



Royal Borough of
Windsor & Maidenhead

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018

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Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

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FOREWORD

Message from the Leader of the Council and Managing Director

As we looked back on 2017/18 when compiling this first annual report, it became clear just how busy a year it has been for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

The council has been through a considerable amount of change and transformation to ensure it is in the best position to keep up the high quality services we know people value. We are proud of the council's progress this year, but it is important to pause, reflect and focus on where there is still more we can achieve.

The council's objectives mirror what matters to residents, from being healthy and safe, to living and working in an attractive, dynamic and vibrant area, enabling people to fulfil their potential to expecting excellent services, whilst providing value for your money.

Progress in each of our six priority areas (see page 17-29) is a mixture of long term activity generating steady change as well as actions which can deliver 'quick wins'. Some of the highlights of the milestones we reached, as well as an overview of our ambitions for the year ahead, are set out in this document. The breadth of which reflects just how diverse and wide-ranging the work of the council, together with its many partners, is.

While reflecting on progress, this document serves to remind ourselves of the unwavering commitment of councillors and staff to continue achieving more so that we can continue our efforts to build a borough for everyone.



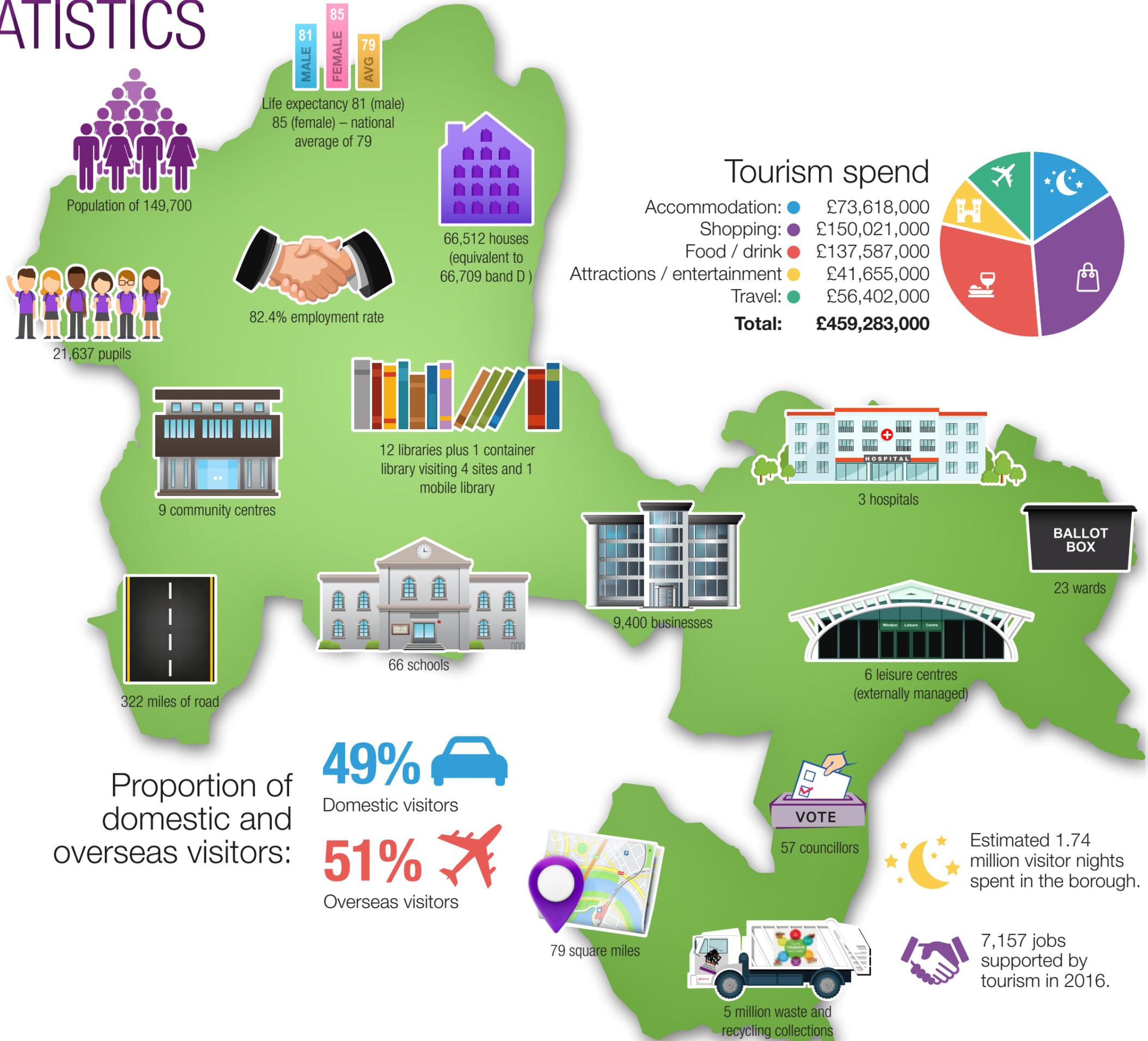
Cllr Simon Dudley, Leader of the Council.



Alison Alexander, Managing Director.



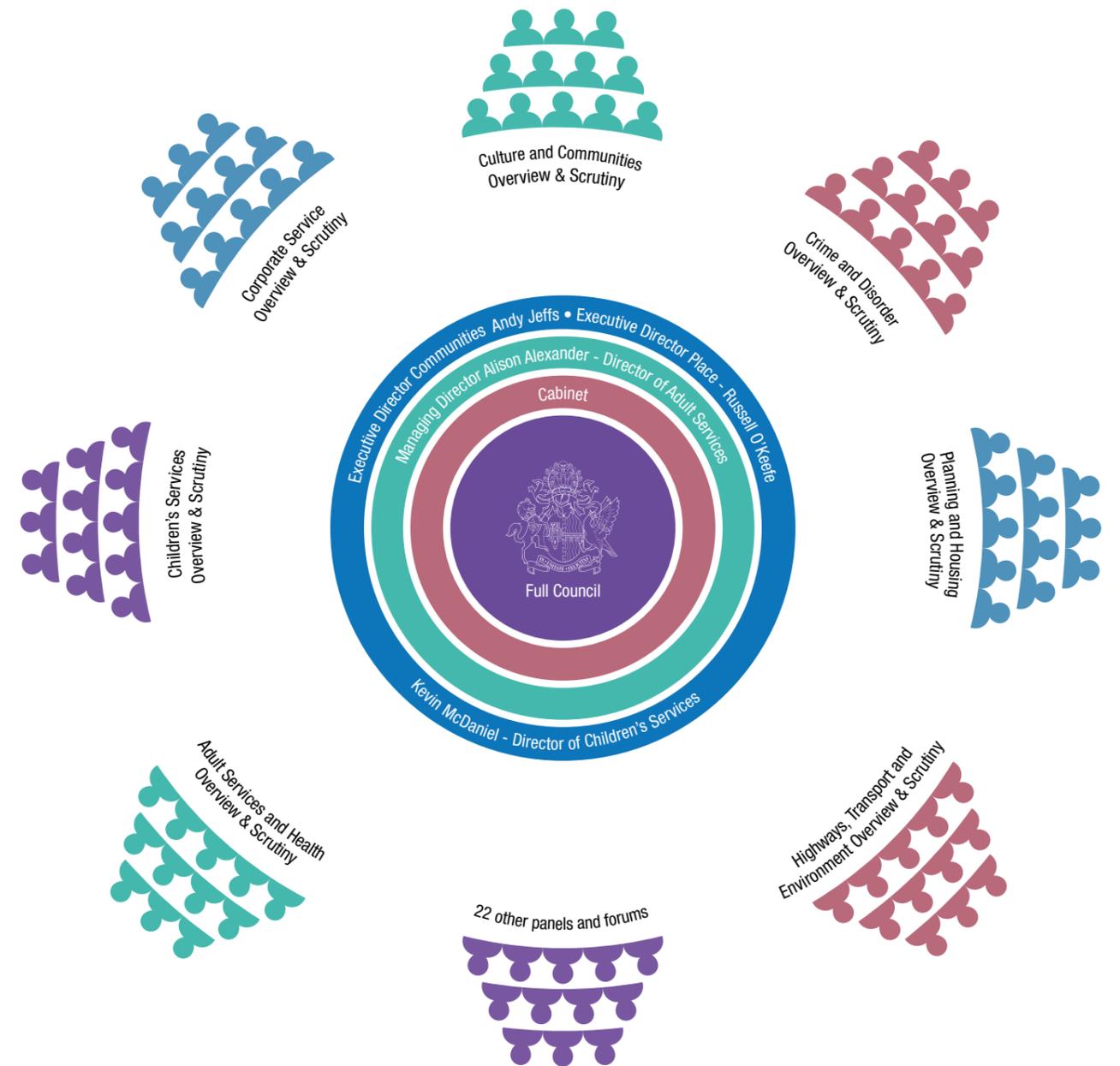
VITAL STATISTICS



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO



COUNCIL STRUCTURE





OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES



OUR PRIORITIES



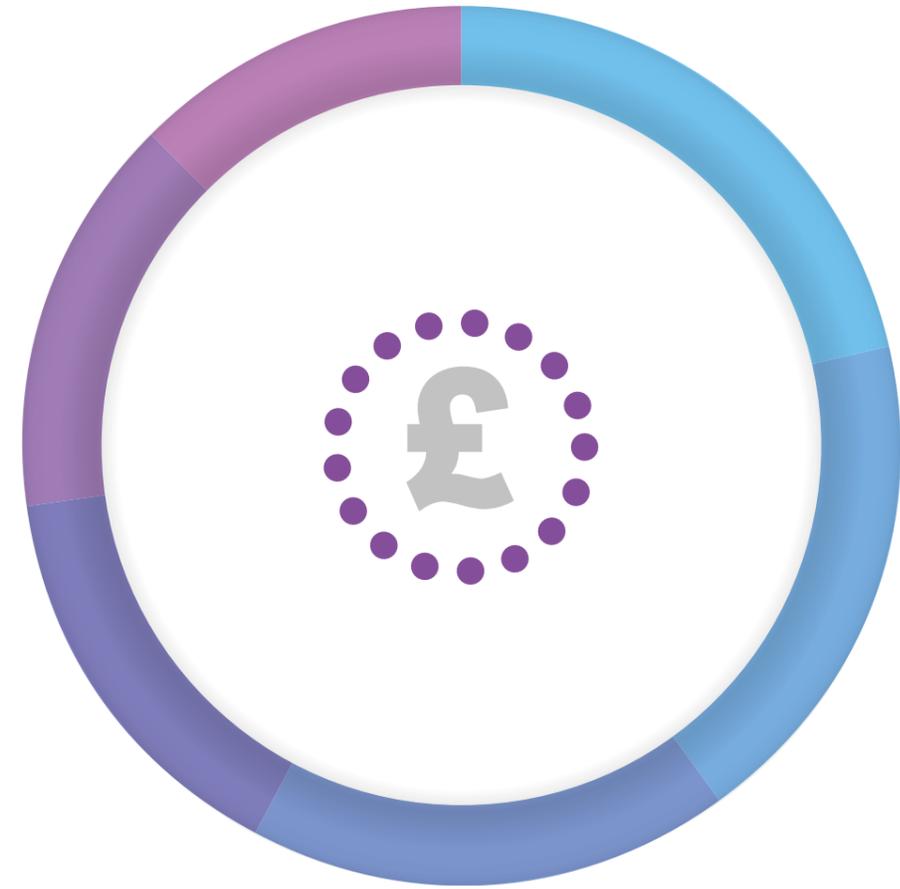
WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

Expenditure exceeding £1,000,000



Children's Services	£105,788,000
Adult Social Care	£53,645,000
Housing	£38,207,000
Other services	£20,125,000
Roads and Highways	£13,537,000
Bins, recycling and waste disposal	£10,452,000
Capital Financing	£5,170,000
Public Health	£3,037,000
Planning and Enforcement	£2,850,000
Library and Customer Services	£2,635,000
Maintenance of properties	£2,461,000
Parks, open spaces and cemeteries	£2,369,000
Councillors and Elections	£2,004,000
Street cleaning	£1,605,000
Leisure Centres	£1,382,000
Environmental Health and Protection	£1,294,000
Tourism and Town Centres	£1,075,000

Expenditure below £1,000,000



Community Wardens	£617,000
Museum and Arts	£535,000
Communications	£510,000
Community Partnerships and Grants	£433,000
CCTV	£420,000
Regeneration	£353,000
Total	£270,504,000

*total costs less recharges.

KEY PROJECTS



In preparation for the royal wedding, which was watched by 2 billion people across the world, a number of projects in Windsor were completed including four new variable messaging signs as well as streetscene improvements and resurfacing along the carriage route. A number of these were planned for 2018/19 but were brought forward in order to show the town in its best light.



4,460 potholes were repaired and approximately 15km of the Borough's roads were resurfaced as part of the 2017/18 Highways Capital Programme. Additionally, highways and street-cleaning operations were successfully transferred to Volker Highways, Urbaser and the Project Centre in April and June 2017.

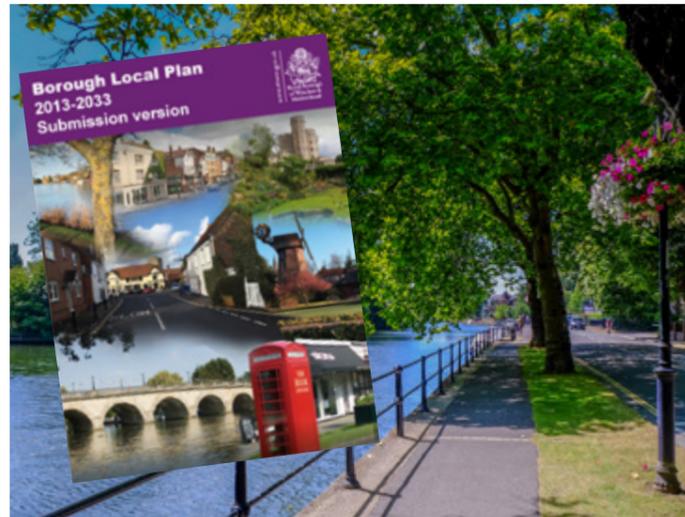
Progress was made in the Council's £30 million agreed secondary school expansion programme across all of the Borough's major towns in 2017/18. This included work at Charters in Ascot, The Windsor Boys' and Windsor Girls' school and Cox Green, Furze Platt Senior and Newlands Girls' schools in Maidenhead.



In April 2017 staff from the Council were transferred to Optalis, a company the council jointly operates with Wokingham Borough Council to deliver adult services. In August 2017 staff from children's services transferred to Achieving for Children, a company set up to deliver services for children with partners in the London boroughs of Richmond-upon-Thames and Kingston-upon-Thames.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



The Council formally submitted its Borough Local Plan, the blueprint for providing responsible development over the coming years to the Secretary of State in February 2018. The plan runs retrospectively from 2013 to 2033 to ensure future development, including a range of housing, retail, office, leisure, health and education is built in the right place at the right time. For updates on the Borough Local Plan visit www3.rbwm.gov.uk/BLP



Working in partnership with the Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group, further work on restoring and enlarging the old waterways that run through Maidenhead Town Centre was undertaken in 2017/2018. This included the opening of the new footbridge by Maidenhead Library.



Healthy, skilled and independent residents



The Royal Borough always puts its residents first which is why one of our key priorities is for them to be healthy, skilled and to live independently with dignity.

The way we deliver our services to children and to vulnerable adults has transformed this year, see more detail on pages 10 and 29, but our responsibility for their wellbeing and our focus on ensuring ongoing high quality services has not changed.

Our aspirations are to:

- Promote and develop opportunities for residents of all ages to improve their physical and mental health.
- Enable children and young people to have the best start in life.
- Work with schools to ensure high-quality education for all.
- Enable older residents and vulnerable adults to live independently.
- Improve support and opportunities for carers in our communities.

In July 2017 the council and its partners had their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. The inspection found that while overall outcomes for SEND pupils in the borough are high, some families reported difficulties accessing certain services at the right time. As a result, the council has an action plan which is being closely monitored and good progress against the improvement actions is being made.



Other milestones for adult services this year include the Allenby Road respite unit receiving a 'Good' rating from the Care Quality Commission. A successful drop in service to support the borough's carers is now in place at Maidenhead Library.

Performing better than target for the year was the number of adults being admitted to permanent residential care (actual - 141, target – fewer than 210). This is part of our commitment to helping residents live at home independently.

Number of permanent admissions to care for those aged 65+ years



Number of training sessions delivered to schools/professionals in relation to Mental Health



One of our focuses has been on better support for those with mental health conditions. Our annual target of delivering 30 mental health first aid training sessions to schools and professionals was exceeded this year by five sessions.

The number of schools in the borough which are 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rose to 85% against its 84% target. None of the borough's schools are currently considered Inadequate. Two percent more children received a place at their first choice secondary school for September 2017 with 80% of first preferences being met. At primary, infant and junior school 85% of children received places at their first choice of school.



Safe and vibrant communities



As a unitary authority, we have a statutory responsibility to protect the most vulnerable in our community, as well as ensuring the borough is a vibrant and an enjoyable place to live.

This priority reflects both our duty to keep vulnerable children and adults safe from harm, as well as focusing on providing high-quality, arts, culture and leisure facilities and encouraging people to be involved in their community.

Our aspirations are to:

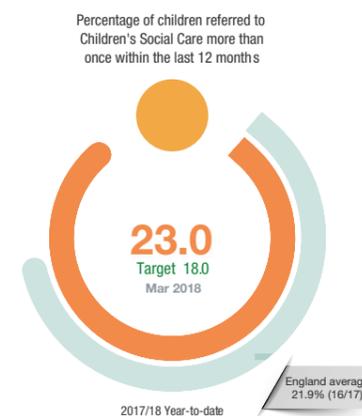
- Deliver services that protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.
- Develop the Borough's infrastructure responsibly and support residents to get more involved in the maintenance and future direction of their neighbourhood.
- Maintain high-quality arts, culture and leisure facilities.
- Enable the community and voluntary sectors to flourish.

One of our key indicators for adult safeguarding is the service user satisfaction levels based on customer surveys. In 2017/18 83.1% of adult safeguarding service-users were satisfied with the service they had received against a target of 80%.



The residents of the Royal Borough continue to provide an invaluable contribution to our communities with 5,590 people volunteering throughout the year. Whether this is from residents and businesses who have adopted a street to keep clean, to those volunteers working in organisations supported through the council's community grants – we thank you!

One of our focus areas in children's safeguarding is to keep repeat referrals to social care within a year as low as possible. At the end of the year, this was performing at just short of target at 23%, which is higher than previous years and just above the national average for 2016/17 at 21.9%. During the autumn 2017, practice within the Council's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was refined to ensure that thresholds are being consistently applied and it is anticipated that performance in the coming year will improve in light of practice improvements.



A key milestone in the project to deliver a new, state-of-the-art leisure centre at in Maidenhead was achieved this year when the green light from the Government was given for its planning approval in March 2018. The new Braywick Leisure Centre is set to open by March 2020 featuring a 10 lane swimming pool, 200 station gym and improved access for disabled users. The 40 year old Magnet Leisure will remain open until the new one is built.



Growing economy, affordable housing



The Royal Borough is not only a desirable place to live, but also to do business. Nearly 9,400 businesses are based here; 29 of the South East's top 500 companies have their main offices in the Royal Borough, with a number of high-tech companies having located here. 18 of the top 500 companies are in Maidenhead, 10 are in Windsor and one top 500 company is based in Ascot. Our residents are industrious, with the borough having an 82.4% employment rate compared to the south east average of 78.8% and the national average of 74.9%.

As important as it is for people to be able to use their talents and skills at work locally, the council is prioritising tackling the affordability challenge of owning or renting a home here. This is a national issue, but with the average house price rising to £485,000 and the average earnings £39,021, the house price to earnings ratio is 12.43 in the Royal Borough compared to the national figure of 7.91 and the south east at 9.79. Though a complex and long term issue, the council is determined to help residents from across the salary spectrum to afford to live here.

Our aspirations are to:

- Improve our towns, while valuing their local distinctiveness.
- Encourage the growth of a diverse range of businesses in the borough.
- Support further opportunities for work placements, apprenticeships and volunteers.
- Support the provision of affordable housing and expand and improve practical support for residents facing other housing issues.
- Expand and improve practical support for residents facing other housing issues.

One of the measures of the vibrancy of the local economy is to keep vacancies in shops, offices and commercial spaces low. In 2017/18 against a target of 13%, there were 12.4% units that were vacant. Part of the council's efforts to keep this figure as low as possible is to provide business rate relief and 'empty shop' discounts as well as encouraging pop-up shops. To find out more contact us at business.rates@rbwm.gov.uk.

The council set itself a target of offering 9 apprenticeships last year, and by March 2018 there were 14 people who had taken up an apprenticeship opportunity at the council.

 14.7m

As well as encouraging businesses, attracting people to our towns is high up on the agenda. 14,703,498 people were recorded in our town centres last year, approximately 500,000 above the annual target.

Specific focus on the regeneration of Maidenhead continued apace with the appointment of a development partner for the council-owned town centre sites. Countryside were appointed in April 2017 as a Joint Venture partner to work with the council on four sites, covering more than 6.3 hectares and that have the potential to deliver 1,200 homes alongside shops, restaurants and offices. Successful engagement events were held on the proposals this year and more progress is expected throughout 2018 in this key area



Attractive and well-connected borough



The Royal Borough is a uniquely special place to live, work and visit. At the same time as encouraging opportunity and growth the council understands that this would only be possible if its special character, connectivity and infrastructure are also enhanced.

Our aspirations are to:

- Protect and enhance the attractiveness of our community spaces and countryside.
- Promote sustainable energy sources and minimise pollution and waste.
- Enhance the quality and safety of our roads, highways and pathways.

Approaching 13,000 streetlights were upgraded across the borough in 2017/18 with LED bulbs. Not only is this more environmentally sustainable and less costly to run, saving £400,000 per year, but they also have self-reporting technology to automatically indicate when a fault has occurred. Since the switchover, there have been 69 faults self-reported to the system which have all been fixed.

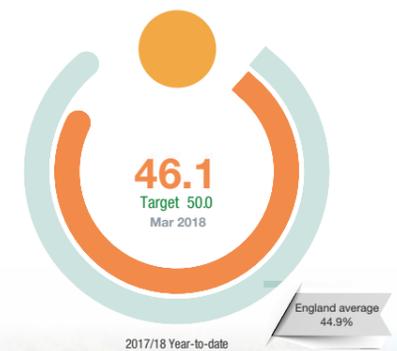


In 2017/2018 the Royal Borough agreed a new contract to improve bus routes after a number of services were set to be discontinued. The three new routes began at the end of January 2018, before the old routes ceased so that there was no break in service for residents.

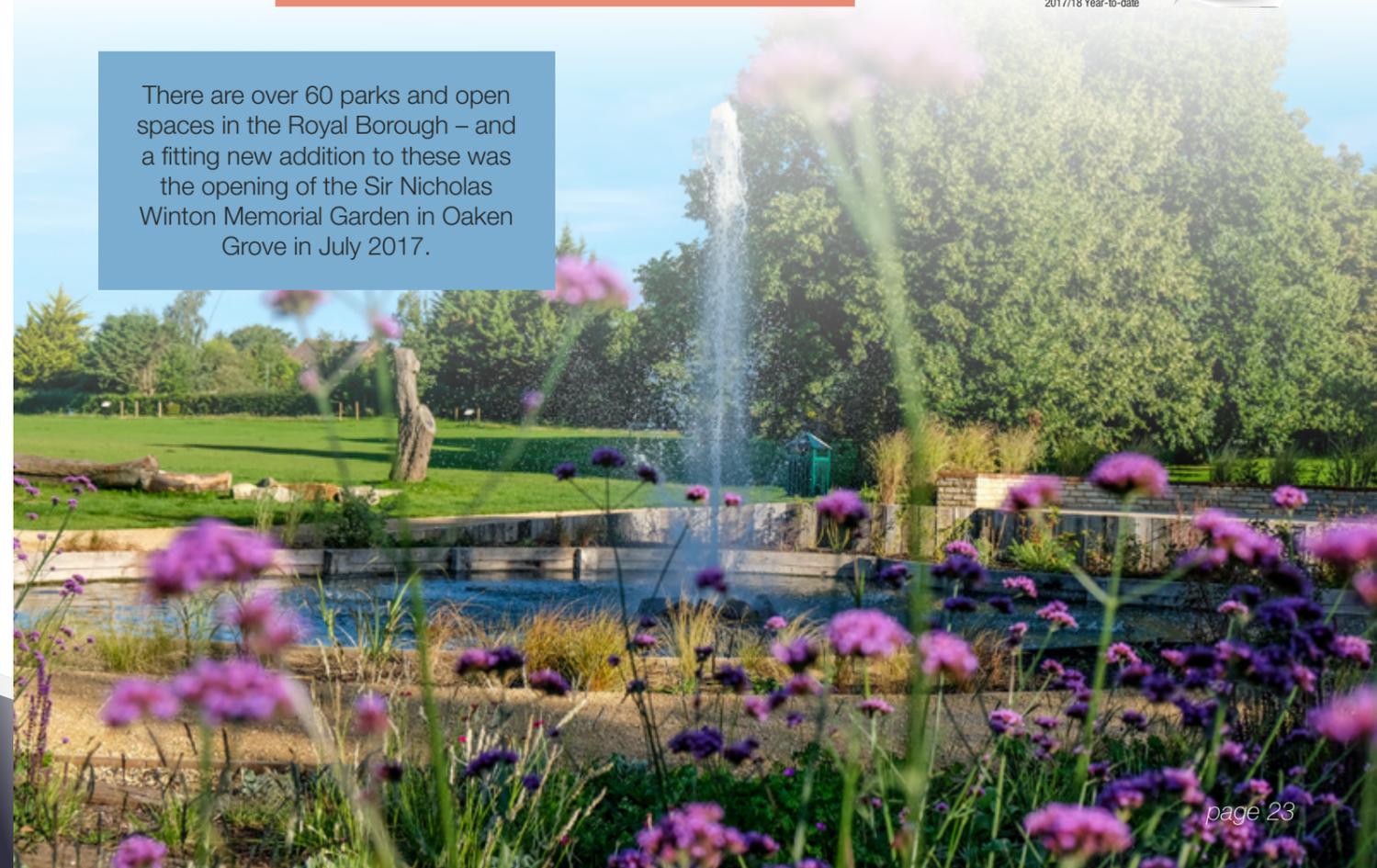
The winter roads service saw 240km of roads gritted this winter, using 3,000 tonnes of salt to keep roads open during the winter weather. As a result, refuse collections were carried out every day even during the most challenging conditions.

The council sets itself an aspirational target to recycle half of its waste. This year we were just short of achieving that at 46.1% but this exceeded the England average of 44.9%. One of the ways we can improve on this is by recycling more food waste – that's why food waste recycling bags are available for free to residents at libraries. For other tips on how to recycle more visit www.greenredeem.co.uk.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling



There are over 60 parks and open spaces in the Royal Borough – and a fitting new addition to these was the opening of the Sir Nicholas Winton Memorial Garden in Oaken Grove in July 2017.



An excellent customer experience



We know residents, businesses and visitors expect a first class customer experience whatever the nature of their enquiry. Whether dealing with an advisor at one of the customer service centres in our libraries across the borough, making a call to the town hall or accessing services online the council is focused on providing high standards of customer service.

Our aspirations are to:

- Communicate and engage well with residents.
- Enable easy access to council services.
- Deliver our customer-service standards.
- Improve our understanding of what residents need and want.

In July 2017 the council launched its customer service hubs in Ascot, Maidenhead and Windsor libraries. National data shows that overall library service points fell by 10.3% from 2010-11 to 2016-17. Providing more services in libraries means that many queries can be answered seven days a week and without needing to travel to the town hall itself.

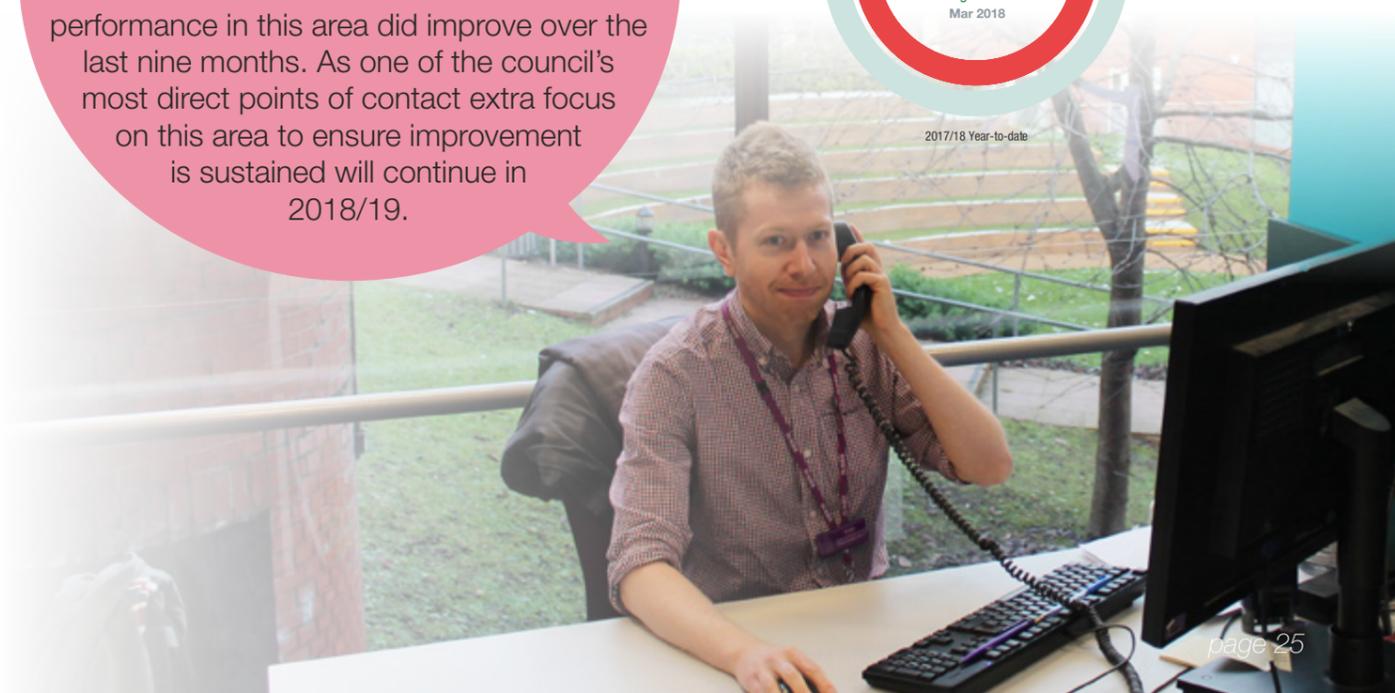
For residents needing housing benefit we set ourselves the demanding target of processing claims in 3.5 days. Whilst our performance for the year was just short of that at 3.7 days – that's the equivalent of it taking 1.5 hours longer. According to the Department for Work and Pensions – we provide we are the 3rd quickest council in the UK at providing this service to some of our most vulnerable residents. The England average for new claims is 22 days, and for changes of circumstance is 9 days.



Over 200,000 phone calls were made to the council last year and our target is to answer 80% of those within 60 seconds. Last year, we didn't reach that target due to some underperformance in the first three months of the year. Corrective action and more resource was invested and performance in this area did improve over the last nine months. As one of the council's most direct points of contact extra focus on this area to ensure improvement is sustained will continue in 2018/19.



As part of the council's drive to improve, the Royal Borough took part in a 'peer challenge' with the Local Government Association in September 2017. Over four days, five leading officers and councillors from across the country spoke to over 90 stakeholders here and spent over 140 hours reviewing how the council works. They found the council to be ambitious and high achieving as well as making some recommendations to further improve which the council is implementing.



Well-managed resources delivering value for money

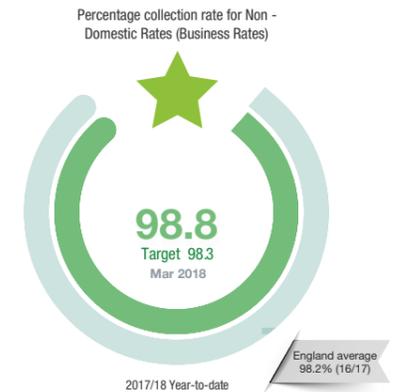


The council would not be able to achieve any of its other priorities if it did not manage its resources well – whether it's harnessing the talent of our staff or balancing the books and investing in the right areas. Local government finances are challenging – but the council is determined not to tax its residents any more than is needed and to use that money wisely to provide the breadth and quality of service and investment that residents want.

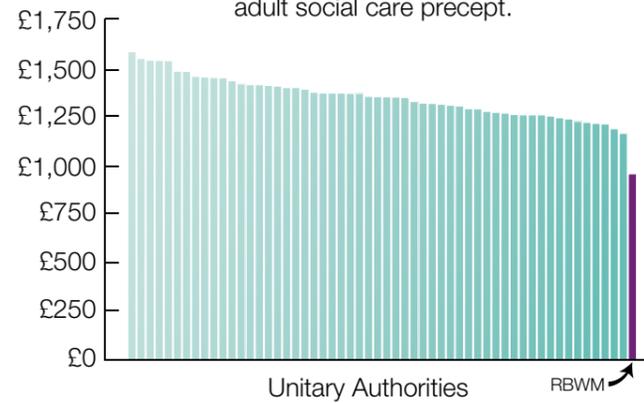
Our aspirations are to:

- Maximise our income and ensure effective and efficient services.
- Increase our existing staff skills, capability and resilience.
- Use modern technology to benefit customers and staff.
- Commission or deliver services to meet residents' needs.

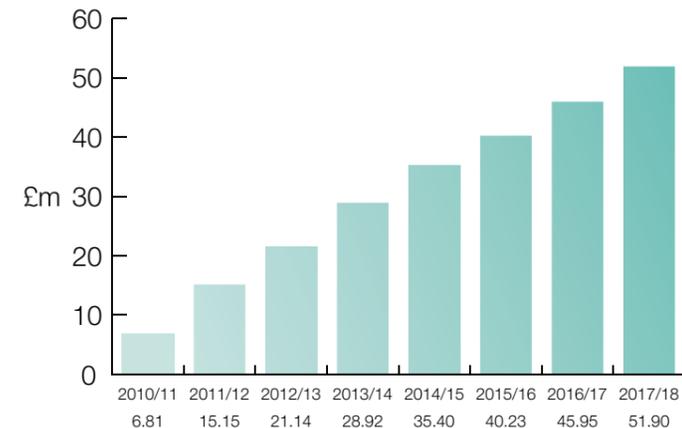
As well as collecting council tax, the Royal Borough must collect the business rates for the local area. It doesn't get to keep all the money it collects as some go back to national government – but this year the council collected 98.8% of the money it was owed, its best ever result.



2017/18 Band D council tax including adult social care precept.



The level of council tax set in 2017/18 was the lowest in the country for a unitary authority outside of London. The Royal Borough Band D is £933.42, compared to £1,430.84 on average for other unitary authorities.



In order to keep council tax low, the council sets itself challenging savings targets to reduce the running costs by delivering things better without compromising on quality. By the end of the financial year, the council had saved £51.9million over the last 8 years.



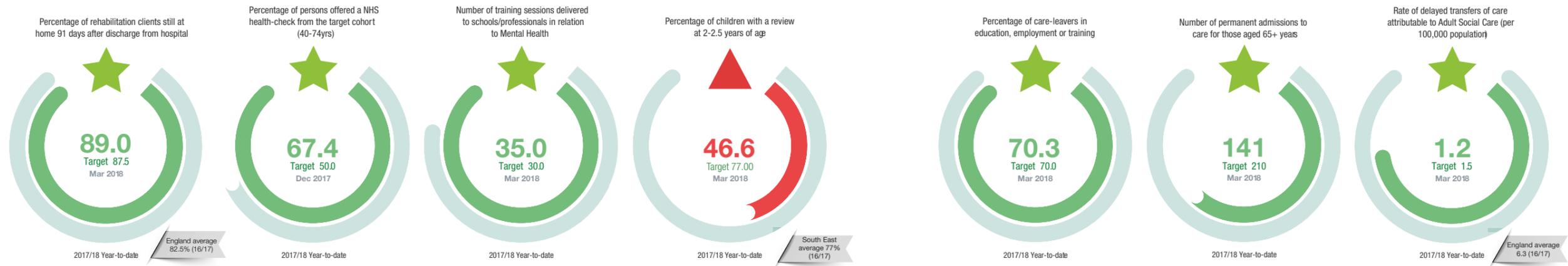
The way that the council delivers its children's and adult services transformed this year. Approximately 230 full time equivalent staff from Adults Services and 249 full time equivalent Children's services staff transferred into Optalis and Achieving for Children respectively. By working differently with partners in Wokingham (Optalis) and the London Boroughs of Richmond and Kingston (Achieving for Children) staff gain greater experience, better learning and development opportunities and the service becomes more resilient for residents.

One example this year of how the council becomes more efficient without compromising on quality and service was the decision of Cabinet, in March 2018, to invest further in the Community Warden team to increase the number of wardens from 18 to 25.

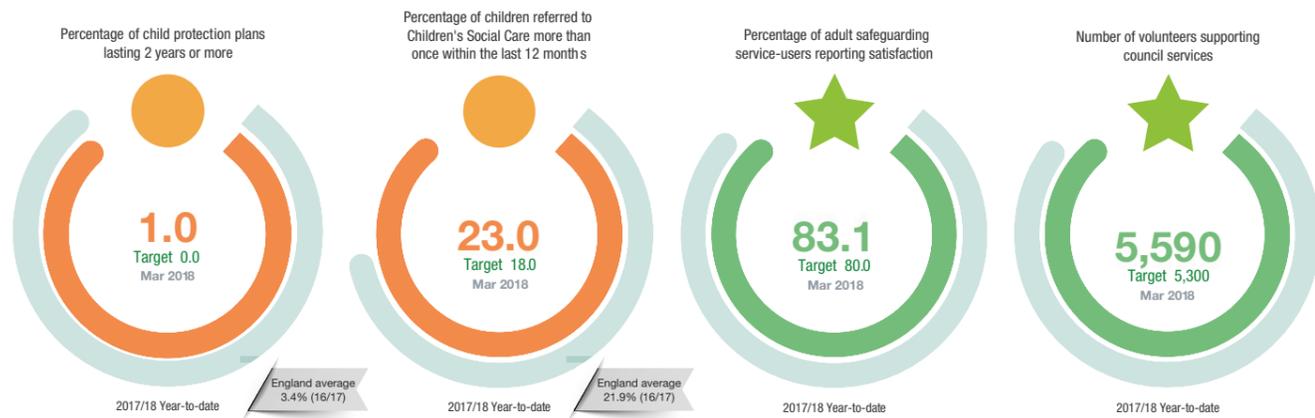


Building a borough for everyone – where residents and businesses grow, with opportunities for all

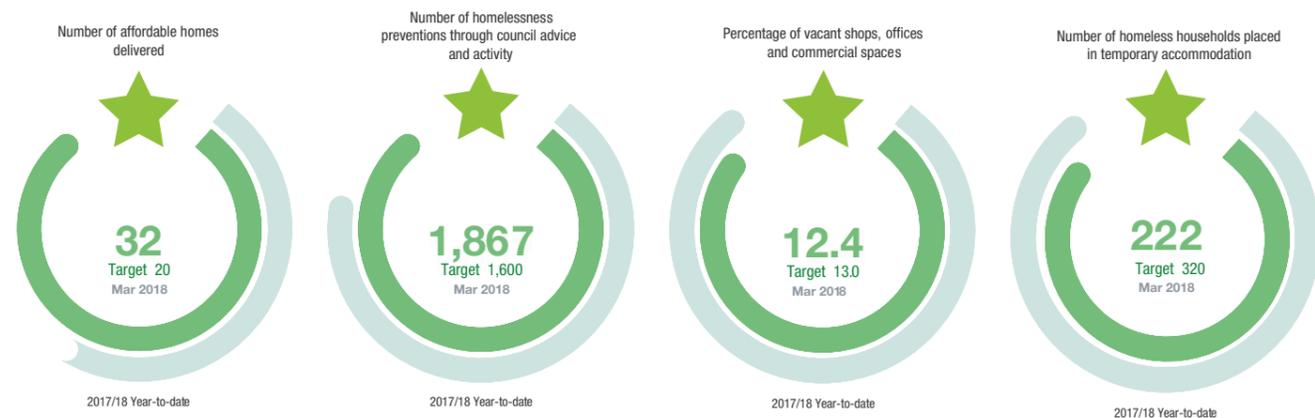
Healthy, skilled and independent residents



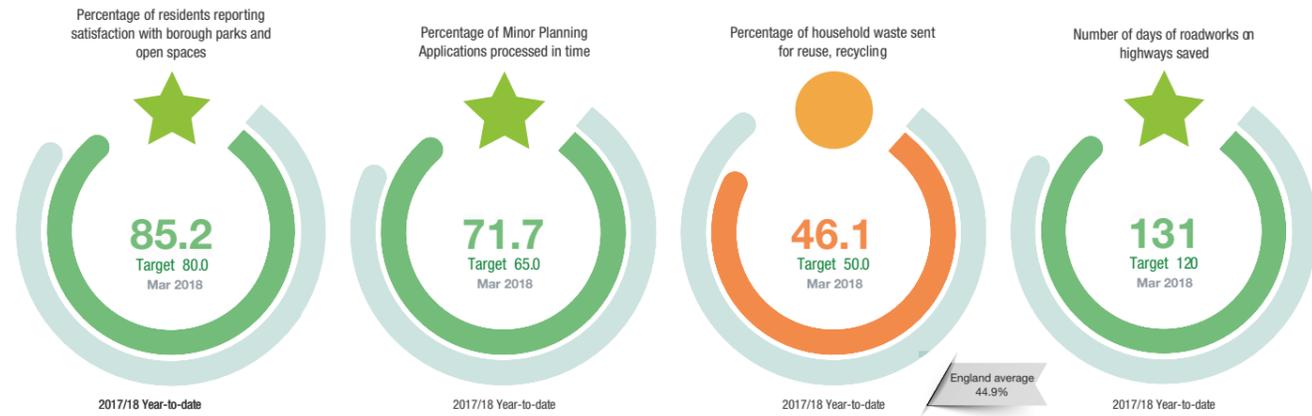
Safe and vibrant communities



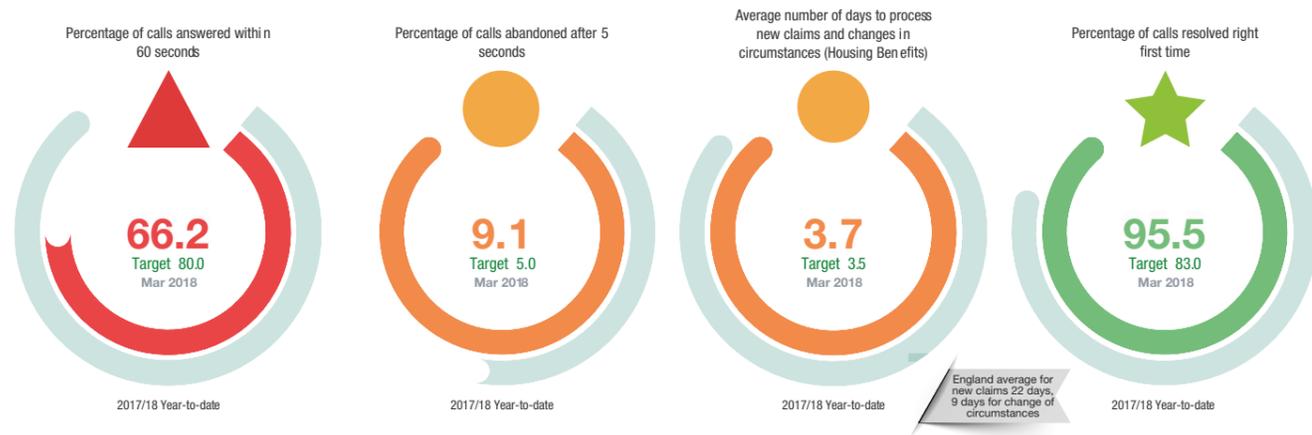
Growing economy, affordable housing



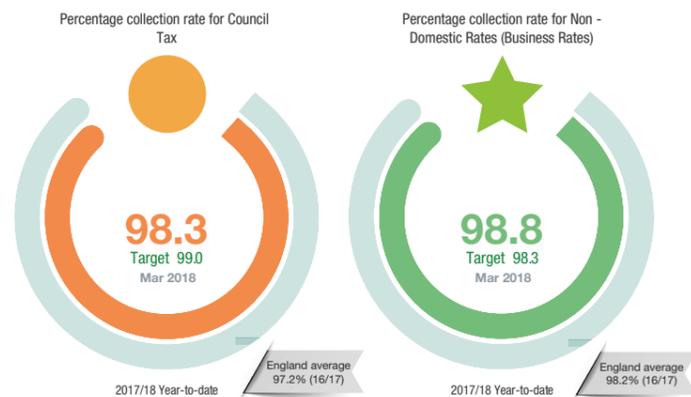
Attractive and well-connected borough



An excellent customer experience



Well-managed resources delivering value for money



* All benchmarking provided is latest available.

AMBITIONS FOR 2018/19



Delivering a new CCTV system.



Successfully procuring the new weekly waste contract.



Refreshing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.



Co-ordinating and delivering a number of neighbourhood planning referendums in support of local decision making.



Implementing procedures to support residents with the roll out of Universal Credit.



