



**Cabinet  
Tuesday, 18 November 2025**

**ADDENDA 1**

**7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 1 - 8)**

Cabinet will receive the following report:-

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report on OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail Strategy

**17. Business Management & Monitoring Report - Performance and Risk Quarter 2 2025/26 (Pages 9 - 20)**

Updated Annex B attached

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## Divisions Affected – All

### CABINET

18 November 2025

### OxRail 2040: Plan for Rail

### Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

## REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on OxRail 2040 (henceforth, 'the Plan'), which set out the Council's plan to improve rail transport and connectivity across the County over the next 15 years.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, Pete Brunskill, Rail Development Lead, and James Gagg, Team Leader, for attending the meeting and responding to questions.

## SUMMARY

5. The Cabinet Member and Director of Economy and Place introduced the OxRail 2040 report, emphasising its ambitious scope, year-long development, and the exceptional number of consultation responses it received. Widely supported, the Plan aimed to outline Oxfordshire's connectivity needs and build a strong investment case, with a focus on achievable outcomes. The recent government approval for the Cowley branch line was noted as a key milestone. The Rail Development Lead highlighted intensified planning efforts since June, including collaboration with WSP consultancy, broad engagement across the council and rail industry, and significant stakeholder support. The recent release of the Government's Railways Bill was mentioned as aligning with the Plan's aspirations and providing future opportunities for mayoral authorities in rail development.
6. In its consideration of the item the Committee explored a breadth of topics, including the degree of support for the proposals by the rail industry, impacts on housing viability and modal shift, biodiversity net gain, engagement, updates, and refinements to the Plan, as well as disability access around stations.
7. The Committee makes five recommendations to Cabinet which broadly cluster around comments over the Carterton-Witney-Oxford Mass Rapid Transit, opportunities for housing development, ways to support modal shift, and a suggestion on how further to clarify public expectations of the Plan.

## OBSERVATION

8. The Committee was addressed by Charlie Maynard, MP, the Member of Parliament for Witney, speaking in favour of a Carterton-Witney-Oxford railway. It was suggested that the wording of the OxRail 2040 plan gave insufficient recognition to the amount of work already completed on the project's feasibility and cost-effectiveness and it was requested that amendments were made to the wording of the Plan to reflect this, and to be more ambitious in the phasing of its delivery. Two recommended changes were put forward. The Committee did not consider it necessary to put these forward as formal recommendations, considering it most appropriate for the Cabinet member to request the changes to be made if she considered it so minded. However, the Committee is content to note them as observations.
  - a) *Replace on p. 80 the sentence "We will also begin exploring the case for a Carterton–Witney–Oxford Mass Rapid Transit system (P3.05), working to identify the most suitable solution to enhance public transport access to the west of our County" with "We will continue to explore the case for a Carterton–Witney–Oxford Mass Rapid Transit system (P3.05), to identify the most suitable solution to enhance public transport access to the west of our County."*
  - b) *Replace on p.37 "we will continue to develop options for medium - to longer-term mass rapid transit (which may include rail) for this corridor to identify*

*deliverable plans and financing mechanisms for its implementation (P3.05)” with “we will continue to develop options for medium- to longer-term mass rapid transit (which may include rail) for this corridor to identify deliverable plans and financing mechanisms for its implementation potentially within this plan period (P3.05)”*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Carterton-Witney-Oxford Mass Rapid Transit

9. It is important to recognise, however, whilst the Committee would be content with the textual amendments proposed above, that the Plan commits to ‘a longer-term mass rapid transit corridor (which may include rail)’. Within that caveat is the implication that it equally may not; the Committee was informed that there are strong reasons in favour of rail, but that feasibility studies had also identified that there are also notable challenges.
10. There is a degree of urgency around establishing which solution will be pursued by the fact that West Oxfordshire District Council is in the process of developing its Local Plan, which identifies where it expects to see new development to 2043. The location and density of development is very closely linked to the ability of transport to service it, so clarity on this matter is vital. As such, the Committee welcomed the news that the Council has already commissioned further work to identify its preferred mass transit solution. It wishes to stress to Cabinet that much of the value of this work will come from giving West Oxfordshire District Council a clearer idea on which to base their Local Plan. Consequently, it is critical that this work is undertaken early enough to be understood and incorporated into the wider proposed Local Plan.
11. It is stressed as part of this recommendation that much work has already been undertaken previously over the past twenty years as to how to reduce congestion on the A40. It is specifically hoped that this work will be referenced and engaged with, rather than lost or re-undertaken.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council should undertake sufficient work to identify its preferred options and feasibility for mass rapid transit solutions for West Oxfordshire in time to allow that information to be used meaningfully and to be incorporated into the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2043**

### Housing

12. Whilst the location of railway lines (or other forms of rapid mass transit) have implications for housing and development at a strategic level, there are also opportunities in the reverse direction: developing unused land owned by railway companies near to stations for housing. The Committee queried how far this had been investigated. Members were gladdened to hear not only of the Council's openness to this possibility, particularly in Banbury, but also for the support at a national level with the launch of Platform4, which seeks to

develop 40,000 new homes on rail-owned brownfield sites over the coming decade.

13. The Committee appreciates that the OxRail 2040 is not a housing plan. Nonetheless, homes near to railway stations are less car-reliant and often bring people into town and city centres, both of which are desirable and consistent with the Council's strategic plan. As such, the Committee would value the inclusion of explicit reference to those areas it intends to facilitate housing development on rail-owned land.

**Recommendation 2: That the Council should identify the areas of opportunity for development of housing near railway lines and the steps it intends to take to enable delivery as part of the Plan.**

#### Modal Shift

14. As the Plan states, "Rail is at the heart of a zero-emissions transport system." In order to achieve decarbonisation targets, the reductions of road journeys in the Local Connectivity and Travel Plan and the Council's Strategic objectives for a greener, fairer and healthier Oxfordshire it is necessary to deliver modal shift.
15. The Committee does appreciate that the OxRail Plan, in the same way it is not a housing plan, is also not a fully-integrated transport plan. Equally, however, despite being fundamental to a zero-emissions transport system, rail on its own is not sufficient to deliver modal shift. That is to be found with multi-modal integration, where – for example – people can ride their bicycle to the station, catch the train into Oxford, and then take a bus on to their workplace. The work in Didcot to make the station a mobility hub was highlighted to the Committee, and is the driving rationale behind the development of the Oxfordshire Metro concept.
16. An observation by the Committee is that, despite this recognition of the importance of multi-modal transport, the maps provided focus only on rail routes. If these were to be overlaid with key bus routes also it would more accurately reflect and embed the potential of the integrated network that the Plan is working towards.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council should include maps within the OxRail 2040 Plan to illustrate the potential of an integrated transport network by overlaying major bus routes onto projected rail maps.**

17. Modal shift is often thought about in terms of people, but, as the Plan rightly recognises, goods also can also be moved off the roads. Freight delivered by rail, however, does require additional infrastructure to transfer it to roads for the final leg of its journey. The Committee is keen that suitable locations are identified in the upcoming revisions of Local Plans in Oxfordshire to ensure that this necessary infrastructure can be delivered.

**Recommendation 4: That the Council works with the local City and District Councils to identify suitable locations for land to be allocated to the infrastructure required to support greater modal shift towards railway freight.**

#### Plan Clarity

18. A final point concerns how the Plan itself will be received. The length of time taken to deliver rail initiatives, and the complexity from having so many stakeholders – from National Rail to rail companies to the different tiers of local authorities, to landowners – is perhaps better understood within the Council than by the general public. There exists a danger, therefore, that the very significant amount of work referenced in the Plan may be interpreted as imminent commitments to deliver by the Council. The Committee would wish to see fuller information around where responsibility for the deliverables in the Plan primarily lie, the nature of the Council's involvement - either as the lead, or simply an influencer or enabler, the dependencies, and a sense of timescale. Explaining these clearly within the Plan would ground public expectations of the Council and the project deliverables within a realistic structure and potentially avoid confusion or disappointment.

**Recommendation 5: That the Council should clarify within the Plan where primary responsibility for the key deliverables sits, what the Council's involvement is, the dependencies on which they rest, and an assessment of likely timescales.**

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

19. The Committee does not anticipate revisiting this topic again during this municipal year.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

20. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
21. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer:

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Scrutiny Officer

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November 2025



## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

**Issue:** **OxRail 2040: Plan for Rail**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for for Place, Environment and Climate Action**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **18 November 2025**

### Response to recommendations:

| Recommendation   | Accepted, rejected or partially accepted | Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected) |
|--|--|---|
| 1. <i>That the Council should undertake sufficient work to identify options and feasibility for mass rapid transit solutions for West Oxfordshire in time to allow that information to be used meaningfully and to be incorporated into the West</i> |  |   |

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<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

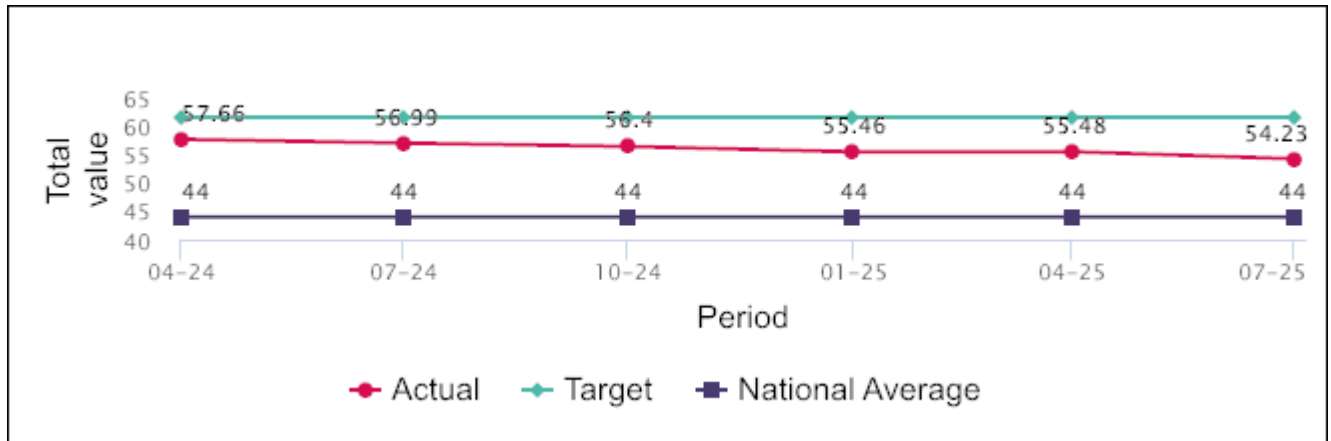
## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <i>Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2043.</i>  |  |  |
| <i>2. That the Council should identify the areas of opportunity for development of housing near railway lines and the steps it intends to take to enable delivery as part of the Plan.</i>  |  |  |
| <i>3. That the Council should include maps within the OxRail 2040 Plan to illustrate the potential of an integrated transport network by overlaying major bus routes onto projected rail maps.</i>                                    |  |  |
| <i>4. That the Council works with the local City and District Councils to identify suitable locations for land to be allocated to the infrastructure required to support greater modal shift towards railway freight.</i>             |  |  |
| <i>5. That the Council should clarify within the Plan where primary responsibility for the key deliverables sits, what the Council's involvement is, the dependencies on which they rest, and an assessment of likely timescales.</i> |  |  |

# Agenda Item 17

## Annex B - Performance analysis by strategic priority by year to date (YTD) position

### Priority 01: Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our



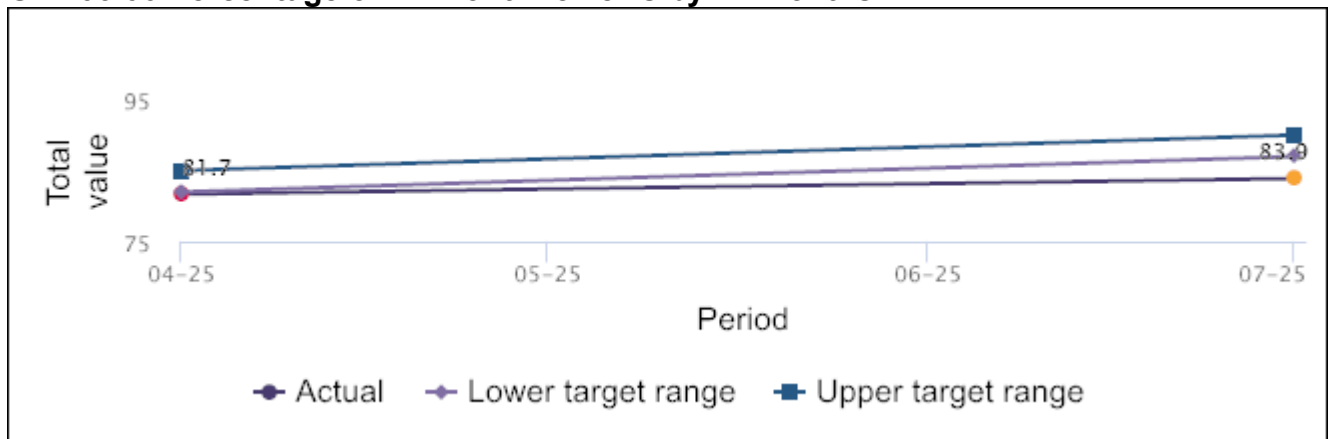
### Commentary

Quarterly reporting pattern means that data is one month in arrears. Continuing trend of reduced performance compared to previous years. Overall likely to remain around this level during all of 2025/26, though a possible implementation of a food waste campaign in the autumn could help for the latter part of the year.

Oxfordshire residents consistently exceed the national average (44% in 2023/24) for household waste recycling. In November 2024, the central government made announcements around Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility. It is anticipated that the implementation of national waste policy reforms expected in the next few years will improve performance.

### Priority 03: Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

#### OCC03.06 Percentage of 12-month reviews by 12 months

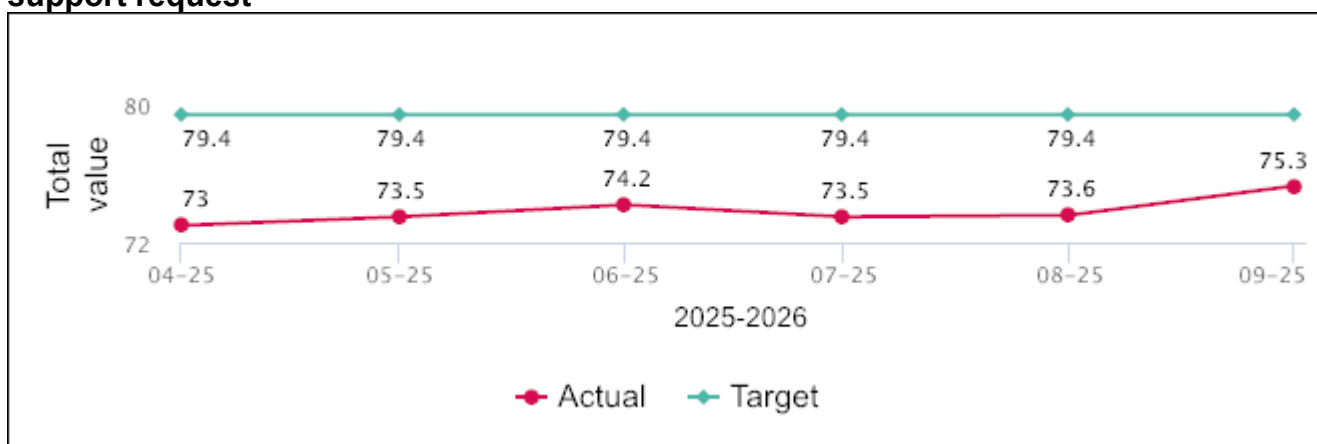


## Commentary

This universal review is offered to all children as they approach their first birthday. In the quarter the service completed 1,568 reviews. Due to family commitments and parents working, families may choose to have their review after the child's first birthday up until 15 months. If a family declines or does not attend an appointment the service follows them up to offer another review and this may then be outside of the 12-month timescale. In this quarter 1586 babies or 89.5% have received a review by 15 months.

### Priority 04: Support carers and the social care system

#### OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 25/26 with no further support request

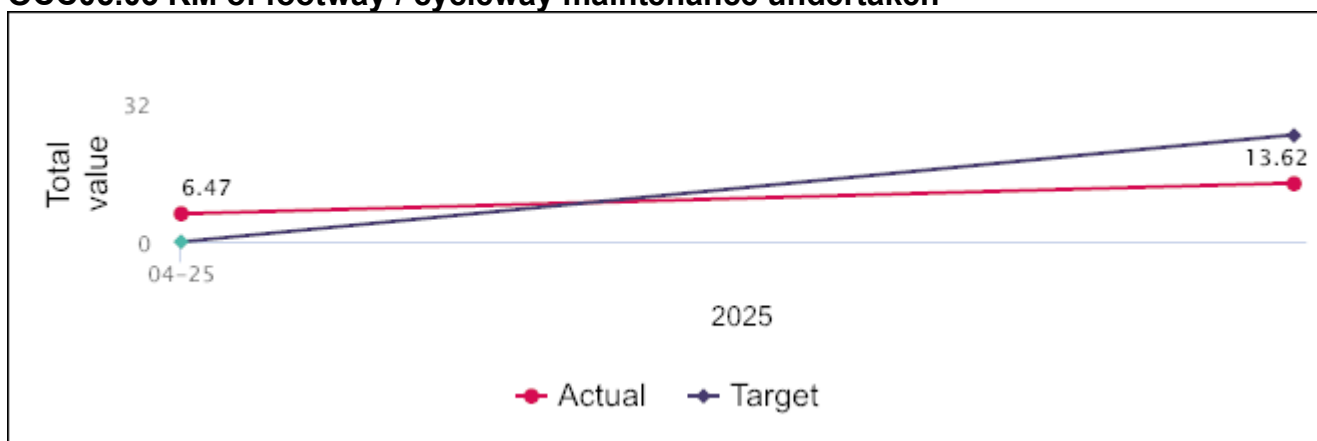


## Commentary

We are making small gains in terms of percentage achieving independence. Training of zonal providers on reablement is now live and this should help improve our outcomes. We are also looking to recruit 13 more staff to support Pathway 1 discharges to increase both the quality and timely assessment of reablement episodes.

### Priority 05: Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

#### OCC05.03 KM of footway / cycleway maintenance undertaken



## Commentary

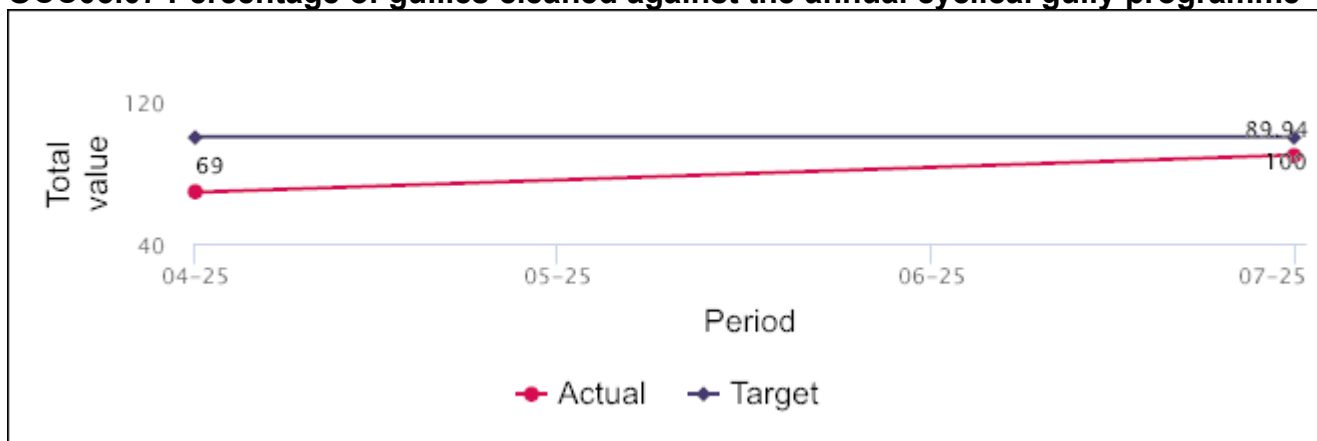
The footway slurry schemes, which represent the majority of the length within this year's footway programme, were originally scheduled for summer delivery. The programme has now been restructured into two distinct phases:

Phase 1: Scheduled for delivery during October–November.

Phase 2: Deferred to Quarter 4.

Please note that the annual delivery target remains unchanged despite the revised schedule.

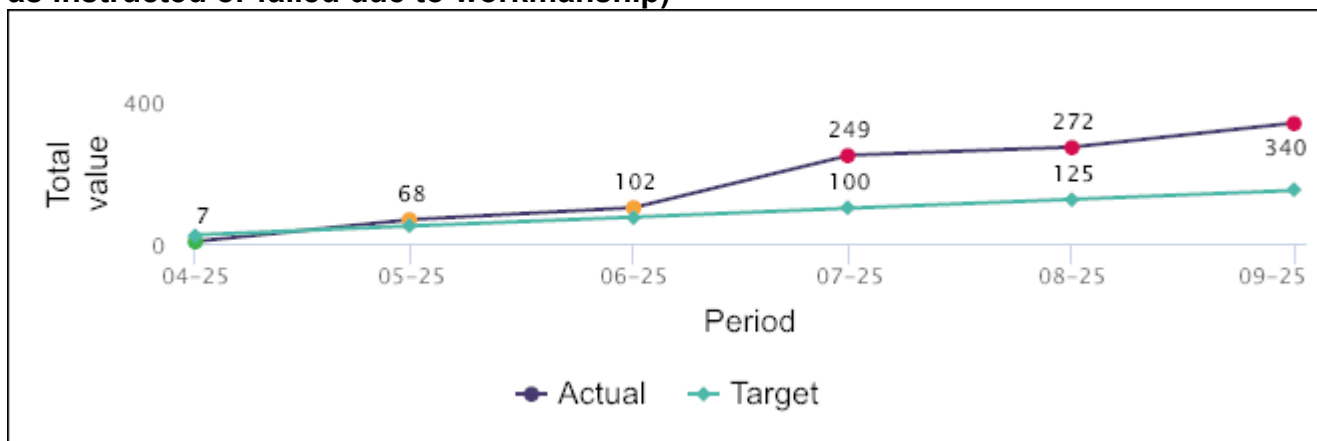
### OCC05.07 Percentage of gullies cleaned against the annual cyclical gully programme



## Commentary

Although still below target, 33,959 gullies have been emptied in Q2. With the September target exceeded, confidence remains high that the year end target will be met.

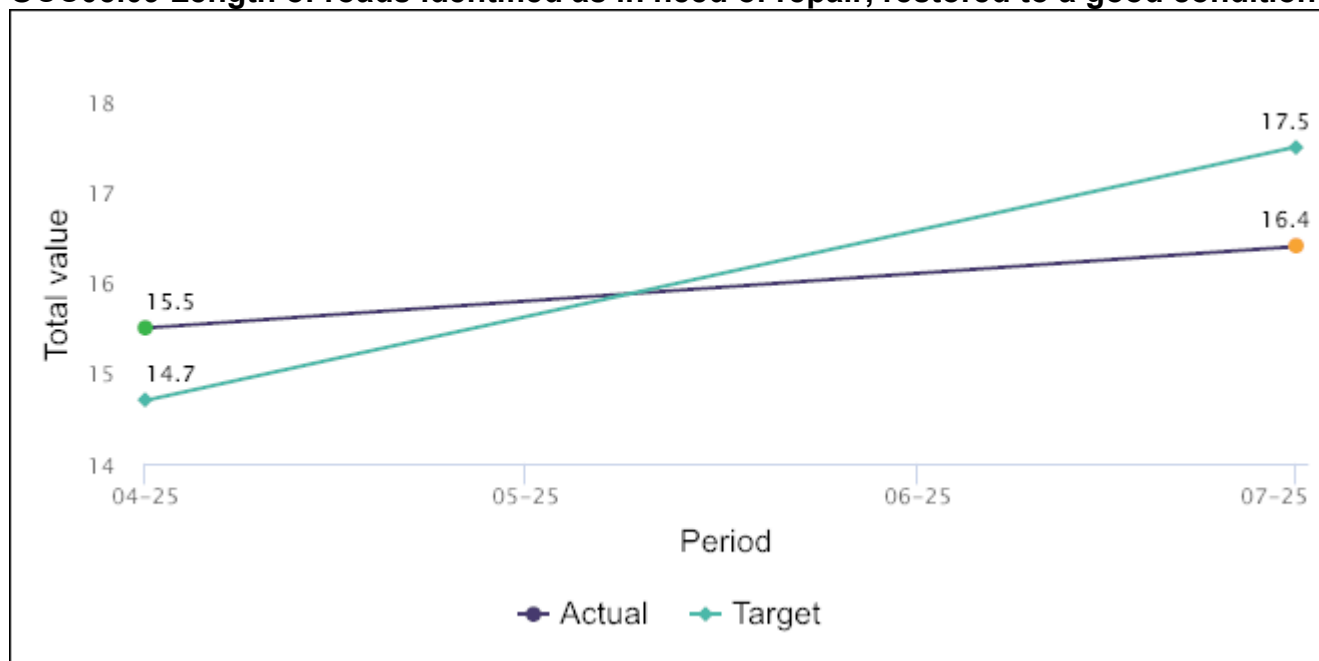
### OCC05.08 Number of non-chargeable defects (NCD) identified (works not completed as instructed or failed due to workmanship)



## Commentary

This month's figure of 68 shows a monthly rise of NCDs compared to last month's low of 23 NCDs. As part of a joint initiative with the contractor, OCC have agreed a robust action plan to ensure an improvement in the standard of work being delivered.

### OCC05.09 Length of roads identified as in need of repair, restored to a good condition

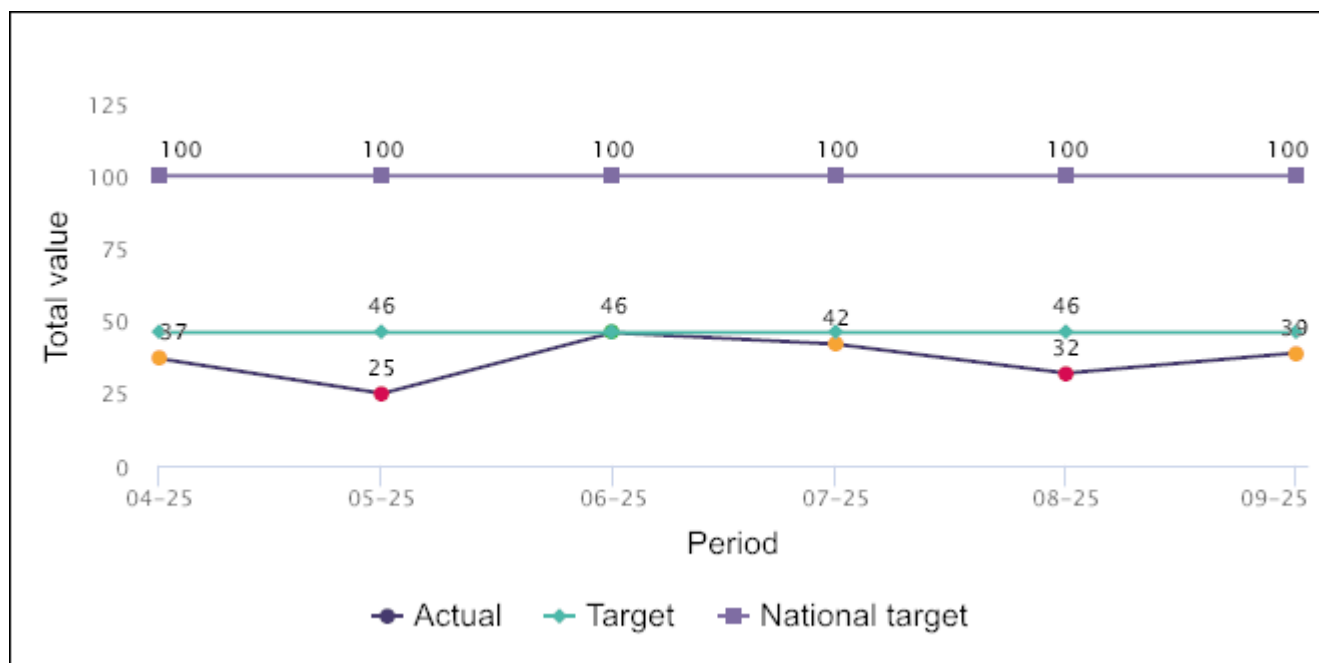


## Commentary

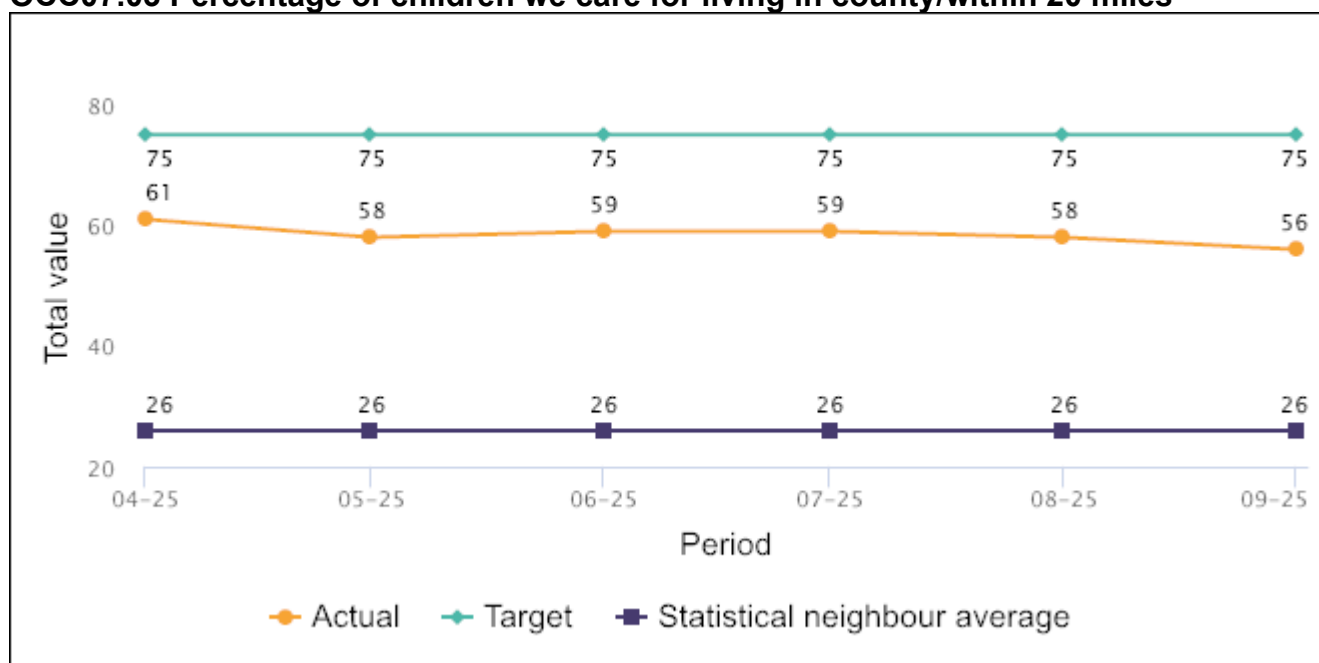
As part of our carriageways programme, we have restored 16.4 km of carriageway previously identified as being in poor condition. While a few schemes have been rescheduled to Quarter 3, we remain on track to meet our annual target.

### Priority 07: Create opportunities for children and young people to reach our full potential

#### OCC07.01 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)



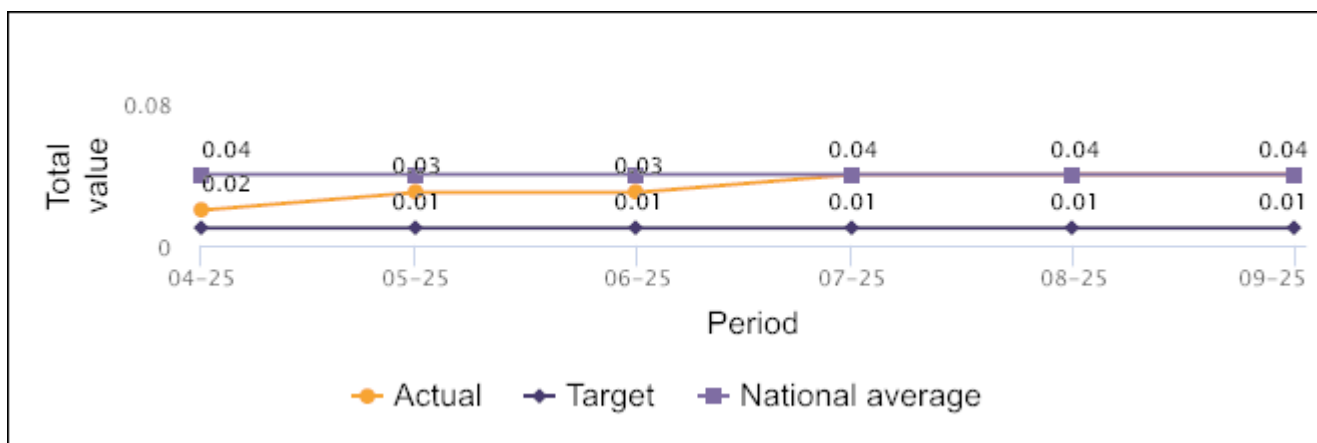
#### OCC07.03 Percentage of children we care for living in county/within 20 miles



#### Commentary

We continue to build relationships with local providers to support bringing our CWCF back to Oxfordshire. We continue to try and match our children with our internal provisions as a priority.

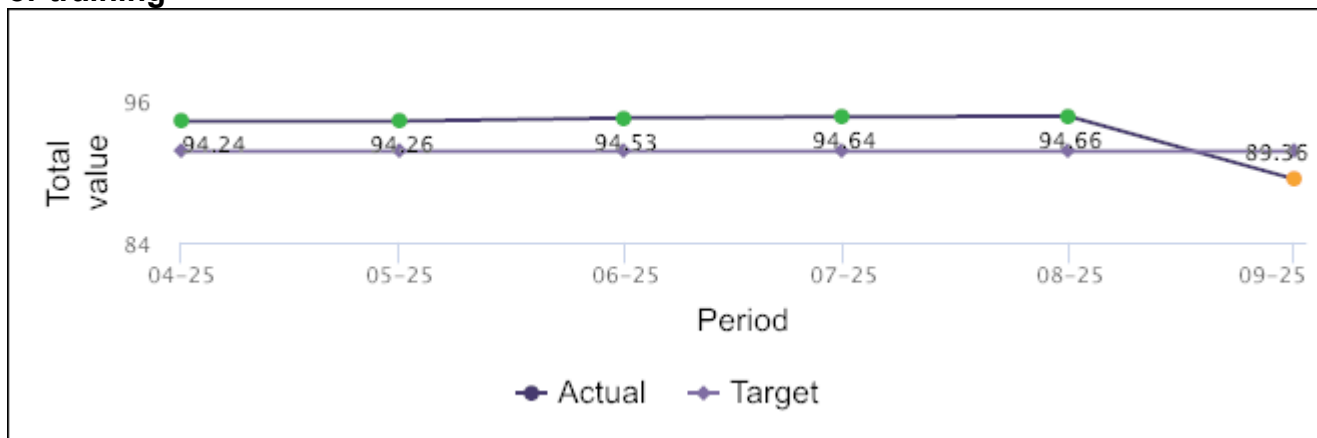
#### OCC07.10 Rate of permanent exclusions (cumulative through academic year)



### Commentary

Terms 1-6 (whole year 2024/25)

## OCC07.11 Percentage of young people aged 16-18 who are in education, employment or training



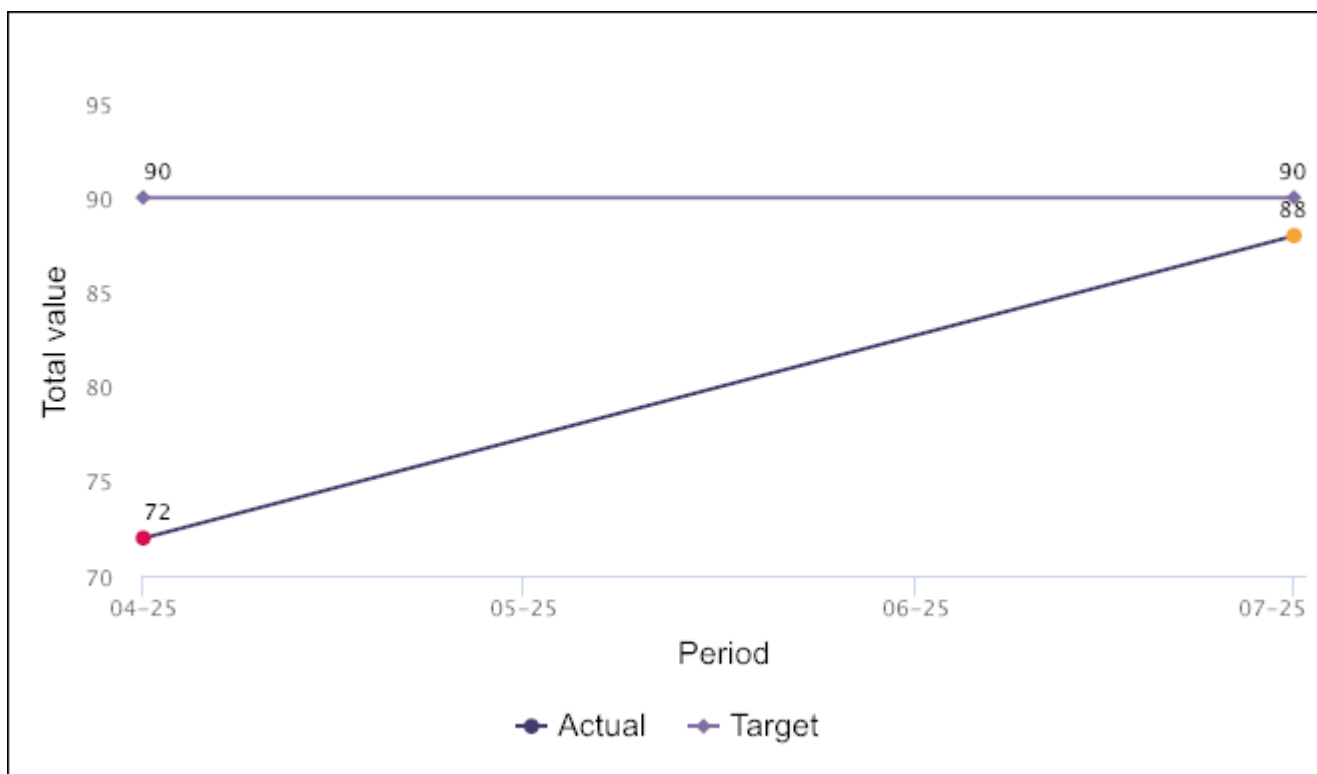
### Commentary

Please note this is the start of the new academic year and we are now waiting for schools, colleges, apprenticeship providers and out of county provision to send in their registers - hence why our figure is approximately 63%. Post-16 providers have until the end of October to submit their data.

## Priority 09: Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

### OCC09.01 Percentage of businesses that were either compliant when visited or brought into compliance during the period (Trading Standards)



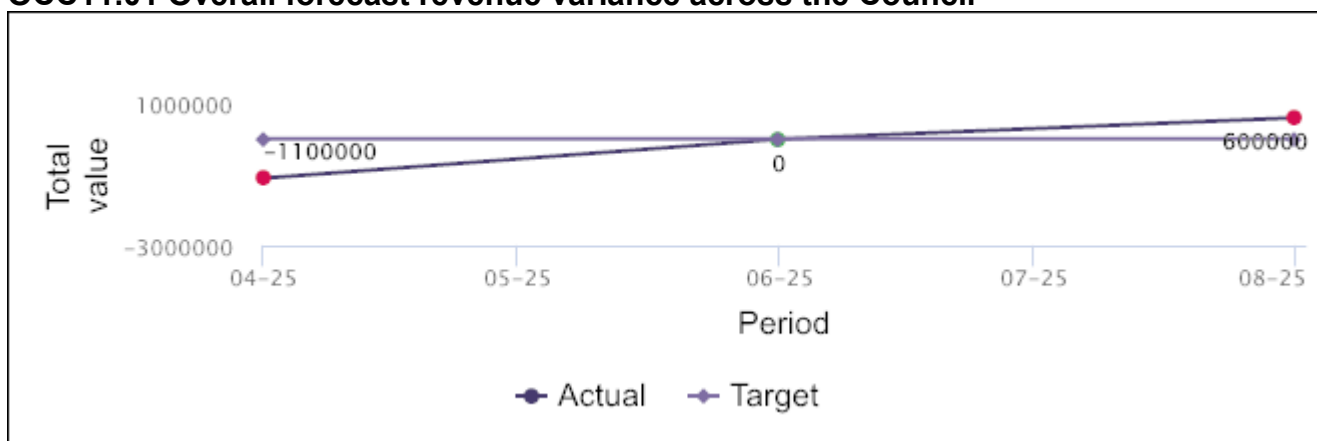


### Commentary

Whilst below target, this is a significant increase against Q1. The below target figure reflects work targeted at some of the most challenging premises, including those selling illegal tobacco and non-compliant/illegal vapes. These can naturally take an extended period of time to bring into compliance, or for formal action to conclude.

## OCC11: Running the business - Finance

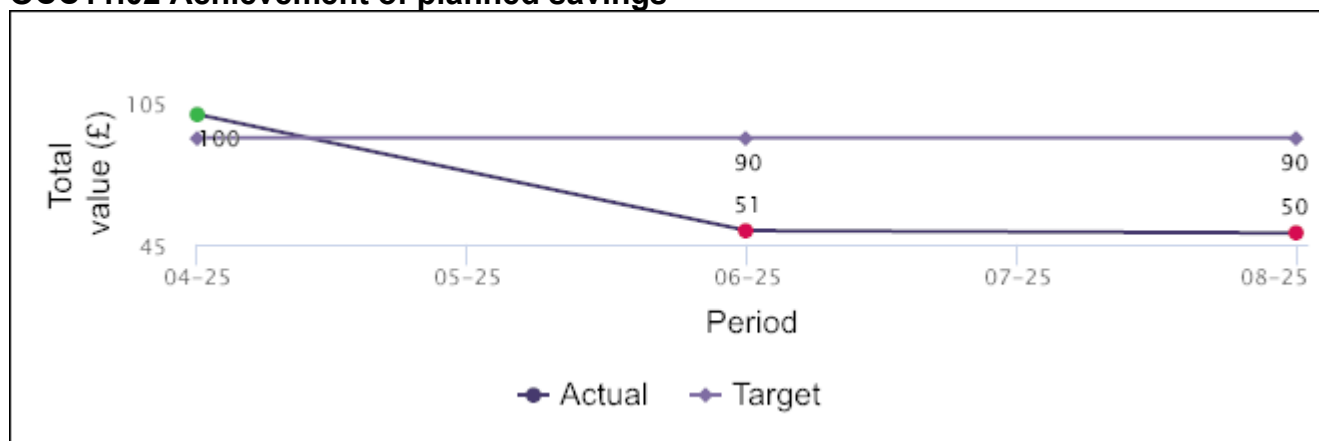
### OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council



## Commentary

This relates to August 2025 as the September position is still being worked on. There is a £600,000 overspend.

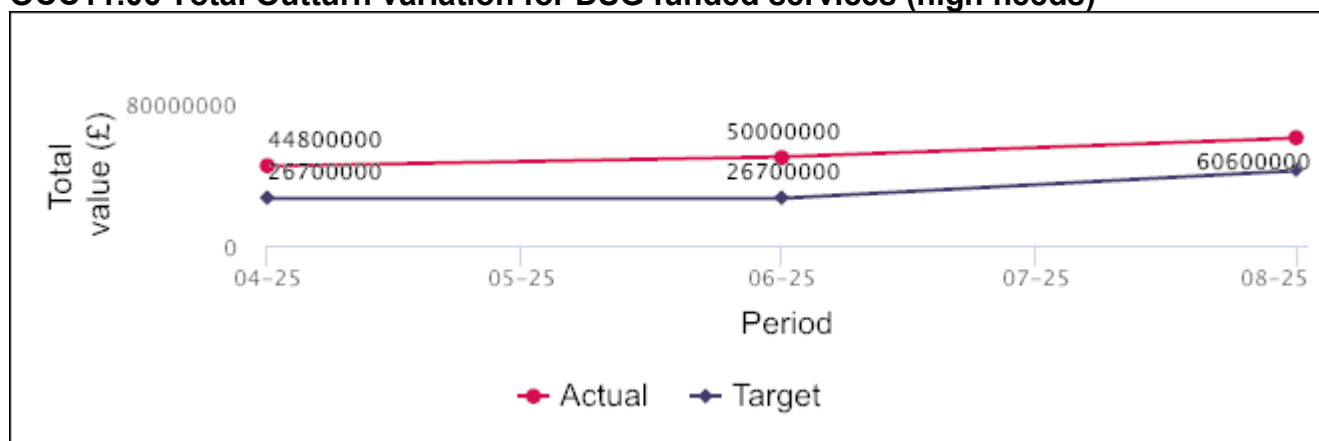
### OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings



## Commentary

50% of savings are currently assessed as delivered or expected to be delivered. A further 32% are currently assessed as amber so work is continuing to achieve those. Savings that are assessed as red include the impact of a delay in the approval from DfT to implement the Lane Rental Scheme.

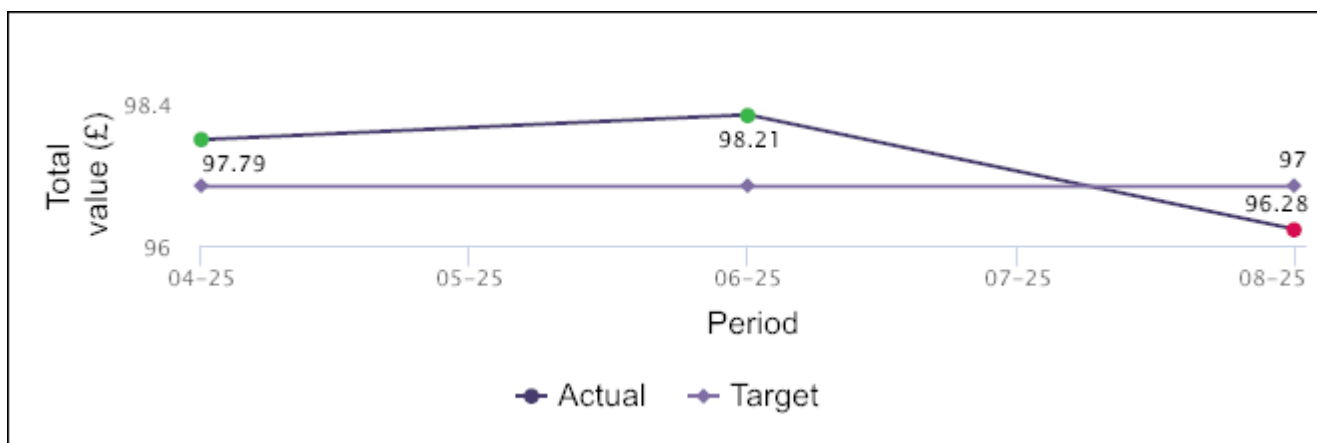
### OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)



## Commentary

The forecast overspend will increase the cumulative deficit from £92.3m as at 31 March 2025 to £142.3m by 31 March 2026. A White Paper on SEND reform and further information from the Government on how High Needs DSG deficits will be managed in future is expected in the autumn.

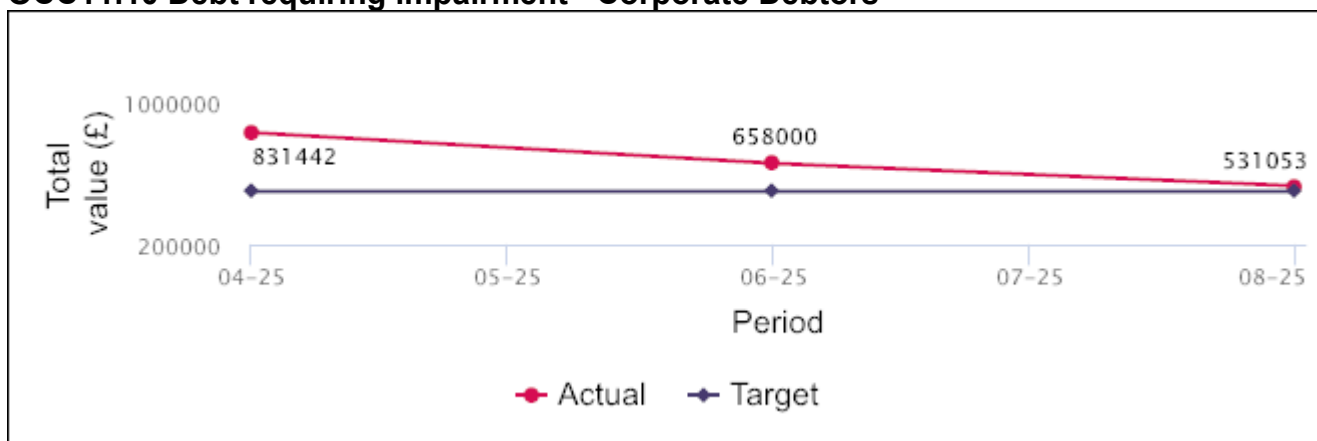
### OCC11.09 Invoice collection rate - Corporate Debtors



### Commentary

This measure identifies the percentage of invoices issued that have been paid within 120 days. In this period, we measured invoices issued in June 2025. The collection rate was 96.28%, slightly below the target of 97%. The number of invoices issued in June was unusually low. Historically this leads to a reduction in the collection rate.

### OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors



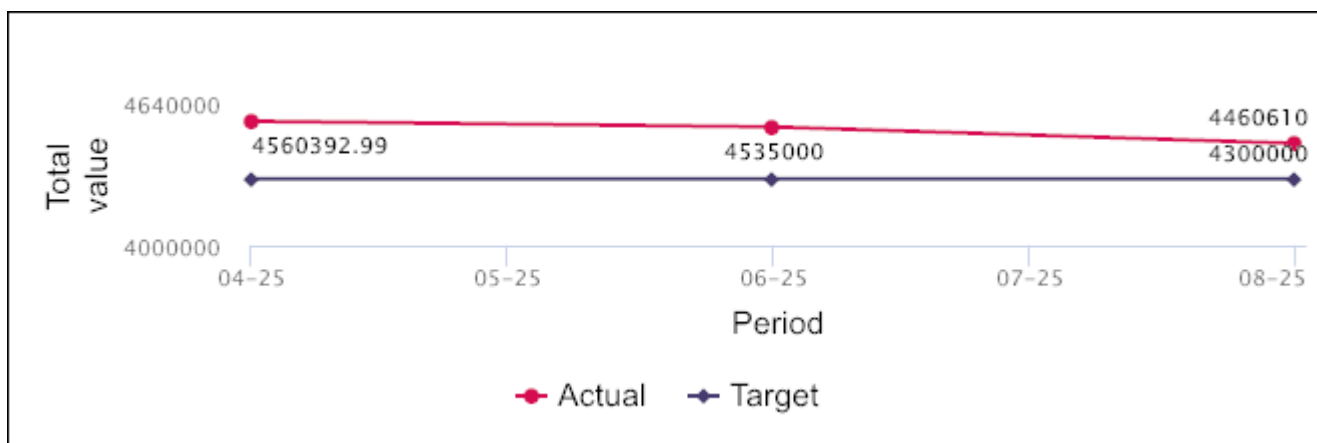
### Commentary

Debt requiring impairment is the value of invoices with potential to become unrecoverable. The potential loss requires recording in the accounts at year end. If at year end there is an overall increase in the value of invoices at risk, we are required to top up the impairment balance. Consequently, this figure is tracked through the year.

Debt requiring impairment this month is £0.531m. The top five cases, including two which are in liquidation, account for 45% of the total bad debt and is being actively worked on by Legal Services and Debt Recovery Officers.

The bad debt figure has reduced by £0.269m from the 2024/25 year-end figure and is significantly closer to target.

### OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - Adult Social Care contribution debtors



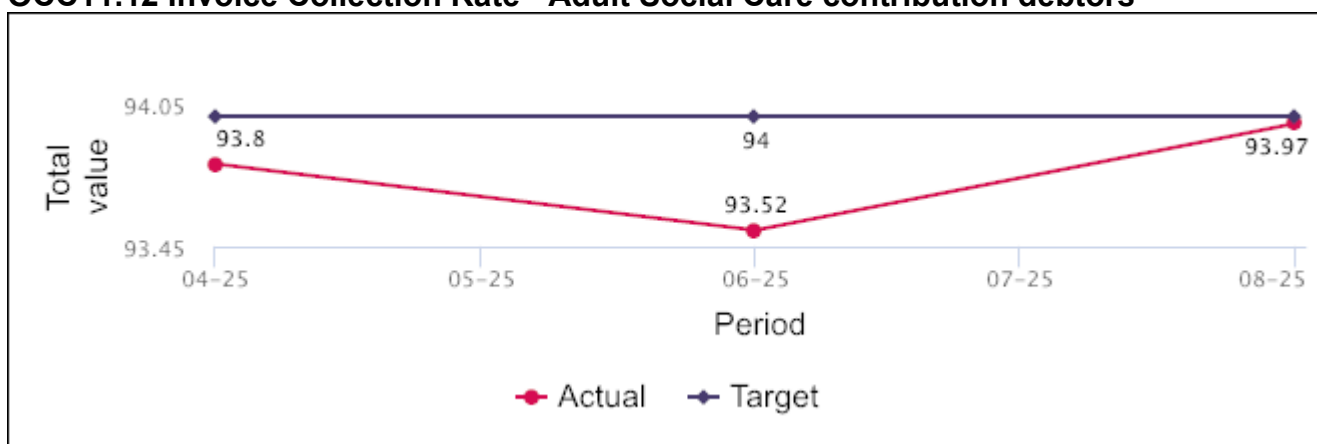
### Commentary

The 2024-25 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.51m. At the end of this period, it is £4.46m, a reduction of £0.05m.

As reported previously, wider economic factors have had a significant effect on means tested social care contribution debt levels, as have delays with the court of protection and related activity. This tracks with other local authorities' experience.

We are revising our approach to overdue debt and bringing together a debt reduction and recovery plan.

### OCC11.12 Invoice Collection Rate - Adult Social Care contribution debtors



### OCC11.12 Invoice Collection Rate - Adult Social Care contribution debtors Commentary and analysis

In this period, we measured invoices issued in June 2025. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 93.97% for this period, below the new stretch target of 94%.

As a result of an increase in target for 2025/26, the collection rate has fallen below its target by a slight decline in performance by 0.03 percentage points. Assessment is underway and the service and finance are working on a plan to meet the target by the end of the year. At

the end of August (not a reporting month) the rate was 94.10%, so the rate is generally very close to target.

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