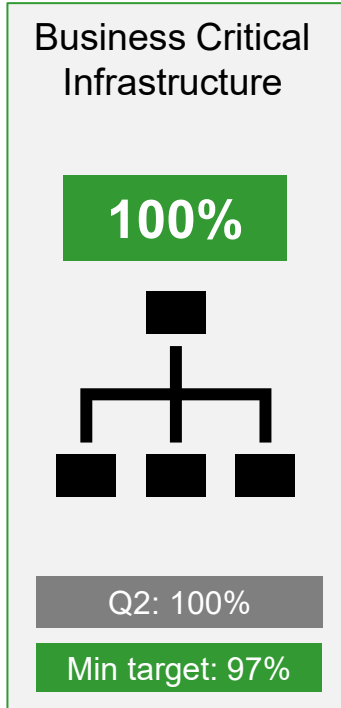
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# IT (Operations)

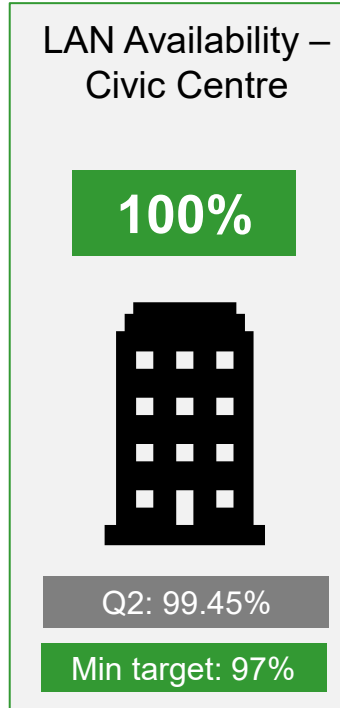
## Key Metrics (against target where set)



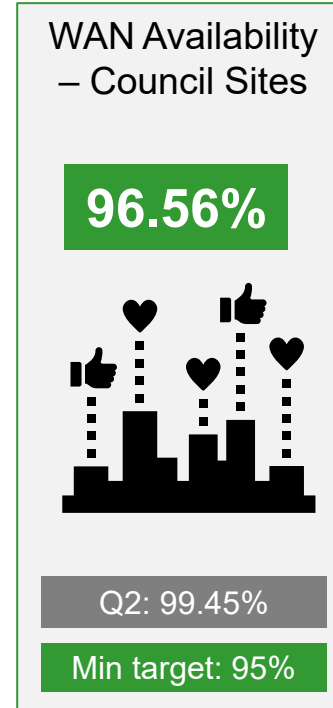
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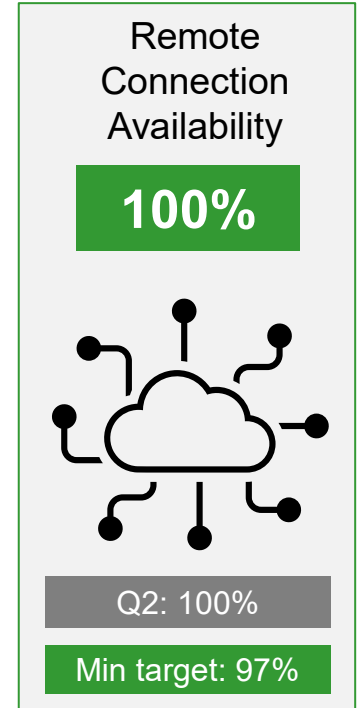
[Green]



[Green]



[Green]



[Green]

## IT (Operations) Successes/

Contact Centre Telephone Availability	Gone up since Q2.
LAN Availability – Civic Centre	Increased since Q2.

# IT (Operations)

## Areas of Development

Breached Tickets	Gone up since Q2. Has been flagged as a risk relating to the amount of available resource dedicated to BAU tasks.
First Contact Resolution rate (60 min)	Decreased since Q2. This is tied into other key areas like software patching and network issues that we are also looking at ways to fix, such as a dedicated patching management solution.
WAN Availability – Council Sites	Decreased since Q2.

# IT (Operations)

## Comments

### **Q2: Mark Edgar** (*Service Assurance and Compliance Manager, Head of IT Operations and Cyber Security*)

The Spindles site has now settled into normal operation, with the issues encountered during the early stages of occupation fully resolved. The technical difficulties that affected network performance, including intermittent outages and compatibility challenges with existing infrastructure, have been addressed. As a result, we've seen a significant improvement in network stability and availability, particularly at the Spindles location, bringing performance back to expected levels.

We are about to deploy new council laptops across the organisation. This rollout is expected to reduce the number of hardware-based support calls in the coming years, as the new devices will provide enhanced reliability and performance, alleviating some of the strain on IT support resources. With a fresh fleet of laptops, we anticipate fewer device failures, which should positively impact our service metrics and user satisfaction. In summary, Q2 has demonstrated continued improvement across most KPIs, with breached tickets on a downward trend, moving us closer to our optimal targets. The team's efforts to resolve technical issues and proactive initiatives like the laptop rollout place us in a strong position as we enter the next quarter.

### **Q3: Lindsey Al-Basri** (*IT Head of Projects*)

The 3 months from October witnessed more Council teams and partners coming into Spindles further proving the new infrastructure. The build of the new Primary Comms Room is progressing, ready for completion in early Q4, when we commence a major milestone of migration from the old data centre in the Civic, to Spindles. The laptop refresh project has now started with IT being the first department to be implemented and with early adopters across the Council being progressed, but the expected and welcome impact of having a fresh estate has not yet reached a point to reduce device failures but Q4 and into 25/26 will see the benefit of reduced service calls from this. However, our initiative to improve Wifi across council sites is progressing well, and due to finish in Q4 as is the implementation and migration of sites onto the new GMOne Network which continues and is gathering pace.

Signed Off: 28/01/2025

# Finance

## Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability

**Officer Contact:** TBC (*Assistant Director Revenues & Benefits*)

### Service Summary:

The Finance Service provides a wide range of functions primarily focussed on the delivery of financial management information, advice and support to Council officers and Members, but also members of the public, Central Government and other partner organisations.

# Finance

## Key Metrics (against target where set)

Average time taken to process *New Claims - Housing Benefits*

**23 days**



Q2: 20 days

Target: 27 days

[Green]

Average time taken to process *Change in Circumstances - Housing Benefit*

**4 days**



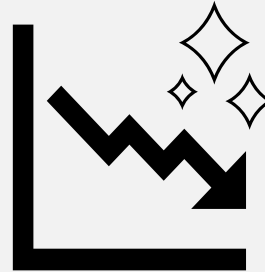
Q2: 6 days

Target: 27 days

[Green]

Average time taken to process *New Claims - Council Tax Reduction*

**22 days**



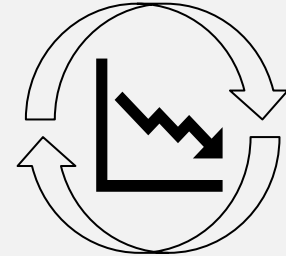
Q2: 30 days

Target: 20 days

[Red]

Average time taken to process *Change in Circumstances - Council Tax Reduction*

**7 days**



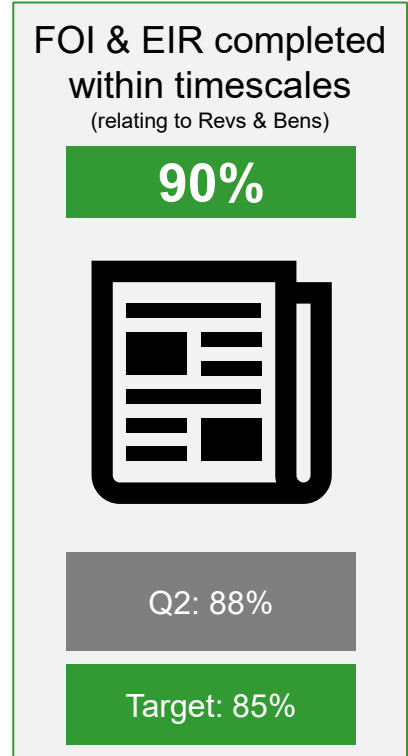
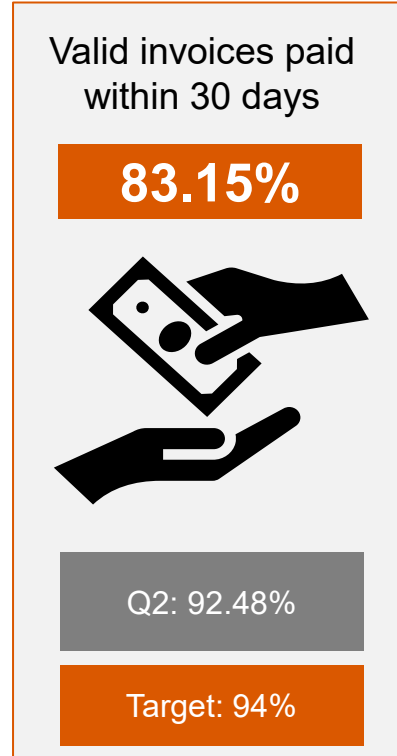
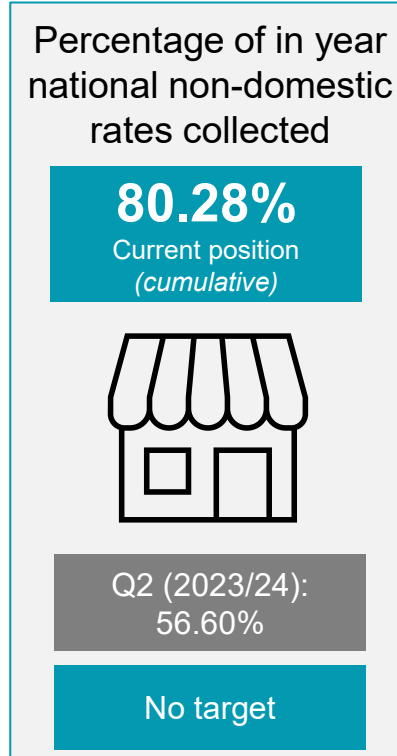
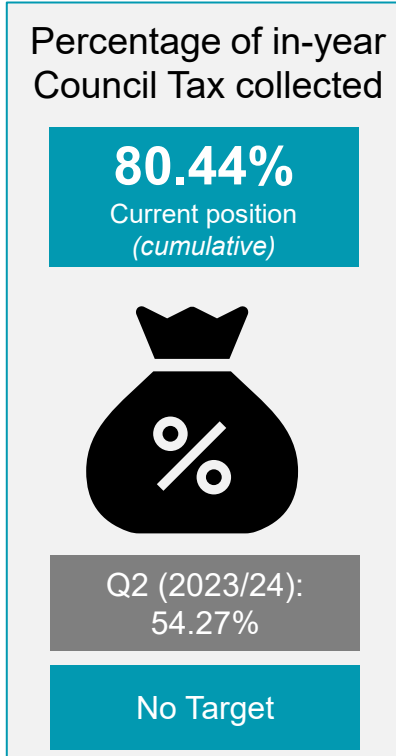
Q2: 8 Days

Target: 20 Days

[Green]

# Finance

## Key Metrics (against target where set)



[Amber]

[Green]

# Finance

## Summary Update

The annual audit of accounts is now complete and the 2023/24 accounts have been submitted to the Audit Committee for approval on 26<sup>th</sup> February. Once approved, Oldham will be one of a minority of local authorities to have its accounts audited by the statutory deadline of 28th February.

The Budget for 2025/26 was approved by Cabinet on 10th February. This follows extensive work during the year and, for the first time in a number of years, the Council is not forecast to call to reserves in order to balance its budget.

Collection Rates for Council Tax and NNDR as of January 2025 were both at 89.0%, ranking 5th in Greater Manchester in each case. The Council budgets to achieve an overall collection rate for the year of 96.5% for Council Tax and 97.5% for Business rates and is on target to achieve this.

# Procurement

## Summary Update

- Commercial Procurement Unit undertaken Procurement Act 23 (PA23) training in readiness for 'go live' of the Act on 24 Feb 2025
- CPU drafting revised PA23 templates with agreement for internal legal review
- Procurement training sessions to be run by STAR procurement to senior managers during Feb/Mar 25 covering procurement generally and PA23. This will be split by 2 sessions strategic/operational procurement implications
- CPU continues to be understaffed with only 2 perm members of staff. Revise structure proposed and due to comment consultation later in Feb once discussed with incoming FD

# Finance

## Comments

### **Q2: Julie Smethurst (Assistant Director Revenues & Benefits)**

The withdrawal of the e-invoicing module by our suppliers at the beginning of August has adversely impacted on the accounts payable team. Invoices that were previously paid automatically now need to be processed manually. The benefits team have had a couple of processing staff off on long term sick, which has impacted on processing times for new CTRS claims.

### **Q3: Adam Parsey (Interim Head of Revenues)**

The accounts payable team has been impacted by staff sickness resulting in an increase in the average time to process invoices. Universal Credit migration and an increase in change of circumstances notifications from the DWP has increased workload for the benefit team. The focus has been to ensure Housing Benefit processing remains within DWP targets, however the team are working to bring Council Tax reduction new and change of circumstances back in line.

Signed Off: 14/02/2025

## Finance Glossary:

- FOI: Freedom of Information
- EIR: Environmental Information Regulations
- CTR: Council Tax Reduction
- SPD: Single Person Discount
- CPU: Commercial Procurement Unit

# Finance / Procurement / HR & OD / IT

## Portfolio Holder Comments

### Q2: Cllr Abdul Jabbar (Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability)

Significant work has been undertaken to manage in year budget pressures which has resulted in good progress. The imminent rollout of new laptops and the associated decrease in hardware issues should enable our staff to maximise their productivity and better serve residents across the Borough.

### Q3: Cllr Abdul Jabbar (Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability)

I'm incredibly proud to report that once again Oldham is one of the few authorities in the country to have submitted our accounts for 2023/24 to audit by the statutory deadline, this is no easy task but the team have worked tremendously hard under difficult circumstances to complete this work.

While the average time to process new CTR claims isn't yet where we'd like it to be I'm glad progress has been made back towards the target from its high of 30days in Q2.

Signed Off: DDMMYY