

DBC Number

CUL 080a

Indicator Name

Town centre footfall weekly average for the month

Theme or Portfolio

Stronger Communities Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Support the development of the town centre economy by putting appropriate measures in place and demonstrating it is a safe place to visit

Narrative

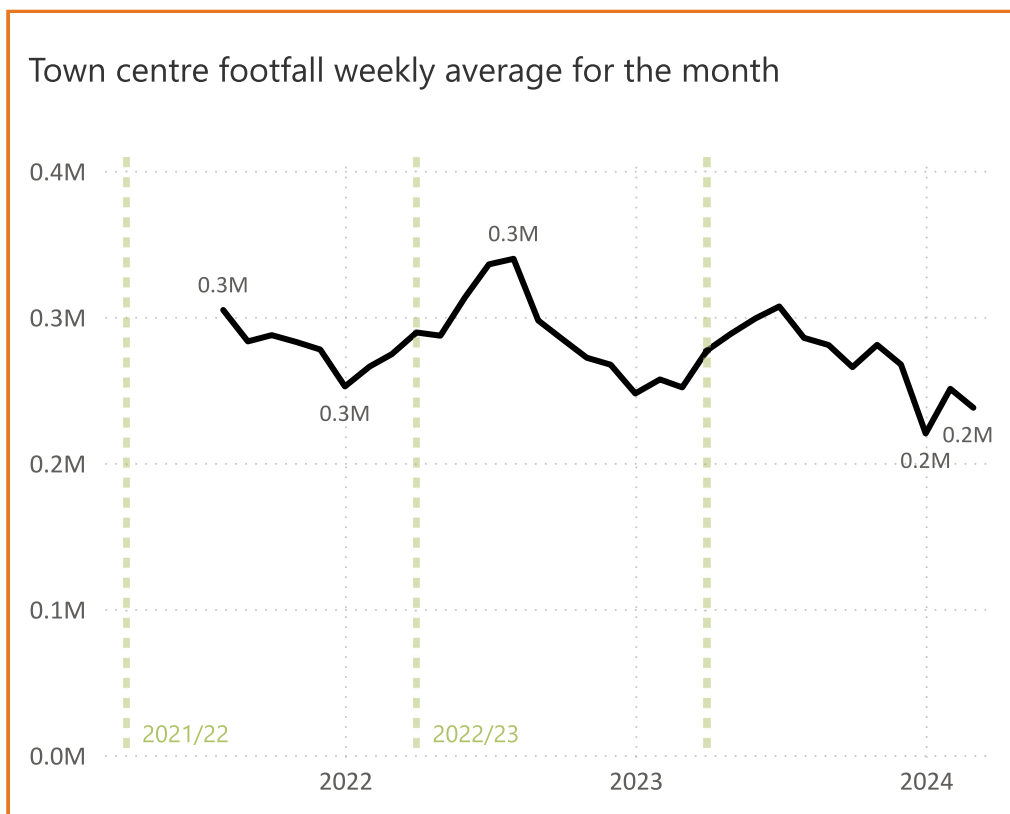
The average monthly footfall for 2023/24 has fallen slightly to 271,640 from 286,938 (2022/23), an average reduction of 5.3%. The months of May, November and December had increased footfall when compared to the previous year.

Investment from the Towns Fund is ongoing to support the High Street, a comprehensive programme of 59 events and animation programmes were delivered throughout the year to attract people to the town. A marketing campaign with video, was released to attract new businesses to the town that reached over 30,000 views across all media platforms.

The redevelopment of the covered market is well advanced, with a whole range of new traders now contracted to open soon.

Occupancy rates in the town centre are currently at 88%.

Graph/Table



DBC Number

ECI 104

Indicator Name

Percentage of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks or within agreed time

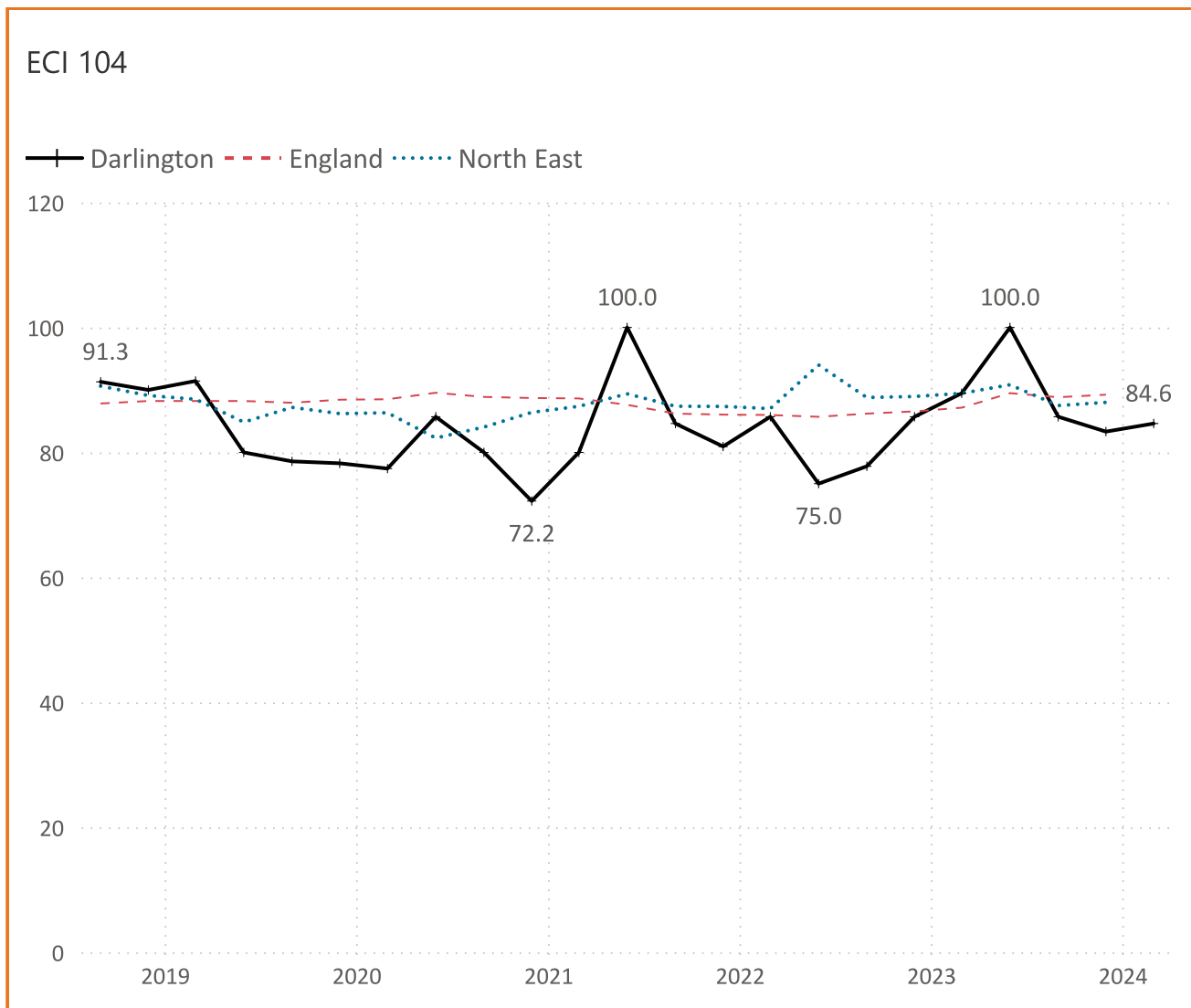
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

The percentage of major planning applications decisions decided within 13 weeks has fallen slightly from 89.4% for 2022/23 to 84.6% for 2023/24. This percentage is just below the December 2023 England average of 89.2% and North East average of 88.0%. A total of 11 major decisions were decided within 13 weeks from the annual total of 13. The two decisions that did not meet the deadline were delayed by the Extension of Time date not being extended to cover the signing of S106 agreements.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

ECI 105

Indicator Name

Percentage of non-major planning development decisions within 8 weeks or within agreed time

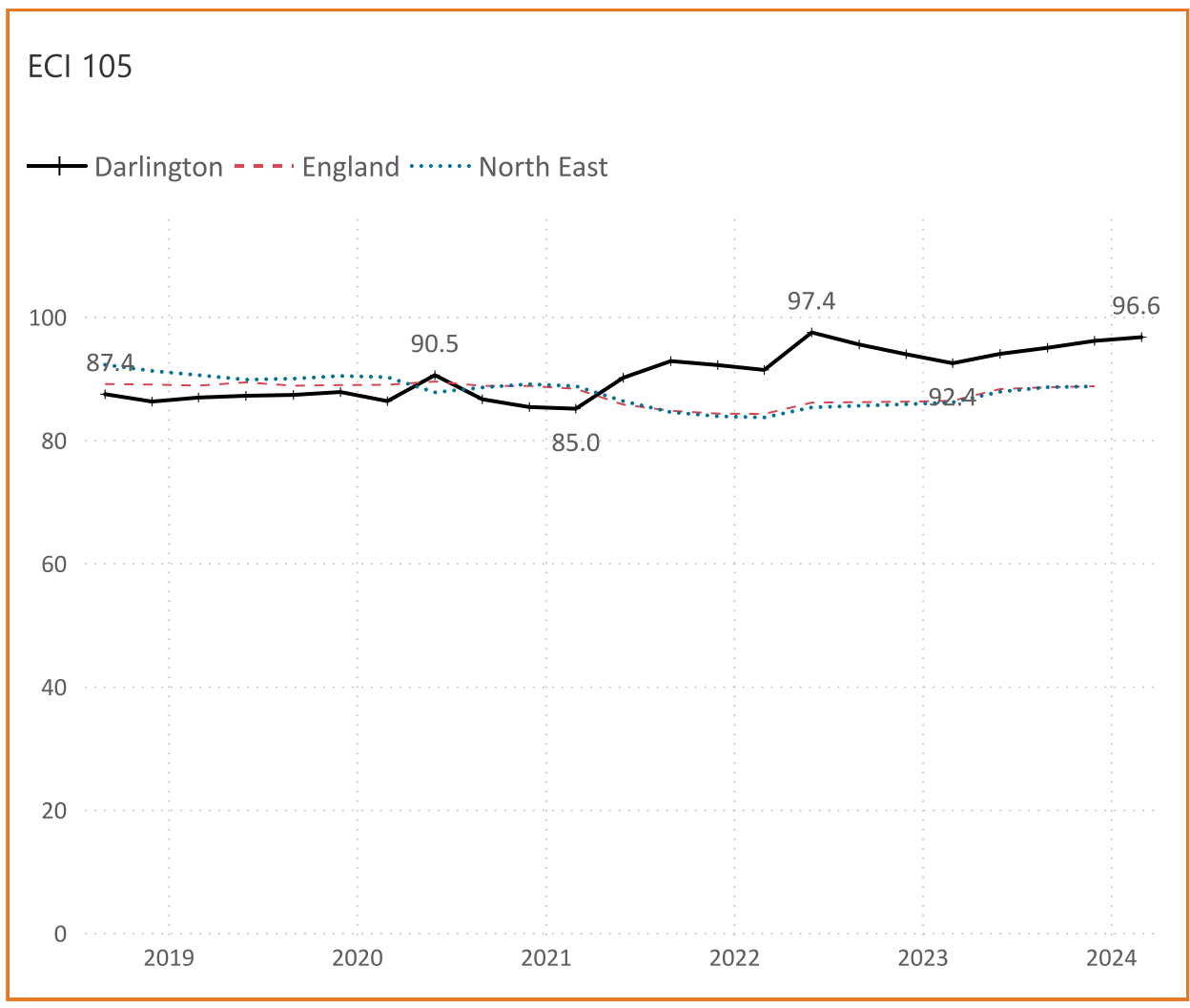
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

The percentage of non-major planning application decisions decided within 8 weeks has risen from 92.4% for 2022/23 to 96.6% for 2023/24. This percentage is above the December 2023 England average of 88.7% and North East average of 88.7%. Darlington's percentage has been above the England and North East average since June 2021. A total of 345 non-major decisions were decided within 8 weeks from the annual total of 357. 10 of the 12 decisions that did not meet the deadline occurred within the first 6 months of the financial year. All 12 of the decisions were decided within 26 weeks. They were delayed due to various issues the most frequent being caused by Nutrient Neutrality Certification

Graph/Table



DBC Number

ECI 106

Indicator Name

Percentage of non-major planning development decisions within 8 weeks or within agreed time (24 months to date)

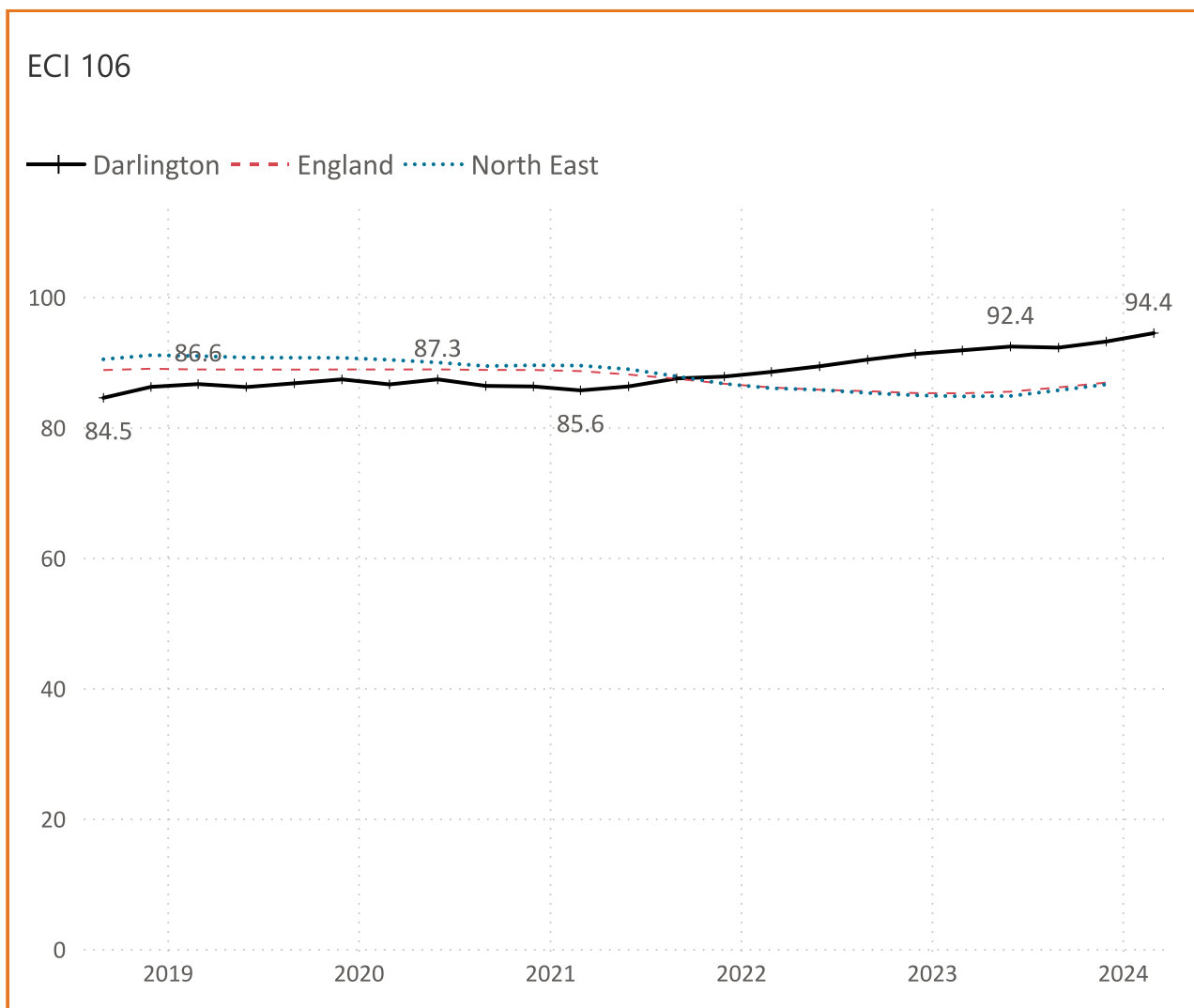
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

The percentage 24 month rolling percentage of non-major planning application decisions decided within 8 weeks has risen from 91.8% for 2022/23 to 94.4% for 2023/24. This percentage is above the December 2023 England average of 86.8% and North East average of 86.5%. Darlington's percentage has been above the England and North East average since December 2021. A 24 month total of 710 non-major decisions were decided within 8 weeks from the 24 month total of 752. The 42 which were not decided within the target were delayed due to various issues some by Nutrient Neutrality, some missing Extension of Time targets.

Graph/Table



DBC Number

ECI 321

Indicator Name

Monthly unemployed claimant count (%)

Theme or Portfolio

GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

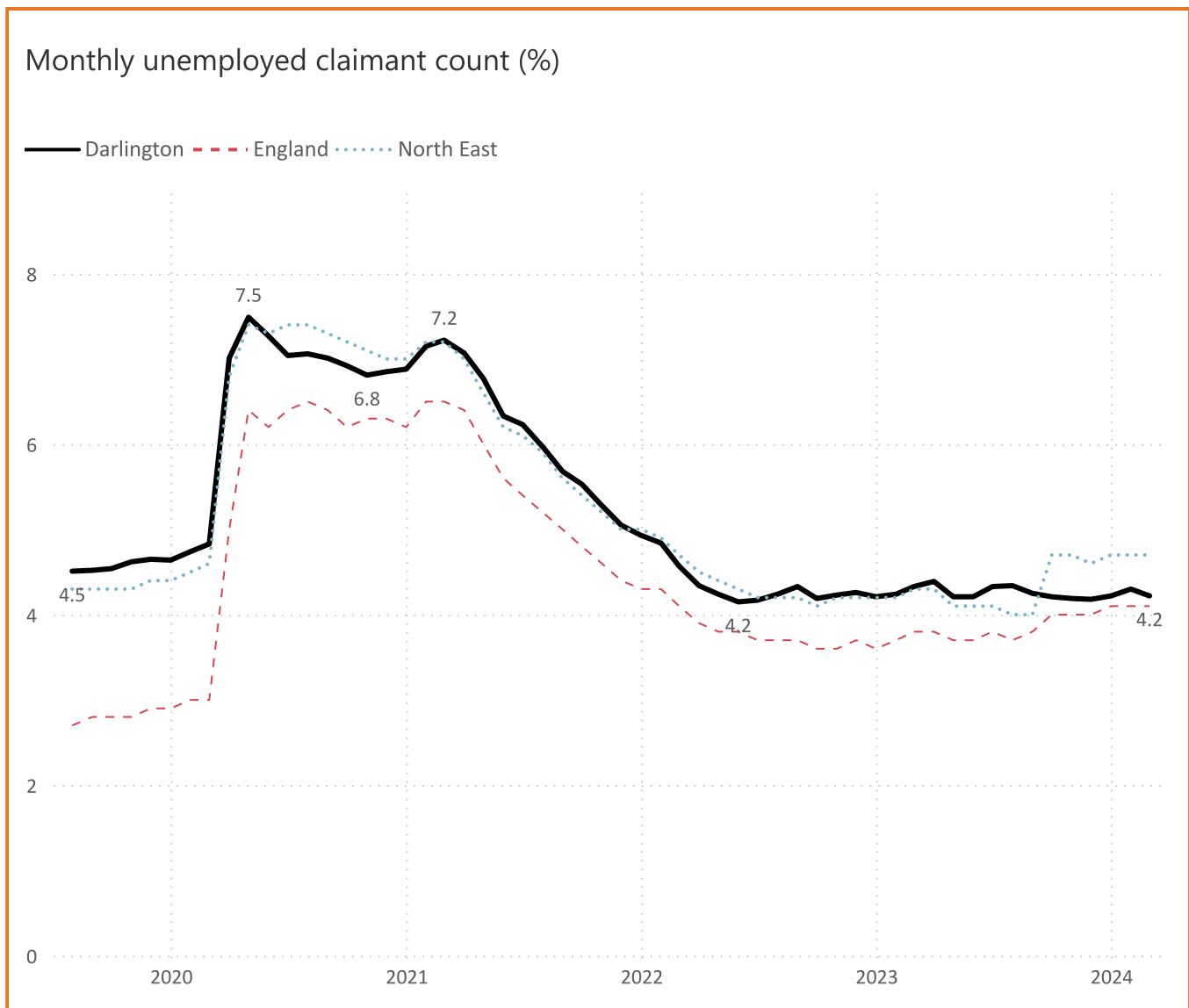
Priority or Key Action

Delivering - More sustainable well-paid jobs

Narrative

Since mid-2022 to date, the monthly unemployed claimant count in Darlington has remained relatively static - a trend which is mirrored in national statistics. The claimant count in March 2024 now stands at 4.2% (identical to July 2022). The rate in Darlington (4.2) is marginally higher than the England rate of 4.1%. The overall North East rate however is now at 4.7%, having increased from 4.2% since July 2022.

Graph/Table



DBC Number

ECI 327

Indicator Name

Percentage of working age adults who are economically active

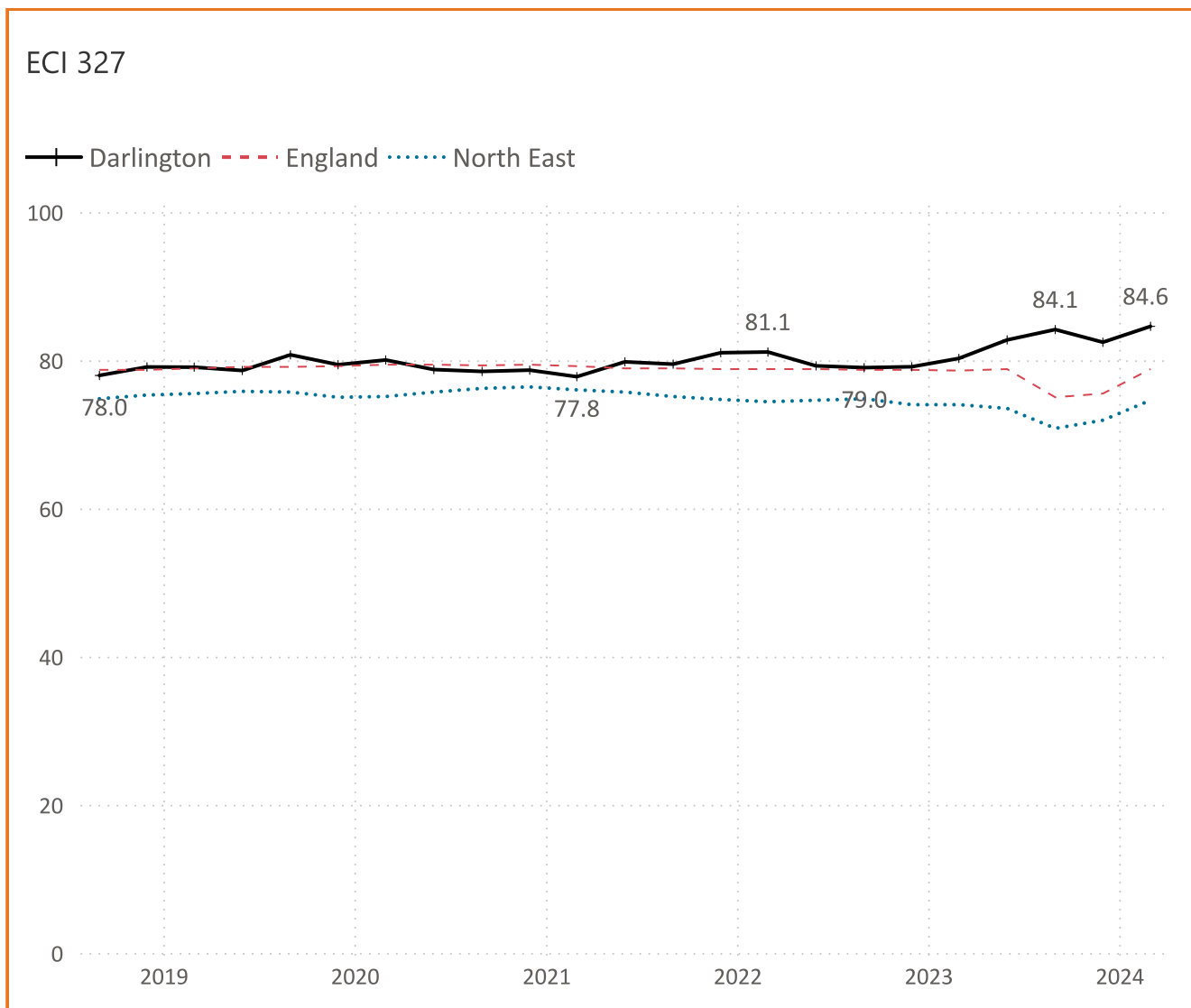
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

The Darlington economically active rate (employed and unemployed) has shown an increase from March 2023 and has now been higher than the rate for England and North East for the year. The percentage of working age adults who are economically active now stands at 84.57% (March 2024), a 5.4% increase since March 2023. Meanwhile the data for both the north-east and England has only slightly risen from March 2023, 74.6% in the North East, and 78.8% for England. Working-age economically inactive people have various reasons for not looking for and/or being able to start work. eg students, sickness, caring and family responsibilities and early retirement.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

ECI 329

Indicator Name

Average (median) annual income: Darlington residents

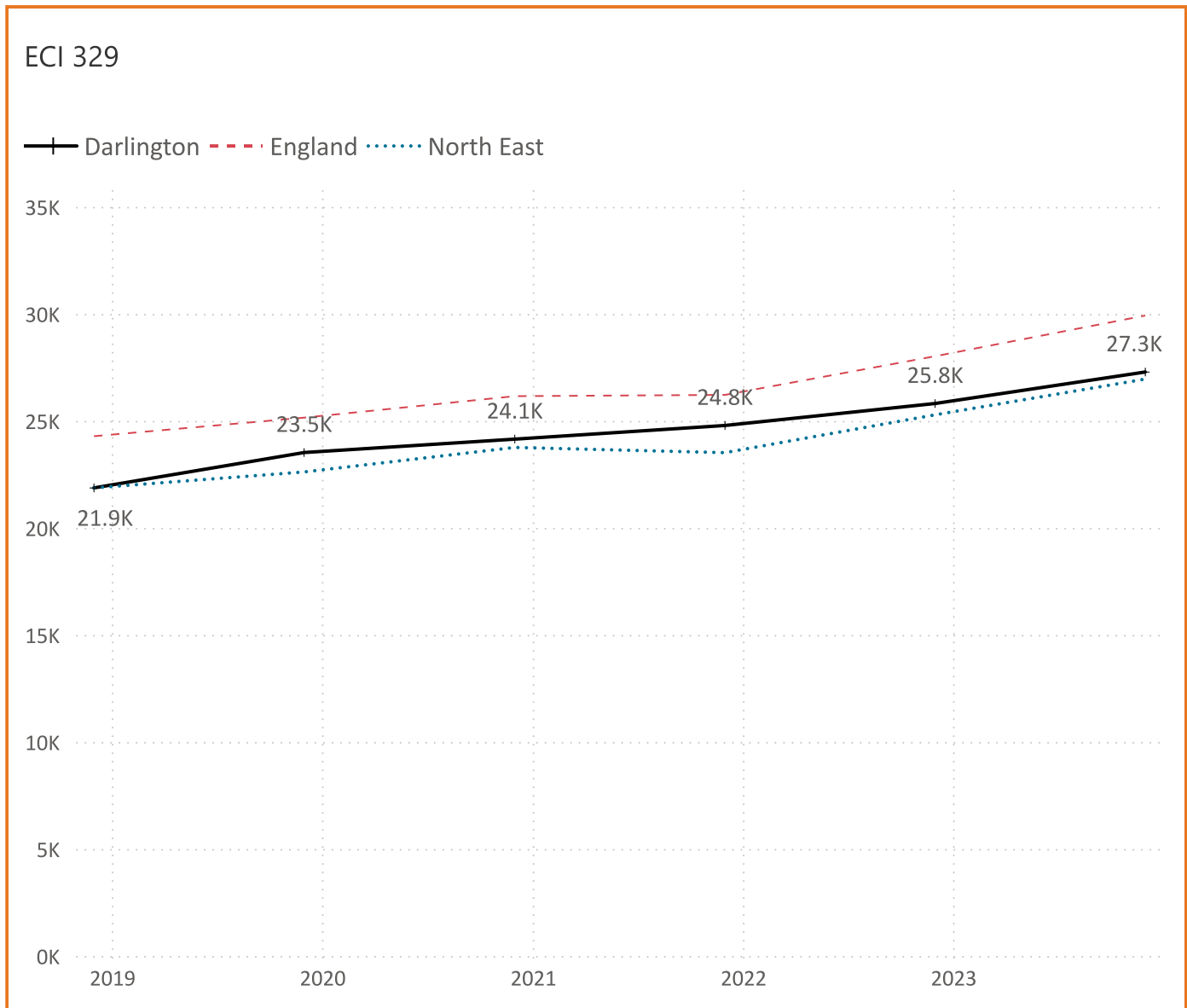
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

Darlington residents average (median) annual income has risen for the 5th year in succession to £27,282. This is slightly higher than the figure for the North east region (£26,952), but lower than the England average £29,919. Between December 2022 and December 2023, Darlington residents average (median) annual income increased by 5.7%, a rate that is lower than the England and North East rates of 6.8% and 6.7% respectively.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

ECI 330

Indicator Name

Average (median) annual income: Darlington employees

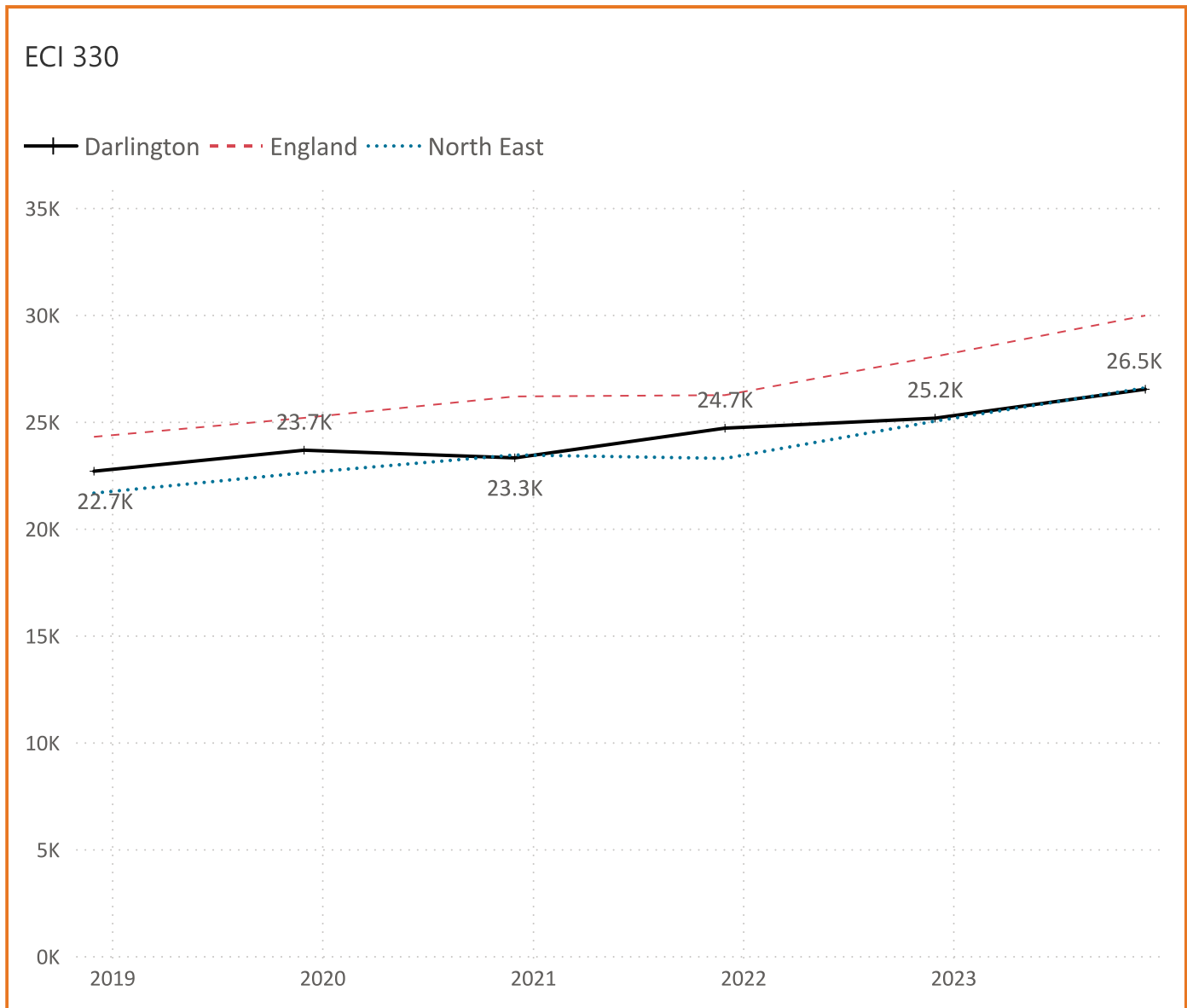
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

Employees average income in Darlington have increased in 2023 to £26,509 (5.4%) - this represents 4 years of year on year increases. The income level is similar to the North east average at £26,576, and below the England figure of £29,955. Residents who live in Darlington have a higher average income than those employees who work in the borough. However, 2023 saw a reduction in the gap between employees and resident average earnings.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

ECI 401

Indicator Name

New homes delivered, annually

Theme or Portfolio

GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

Priority or Key Action

Delivering - More homes

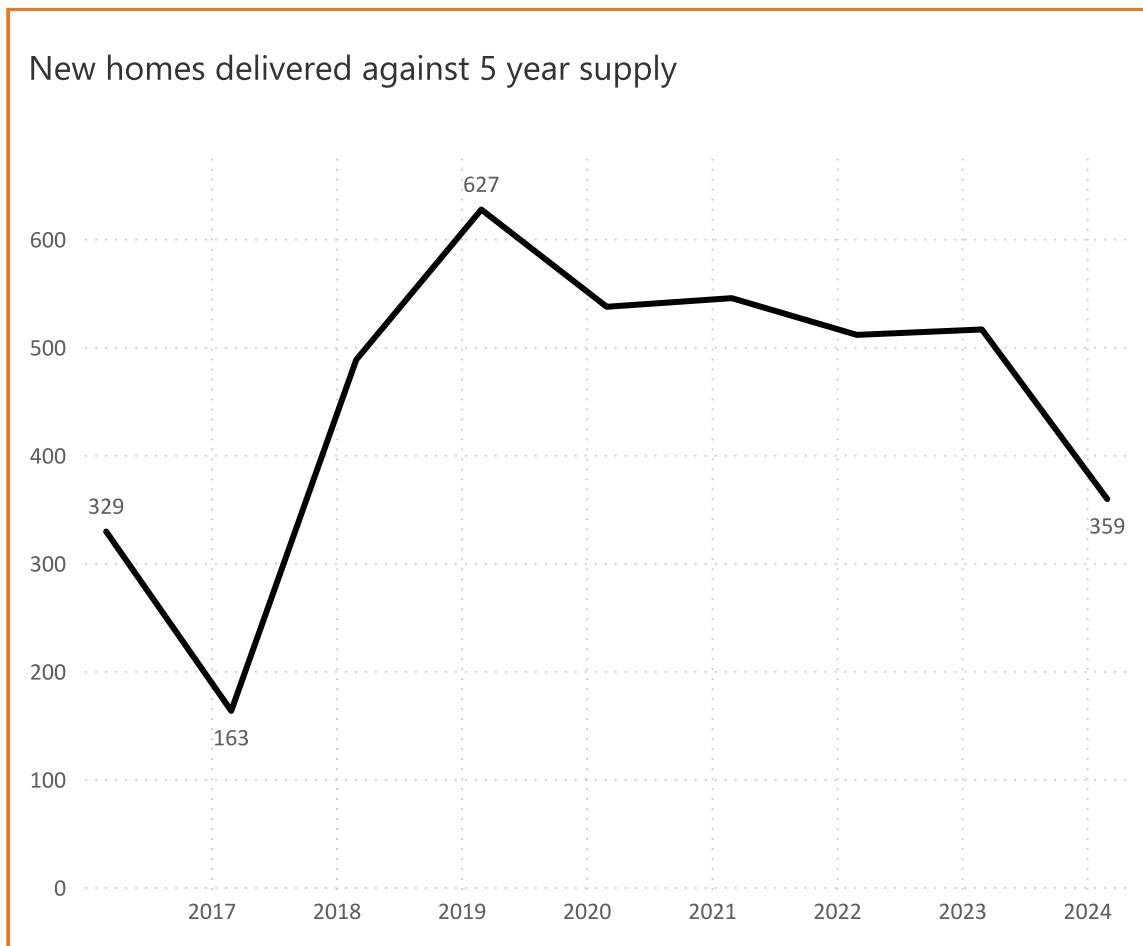
Narrative

Housing delivery has seen a drop in the 2023/24 financial year largely due to the delayed 'lag' effect as a result of the Nutrient Neutrality designation affecting the whole Tees Catchment.

Applications are now progressing and gaining consent largely due to the Natural England Nutrient Neutrality credits scheme. The borough has fared well in the proportion of credits allocated to developments in Darlington helping to unlock around 2000 homes.

Looking at the latest monitoring data on housing starts this lag in delivery may continue for the current financial year 2024/25 but will hopefully recover beyond that with the permissions currently being granted likely to have started building out.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

FHR 001

Indicator Name

DBC number of working days per FTE lost due to sickness (excluding schools)

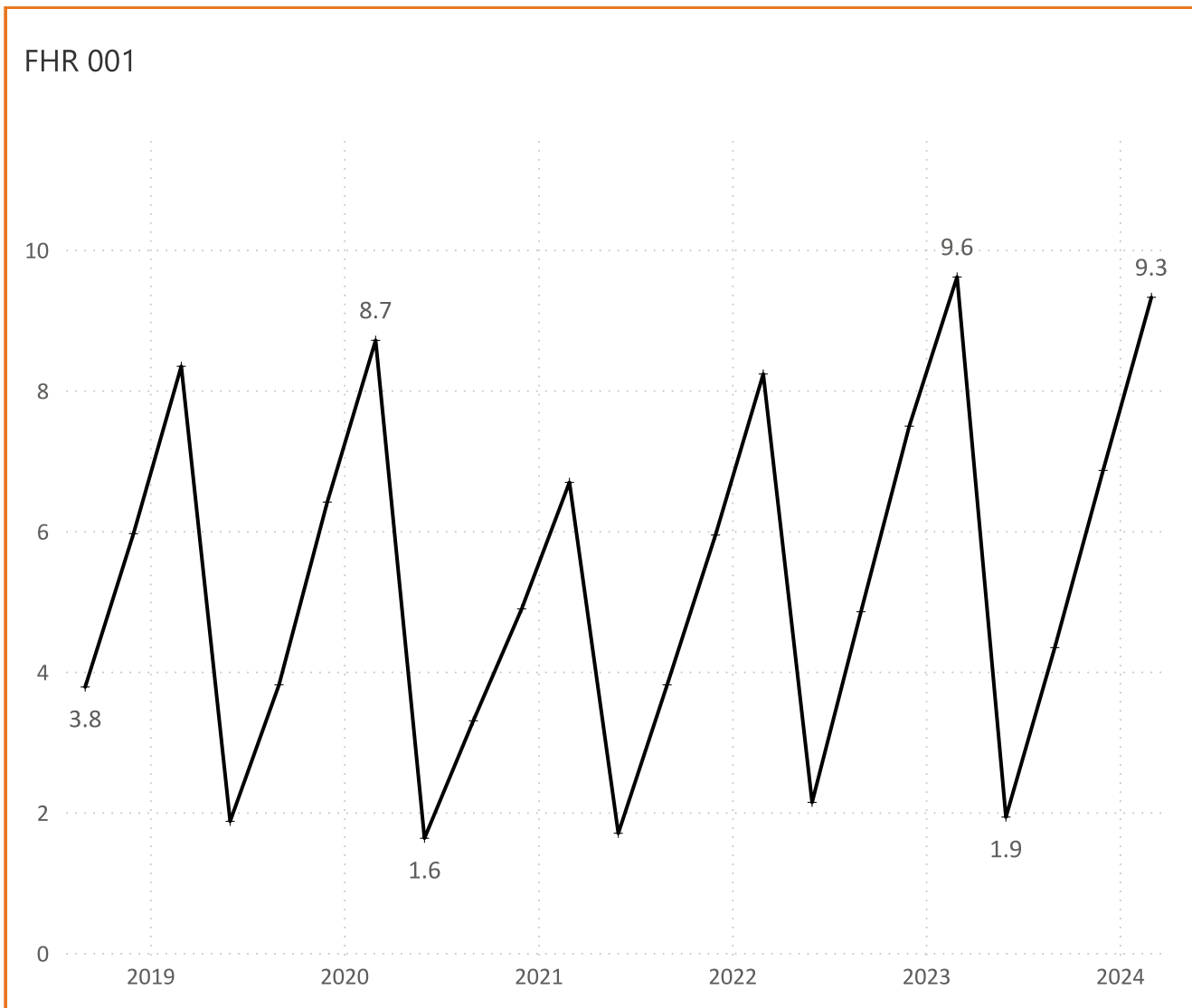
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

At the year end the number of days lost to sickness in 2023/24 has improved by 0.29 days per full time equivalent when compared to 2022/23. Managers at all levels continue to manage sickness within their teams, using the Council's sickness management policies, supported by Human Resources officers. The development of My Journey and the promotion of quality conversations between managers and their employees will compliment our wellbeing programme and assist with absence going forward. The Wellbeing programme continues to produce benefits to our workforce and Council as a whole, with further development and events planned for 2024/25.

Graph/Table



DBC Number

FHR 003

Indicator Name

Number of reportable employee accidents / ill health

Theme or Portfolio

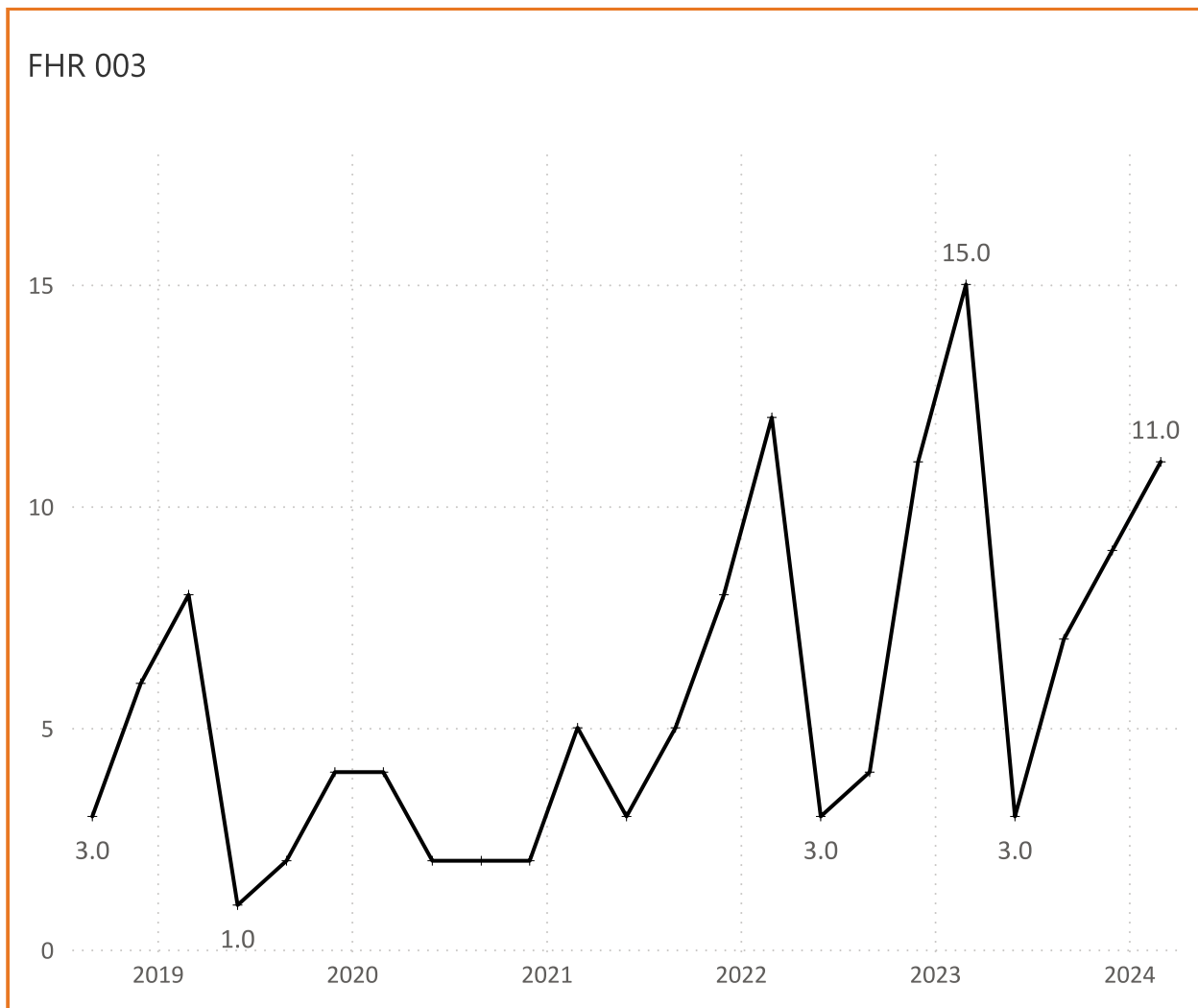
Priority or Key Action

Narrative

Eleven reports were made to the Health and Safety Executive as required by the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations in 2023/24, including one diagnosis of a work related occupational disease/ill health. This is a reduction compared to fifteen reports in 2022/23 which included two occupational disease/ill health.

All accidents and ill health reports are investigated by management and the Health & Safety team to establish the causes, to identify issues or trends and make recommendations to prevent reoccurrence. Health and Safety is a key priority for the Council at all levels and is promoted through all working practices.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

FHR 008

Indicator Name

Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman

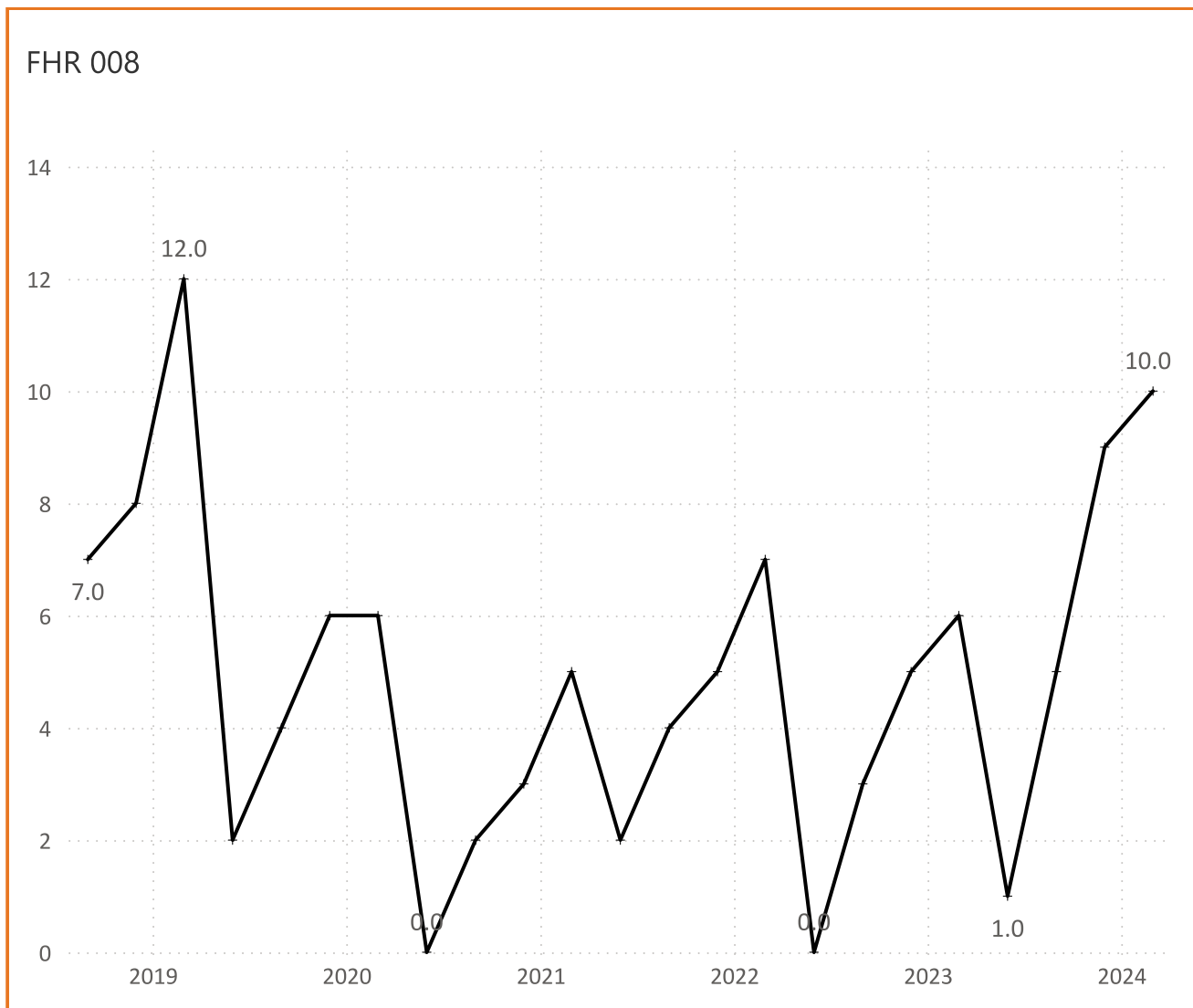
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

The number of complaints upheld compared to March 2023 has risen from 6 to 10. The 8 complaints upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman related to Adult Services -1, Children Services - 2, Commissioning & Contracts - 2 (Care Homes -1 & Home Care - 1), Education & Inclusion - 2 and Finance (Adults) - 1. The 2 complaint upheld by the Housing Ombudsman related to Housing Management Services - 1 & Income Management - 1.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

FHR 009

Indicator Name

Number of complaints upheld by the Information Commissioner's Office

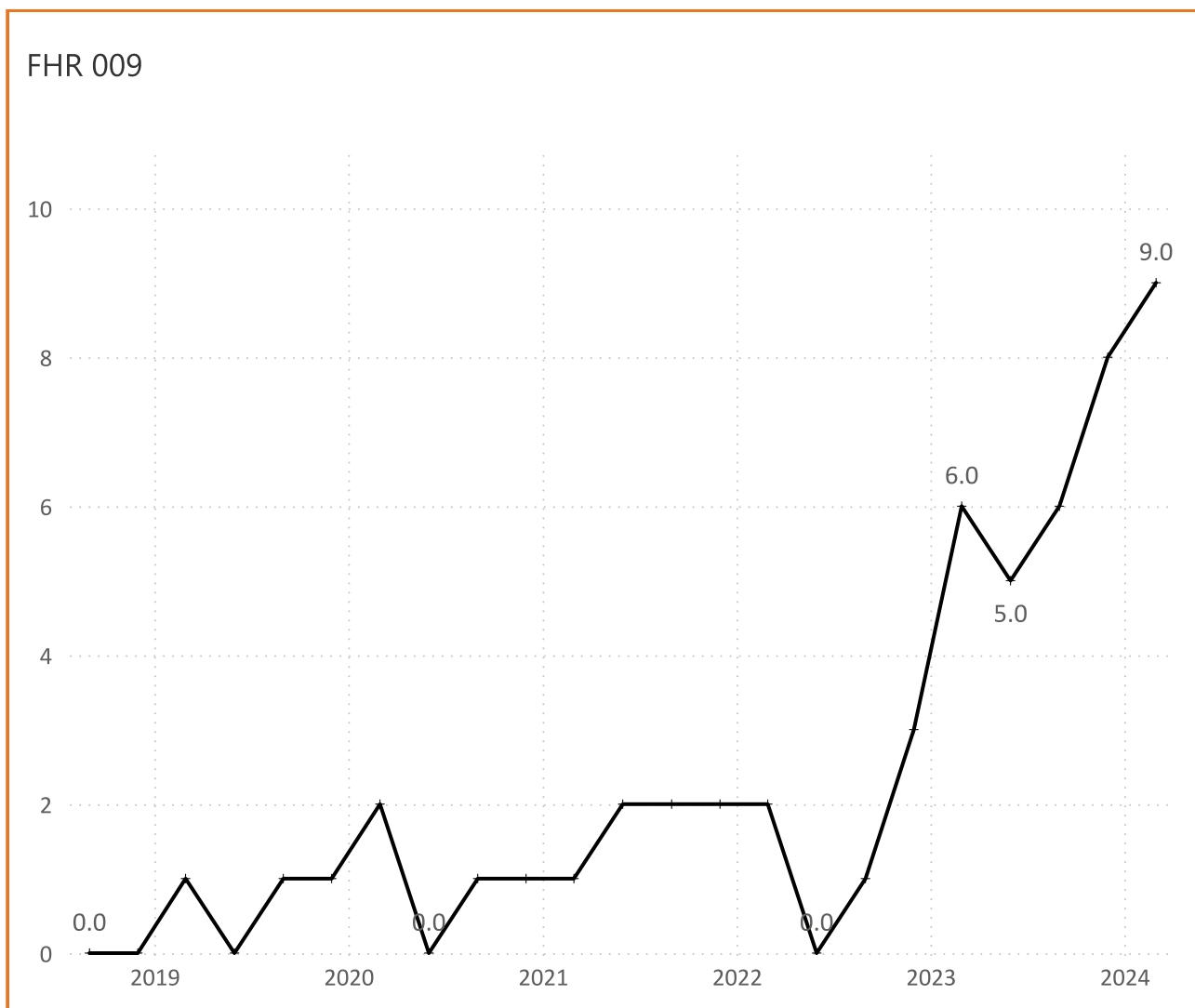
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

There has been an increase from 6 to 9 upheld complaints, compared to March 2023. 5 of the 9 upheld complaints related to delays in responding to Subject Access Requests (SARs). Risk of enforcement action from the ICO in relation to SARs remains on the Council's Risk Register, and work is ongoing to reduce that risk below the risk appetite line. 1 related to HR retaining a former employee's data for longer than the Council's stated retention period. 2 related to data breaches (1 was the result of an email being sent to the wrong person, as a result of someone typing into the 'To' field and selecting the wrong recipient) and 1 related to a delay in responding to an FOI request.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

FHR 019

Indicator Name

Staff turnover - Voluntary Leavers (Divided by average number of staff in period)

Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

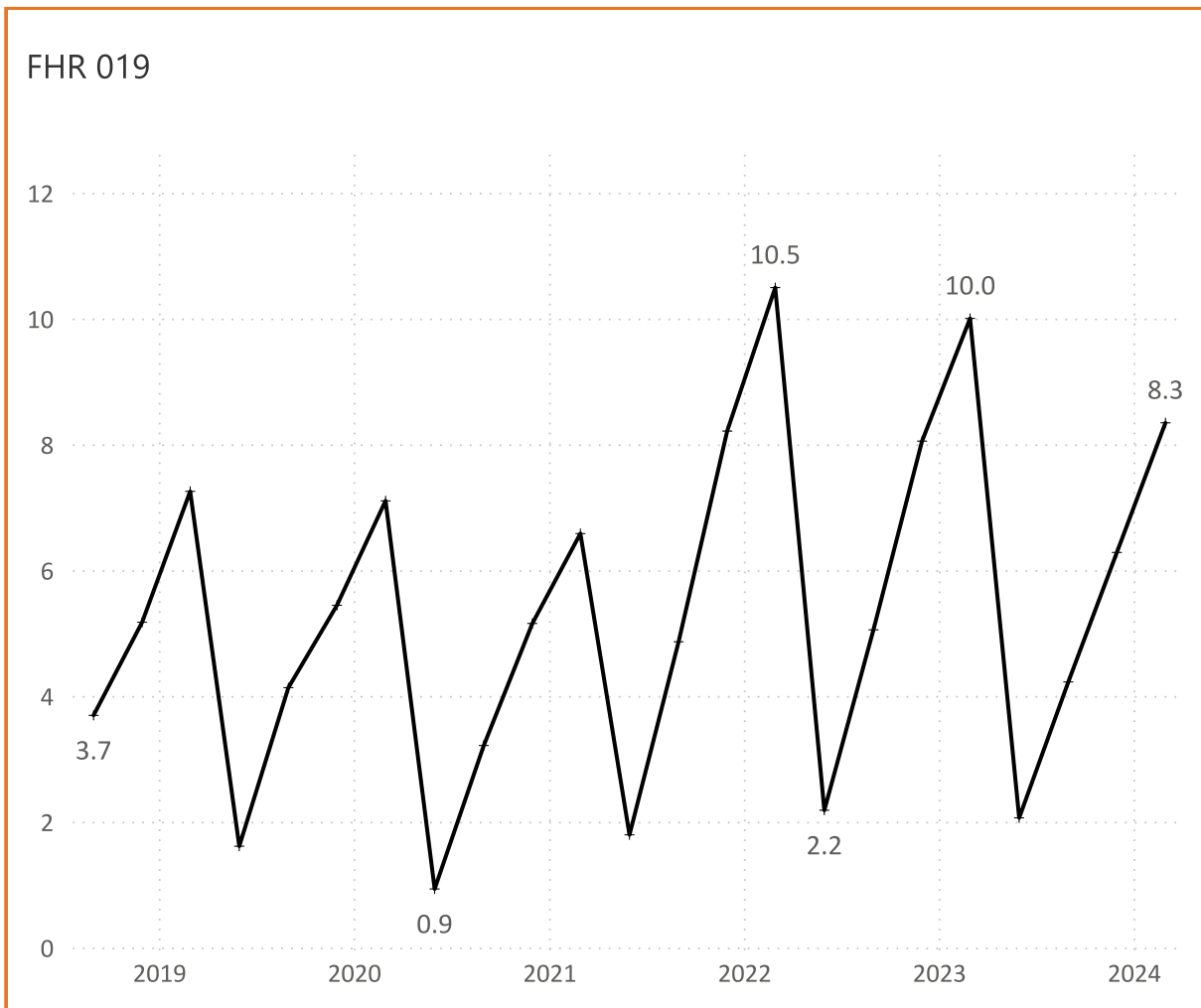
Narrative

The number of voluntary leavers during 2023/24 was lower than in 2022/23 (167 v 192).

We undertake exit surveys and interviews to understand why employees leave the Council and to inform improvements. 85% of employees who completed an exit survey said they would work for the Council again.

Work has been completed on our personal development reviews and we are rolling out our new "My Journey process", from May 2024 incorporating succession planning and further promotion of employee engagement. We are continuing to review a number of other processes and continue to develop and improve our employment package to ensure the Council attracts and retains the best talent for all roles.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

HBS 002

Indicator Name

Amount of Council Tax arrears collected (£)

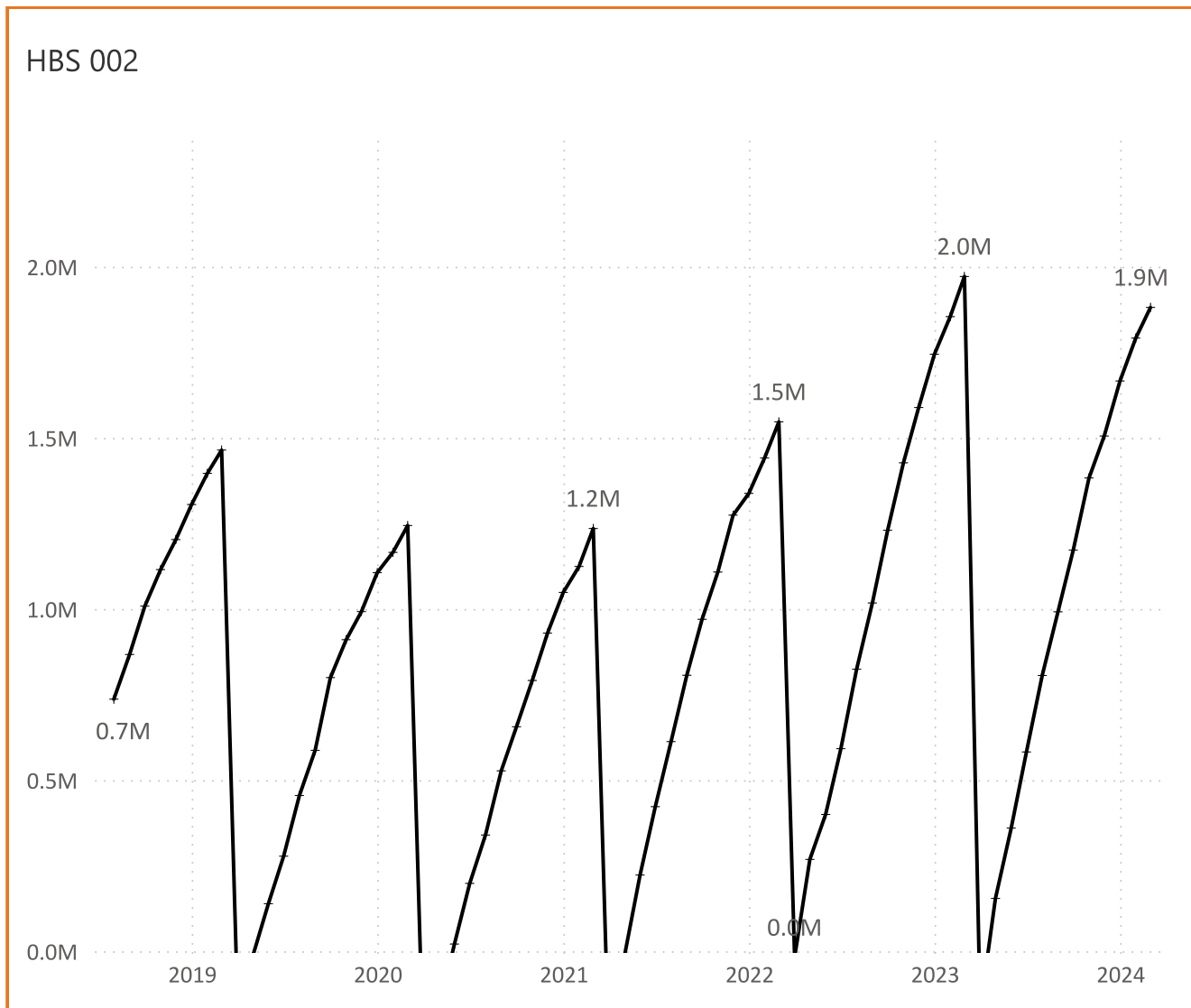
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

The amount of Council Tax arrears collected for quarter 4 has exceeded the target for 2023-24, with £1.88m collected. This is lower than the £1.97m collected for the same period in 2022-23. However, the higher amount last year was due to having restarted recovery action following the Covid pandemic. We are still dealing with arrears resulting from Covid and now also with the current cost of living crisis. However, the amount of outstanding arrears still decreased from £4.3m at the end of quarter 4 in 2022-23 to £4.2m at the end of quarter 4 in 2023-24.

Graph/Table



DBC Number

HBS 003

Indicator Name

Amount of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered (£)

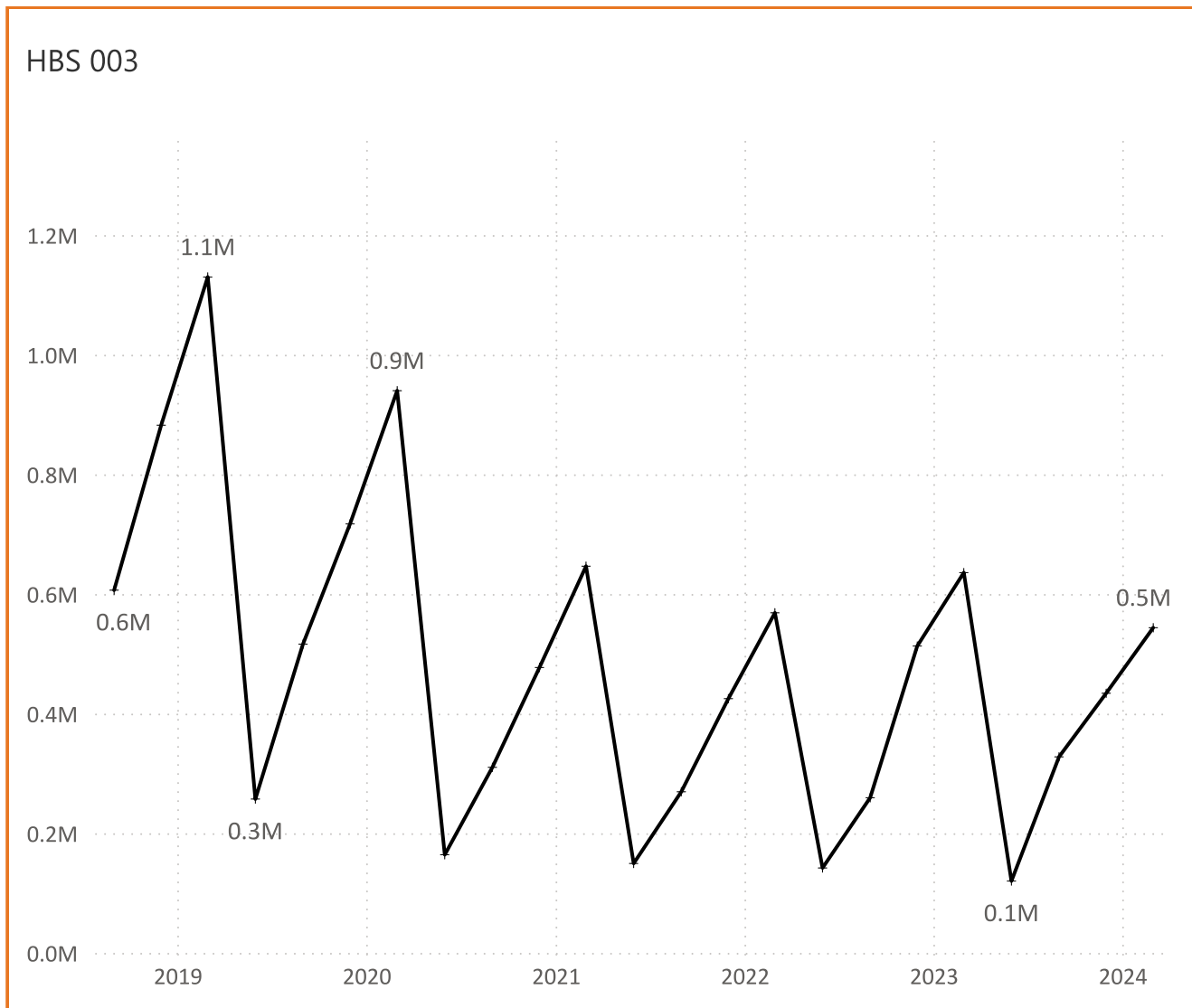
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments collected in quarter 4 has fallen below the target for 2023-24. £544k of overpayments were collected, compared to £636k collected for the same period in 2022-23. However, collection rates are currently at 126% of the new overpayment debt created (£431k), and the overall outstanding debt has decreased (currently at £1.34 million). It is likely that as Housing Benefit claims continue to transfer to Universal Credit, the amount of Housing Benefit overpayments created (and therefore the amount collected) will decrease.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

HBS 009

Indicator Name

Percentage of Council Tax collected in-year

Theme or Portfolio

Resources Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Maximise council tax and business rate income through robust income collection processes

Narrative

The percentage of Council Tax collected exceeded the target for quarter 4, with 96.39% of Council Tax collected in 2023-24. This is an increase in collection, compared to 2022-23, which was 96.09%. The collection rate of 96.39% for 2023-24 is the highest since 2010-11. The overall amount collected by quarter 4 was £72.5m, compared to £68.4m by quarter 4 in 2022-23.

Graph/Table



DBC Number

HBS 010

Indicator Name

Percentage of Business Rates collected in-year

Theme or Portfolio

Resources Portfolio

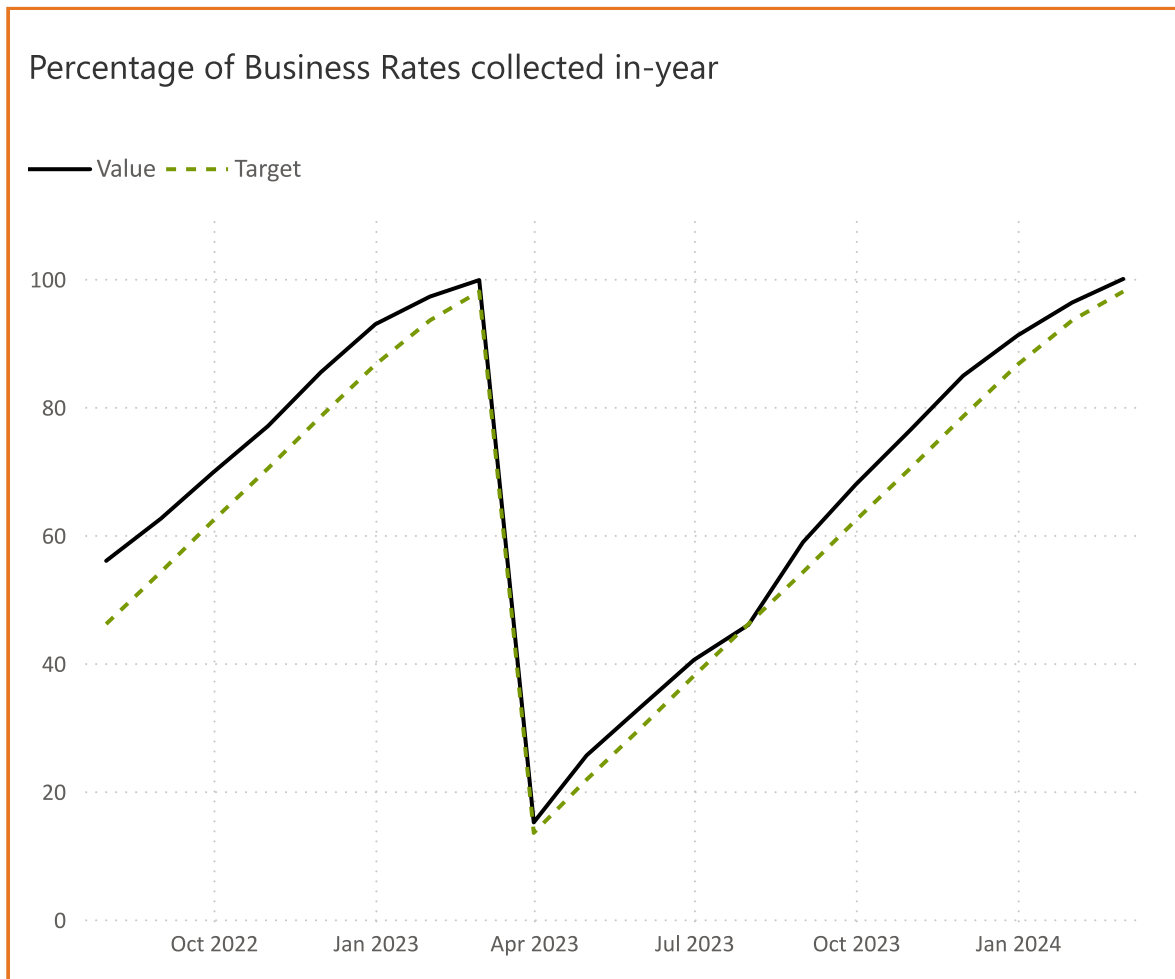
Priority or Key Action

Maximise council tax and business rate income through robust income collection processes

Narrative

The percentage of Business Rates collected exceeded the target for quarter 4, with 99.97% of Business Rates collected, compared to 99.79% in quarter 4 of 2022-23. The overall amount collected by quarter 4 was £31.2 million compared to £31.8 million by quarter 4 of 2022-23. There was a national revaluation of business properties with effect from 1 April 2023, which increased the overall amount of rateable values for Darlington by £2.8 million or 3.2%. However, there was also a generous transitional protection scheme in place, which limited the increase payable for those businesses that would have had an increase in their Business Rates in 2023-24. However, despite the revaluation, the overall rateable values for Darlington decreased slightly in 2023-24 from £90.4m to £90.3m. This was due to some backdated adjustments to rateable values following appeals to the Valuation Office and some businesses being taken out of the rating list temporarily due to development works.

Graph/Table



DBC Number

LGP 008

Indicator Name

Contracted spend as a percentage of total non-salary spend

Theme or Portfolio

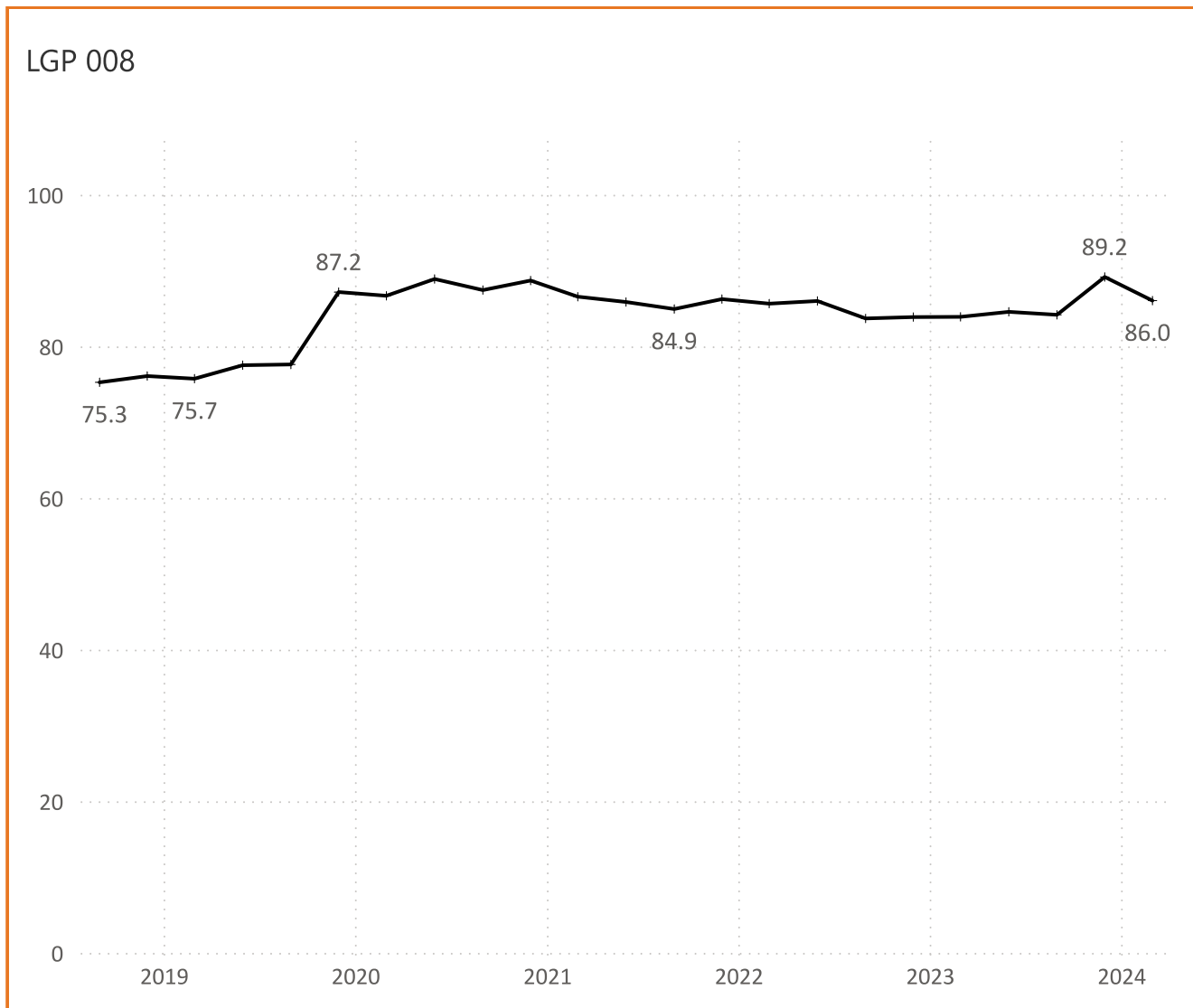
Priority or Key Action

Narrative

Increased engagement and regular procurement updates through communication announcements over the last 6 months has helped officers to better understand the procurement rules which has contributed to the figure rising slightly overall, in the last 2 quarters to 86%

In quarter 3 the figure rose to 89%. This is due to a higher volume of procurement activity and continued engagement with departments and checking the spend against the Contracts Register on a regular basis.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

REG 301

Indicator Name

Percentage of food premises which are inspected within the year in which they are due

Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

Following the pandemic officers have been engaged in a Post Covid Recovery Plan. The pandemic had resulted in a backlog of over 1000 inspections. All inspections were triaged in terms of risk and inspected accordingly. The backlog has now been cleared and overdue inspections have been completed. The recovery plan required that the backlog was completed by March 2024 and the food safety team used a range of resources including out of hours inspections (overtime) and contract inspectors to carry out this work.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

REG 308

Indicator Name

Percentage of premises broadly compliant for food hygiene

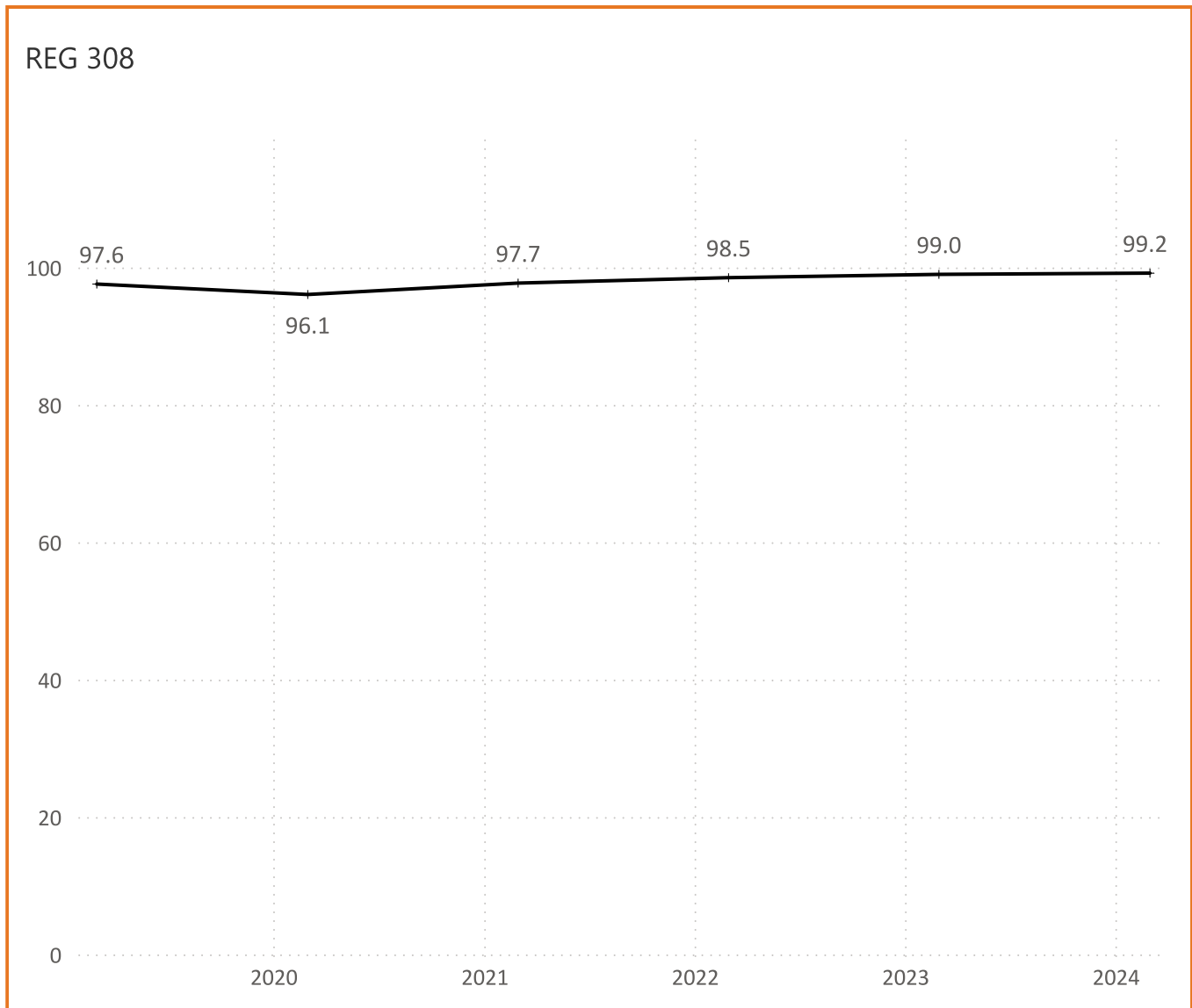
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

Premises within the Borough have shown a consistently high level of compliance year on year. This is due to a robust, consistent, and proportionate advice, inspection, and enforcement regime by officers. Inspectors have worked extremely hard to ensure that standards are maintained. This Indicator illustrates the continued high level of compliance of food premises within the Borough of Darlington which is dependant on regular visits by a statutory service.

Graph/Table



Text

DBC Number

REG 312a

Indicator Name

Percentage of noise complaints investigated and completed within 6 weeks of the date of receipt (except where diary sheet returned)

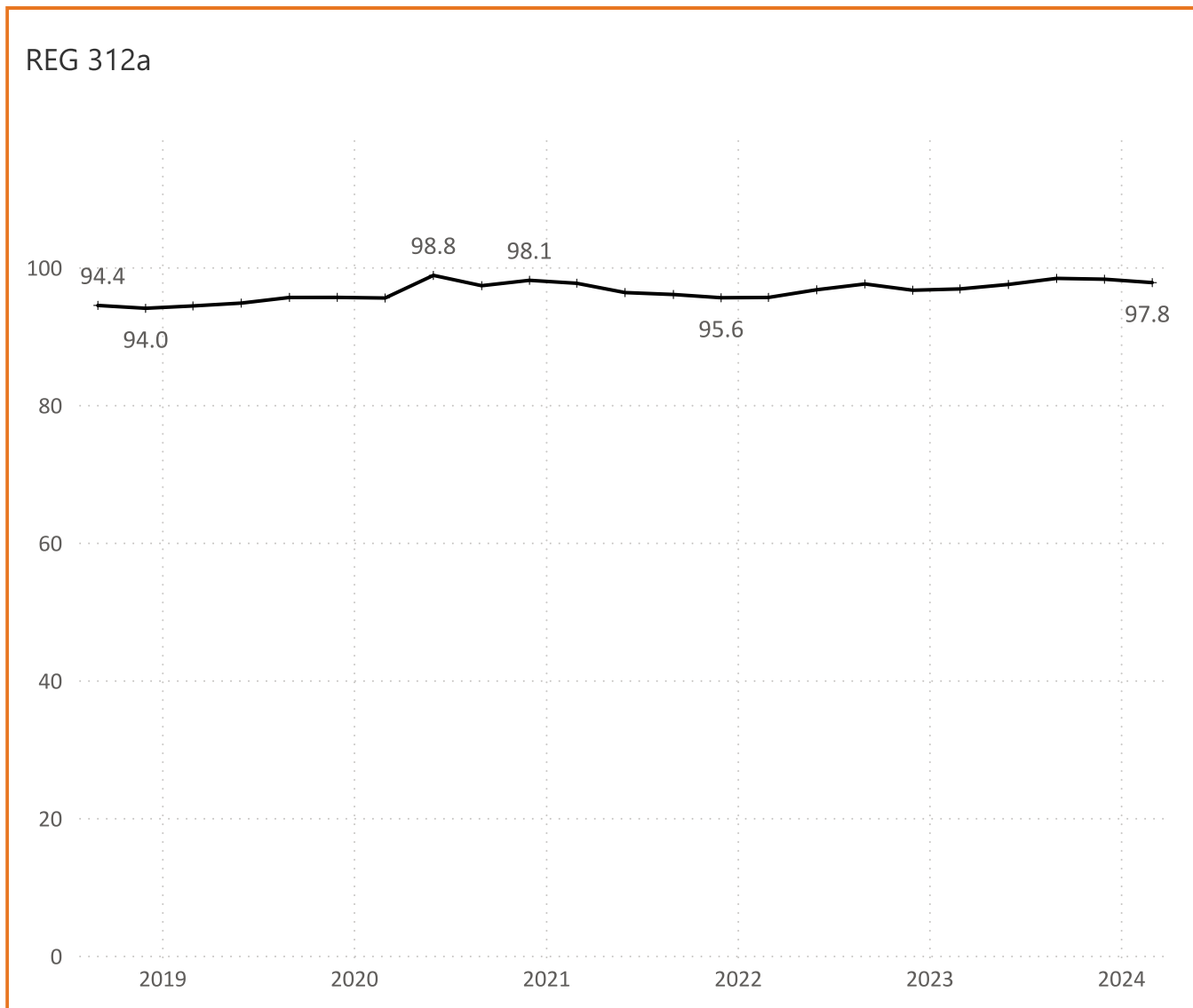
Theme or Portfolio

Priority or Key Action

Narrative

Environmental Health continue to meet this performance target despite noise complaints increasing year on year with 911 complaints received in 2023/24. The highest number of complaints received relate to noise disturbance from barking dogs (347) followed by other types of domestic noise complaints (366). As well as domestic noise 81 complaints were received relating to noise from commercial and industrial premises.

Graph/Table



Text