



Third Quarter Performance Management Report

(1st October – 31st December 2008)

13 February 2009.

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Section 1: Introduction and Summary

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to synthesise the business performance of the Council for the third quarter of the year, October to December 2008. The report reflects upon achievements and key improvements in the last three months, and identifies immediate challenges. It presents a summary of the Council's performance against the regulatory Best Value and National Indicators and against an evolving set of 'business' performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, value and people.

Summary of the Overall Position

The following table provides a 'snapshot' of the Council's overall performance, based on the most recent available status of a basket of 61 performance indicators and 179 improvement actions across the six Corporate Priorities.

| <i>Corporate Priorities</i> | | <i>Status of Performance Indicators</i> | <i>Status of Initiatives and Action Plans</i> |
|--|---|---|---|
| "The environment is clean and green" | | ✓ | ✓ |
| "Business is encouraged and the local economy prospers" | | - | ✓ |
| "Everyone can enjoy a healthy lifestyle" | | ✓ | ✓ |
| "Housing and transport meet local needs" | | - | ✓ |
| "People take pride in their local areas" | | - | ✓ |
| "We deliver excellent, cost-effective and valued services" | Financial Management | ✓ | - |
| | Customer Focus | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Value in the Delivery of Major Services | ✓ | - |
| | Our People | ✓ | ✓ |

This shows that in all the areas measured, the Council is performing well. Only four individual Performance Indicators, and one Action Plan were judged to be 'Red' - these relate to: the cost of waste collection; residents' satisfaction with cultural facilities; ill health retirements; and some playground refurbishments. A further 11 Indicators and 27 Actions were 'Amber', but were heavily outweighed by the 'Green' majority. A full set of data on all the Corporate Priorities will be reviewed at the end of the year, when annually assessed measures and the new National indicators will be available for inclusion in the snapshot.

Allan Reid – Chief Executive

Section 2: Reflection on the Last Three Months, and Challenges for the Next Quarter

Key Achievements

The environment is clean and green

- The Council has adopted the Essex Joint Municipal Waste Strategy
- Partnership commenced with Colchester BC on A12 cleansing
- 14 play area awards were collected at AGM of the Essex Playing Fields Association in October
- A number of successful prosecutions were taken for fly-tipping and other offences
- In conjunction with the Council Local supermarkets have contracted a company to collect abandoned shopping trolleys
- Environmental Protection Officers joined forces with the Police, Environment Agency and Trading Standards staff on several joint enforcement activities targeting illegal waste carriers.
- Every Business in the district received a copy of the fourth edition of our Health & Safety at Work Handbook.

Business is encouraged and the local economy prospers

- Witham Industrial Watch Ltd was formed to take forward the proposed Business Improvement District (BIDs) project for businesses bordered by the railway line and London Road in Witham.
- Free parking was provided for shoppers in Witham and Braintree during the lead up to Christmas.
- We made direct contact with 530 businesses suggesting that they may be eligible for small business rate relief

Everyone can enjoy a healthy lifestyle

- The Emergency Planning team worked in partnership with the Alec Hunter Humanities College to identify suitable areas within the school for use as a point of assembly for residents evacuated in an emergency situation.
- The Reality Road Show, a crime prevention and anti social behaviour education programme for all year-9 students in the Braintree district was co-ordinated by BDC and financed by Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- Extra Government Funding was secured for a project to reduce anti social behaviour and create more integrated communities in areas where there is growing tension amongst residents.
- Operation Marple, a Police and BDC initiative to confiscate alcohol and provide education to Under-age people in the district was carried out successfully, and a presentation made to the High Sherriff
- Overall, Anti-Social Behaviour in Braintree District has reduced by 31.8% compared to the rest of Essex
- There was an 18% increase in visitors to the Braintree Museum compared to the previous year

- A Civic reception was held on 9th October 2008 to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Town Hall Centre.
- The Council announced participation in a 2 year free swimming programme for over 60's and the 16-and-under age-group from April 2009, and Negotiated a 'free swimming for all' project at all District swimming pools between January and March 2009
- The Essex on Tour 2008/9 arts programme commenced with three well attended events in the Braintree District
- Funding was secured for 2 outdoor Gyms – one in Braintree and one in Witham
- We published and distributed the Braintree District Leisure Guide 2009

Housing and transport meet local needs

- A partnership project with Maldon has secured additional funding amounting to £200,000 for next two years. The money will be targeted at private landlords to encourage them to bring empty properties up to the 'decent homes standard'.
- Planning approval obtained for the River View Site in Witham. A step further in the development of the New Extra Care Sheltered Housing Scheme in Witham. Completion of the scheme of 55 new homes expected 2010.
- Our first 'Affordable Housing Strategy' was published for consultation in December 08.
- 'Grab a Grant' Funding of £50,000 from the Community Housing Investment Programme Fund was awarded to four community projects in the district.
- Two new minibuses were added to Community Transport fleet enabling extra journeys to be undertaken
- A celebration event was held for the 10year anniversary of Community Transport, to publicise the schemes

People take pride in their local areas

- Town Hall Celebration and Launch of Local Democracy Week in October
- We produced a new Freedom of Information Publication Scheme for the Council
- Published the first edition of Democracy Counts – a quarterly newsletter for Members
- There was an increase in youth membership on Youth Council to enable more young people to discuss topical issues
- Successful elections for the Young Essex Assembly includes 8 Braintree members
- The Draft Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy ('One District One Vision') was issued for Public Consultation

Significant Improvements

- To further improve transparency in decision-making, planning committees are now routinely webcast every fortnight, allowing those interested to watch the committees without having to travel to Braintree.
- As a result of the improvements made in the Customer Service Centre, not only has the cost of the CSC reduced but performance has reached its 15 second target for call answering.
- The use of wheeled bins was extended to a further 2,500 properties in the District
- People in the District will find it easier to understand information through a 'joined up' Council Tax Leaflet for 2009/2010, produced in partnership with Essex County Council, the Police and the Fire & Rescue Service
- Information about the Council's achievements, improvements and financial management were set out clearly and in an understandable way in the 2008 'Annual Report' for Braintree District Council, published in January 2009.
- Identified operational savings and implemented new income-generating schemes at the Town Hall Centre
- A successful recruitment drive was carried out for volunteer Drivers for Community Transport
- Following a recommendation from the External Funding Officer there is now increased representation of voluntary and third sector organisations on the Local Strategic Partnership





Priority Challenges over the Next Three Months

- Managing the effects of continuing economic recession
- Concluding the 'One District, One Vision' Sustainable Community Strategy
- Finding ways to mitigate the loss of Service Level Agreements to provide services for Greenfields Community Housing
- Negotiations with ECC on the Waste Inter-Authority Agreement, to obtain commitment for support for the Council's plans.
- Successful launch of a joint Parking Partnership with Colchester BC & Uttlesford DC
- Establishing a sustainable and viable long-term business plan for the Museum Trust and the Warners Textile Archive
- Development of proposals to support our business community
- Planning the future facilities at Bramston Sports Centre
- Identifying an additional £500k savings through business efficiency reviews.

Section 3: Delivering our Corporate Strategy

Update on the Corporate Action Plan






Summary:





| Key to performance status | | Third Quarter position |
|---|---|------------------------|
|  | This action has been stopped and will not be proceeding | 9 |
|  | This action has started but will not achieve the original target date. A new one has been set | 20 |
|  | This action has started and is on target to meet the target completion date | 32 |
|  | This action has been completed | 51 |




There are 112 separate projects / actions in the Corporate Action Plan 2008/2009:

- 51(out of a targeted 52) have been completed (12 during Quarter 3)
- 14 other projects were scheduled to be completed during Quarter 3 but weren't. Of these, 11 have had revised target dates set and 3 have been aborted.
- Details of the projects which were completed during Quarter 3 are shown below
- Exception reports have been provided below for the projects which have either been abandoned or are not on target to achieve the targeted completion date.


Projects completed during Quarter 3



| Project ref | Details | Target completion date | Status |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| C&G5 PP | <p>Graffiti Removal with Partners - support other people to carry out graffiti removal and to be involved in other environmental initiatives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot a trial amongst town and parish councils and community groups for them to undertake graffiti removal and other environmental work within their parish/town. <p>Comment: <i>The intended outcome was the removal of graffiti from privately owned properties within the District. Take-up has been minimal, which may reflect the fact that there is not a major problem with graffiti in the Braintree District. Graffiti kits will continue to be made available and the Community Wardens and Street Cleaning staff will continue to promote their use.</i></p> | November 2008 |  |
| C&G6 PP | <p>Roundabouts – improve the appearance of roundabouts on strategic routes across the District</p> <p>Comment: <i>All of the roundabouts across the District (with the exception of those on the A120) were inspected and work was carried out to improve their appearance. A contract with an external company to negotiate sponsorship from businesses to fund a higher standard of maintenance has not been formally agreed yet. This is due to a number outstanding issue with the legal documents. We anticipate a decision by the end of February 2009.</i></p> | December 2008 |  |
| C & G 7 PP | <p>Path Networks – resurface our footpath networks in the open space areas at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> River Walk, Witham, <p>Comment : <i>This has improved safety for users of the relevant section of the footpath along the River Walk. The area looks attractive and ‘cared for’.</i></p> | October 2008 <i>(Revised to December 2008)</i> |  |
| C&G8 PP | <p>Great Notley Country Park - in conjunction with Essex County Council, deliver a programme of improvements</p> <p>Comment: <i>Vastly improved facilities for users of the park: play adventure trail, cafeteria with outside seating, increased car parking, new outdoor events and cycle hire.</i></p> | March 2009 |  |
| HL6 | <p>Improved Leisure Facilities - improve our leisure facilities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out refurbishment works at Bramston Sports Centre in Witham <p>Comment : <i>Repairs to the main columns adjacent to the pool, and tiling around the pool area were successfully completed in December 2008. The pool reopened on time after being closed for 6 weeks whilst the repairs were being undertaken. Engineers have indicated that this work has extended the structural integrity of the building for a further 5 years. Work on redecorating the wet side changing areas commenced at the same time, and will be completed in February 2009.</i></p> | March 2009 |  |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------|---|
| HL8 RE | <p>Braintree Community Sports Project – deliver new training courses for young people aged 9 to 19 years old aimed at having a positive impact on self-esteem, self-confidence, health and fitness as well as impacting on anti-social behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Young Leaders Award – for 9 to 13 year olds • The Junior Football Organisers Course – for 14 to 17 year olds • The Day Certificate in Sports leadership – for 16 years and upwards <p>Comment: <i>The Young Leaders Award has delivered 2 Young Leaders Award Qualifications for young people aged 9 -13 years and will continue to provide these opportunities for young people with the Braintree District. 68 young people have benefited from this project since April 2008</i></p> <p><i>The Junior Football Organisers course has delivered, in partnership with Essex FA, a Junior Football Organisers qualification for young people aged 14 – 17 years. This course was delivered to young people on the verge of exclusion from school. 30 young people have benefited from this project since April 2008</i></p> <p><i>The Junior Referee course has delivered 3 JRC with local Schools in the District and will continue to provide these qualification opportunities for young people. 30 young people have benefited from this project since April 2008</i></p> | March 2009 |  |
| HL13 | <p>New and Improved Cycle-ways and Cycle parking – promote cycling by improving and constructing new cycle-ways and by providing additional cycle parking as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of lighting for at least one urban cycleway scheme in Witham. <p>Comment : <i>A scheme from Cypress Road to Cut Throat Lane has been completed</i></p> | March 2009 |  |
| H&T1 | <p>More Affordable Housing – in partnership with Housing Associations - create at least 100 new affordable homes (annual average) in the District</p> <p>Comment : <i>There were 9 new affordable homes completed in the 3Q, bringing the total for 08/09 to 44. At the start of 08/09 were predicting 90 new affordable homes against an average annual target of 100. We are now certain that 94 affordable homes will be completed during 2008/2009. This means up to 310 people will have a new home that meets their needs.</i></p> <p><i>Over a ten year period starting with 1999/2000 our annual average is 101 homes. Based on 94 completions in 08/09 the average of the last 4 years will be 133 homes.</i></p> <p><i>There is also potentially another 16 affordable completions in 08/09 , this would bring the actual affordable housing completions to 110 and mean up to a total of 366 people would have a new home.</i></p> | March 2009 |  |
| H&T7 | <p>Community Transport Scheme – Investigate ways of increasing capacity in the Council's Community Transport Scheme so that it better meets the needs of elderly and vulnerable people</p> <p>Comment: <i>In partnership with the Primary Care Trust, twice-weekly transport was set up in rural areas . An additional minibus was purchased and delivered in October to increase fleet and passenger journeys. A funding bid was successful for salary for a paid Driver over 2 years; this will enable rural transport issues to be identified and addressed . A Survey was conducted and actions taken to set up shopping trips across the District.</i></p> | March 2009 |  |



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| PRIDE2 SL | Young People and Democracy - encourage young people to become more interested in local politics and government by working with local schools in organising events for 'Local Democracy Week' Comment : This has created a better understanding of local democracy amongst young people | October 2008 |  |
| PRIDE8 PP | Responsible Citizenship Campaigns - deliver a series of Responsible Citizenship Campaigns and programmes - both in house and in partnership with other organisations - aimed at promoting awareness and positive behavioural change in relation to the local environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car litter (target date changed to Oct / Nov) Comment : The intended outcome was to have cleaner streets by reducing the amount of litter thrown from cars. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this campaign, as this is ongoing and will feed into the Fast Food Litter campaign due to start end Jan/early Feb 09. We have targeted customers of fast food outlets, as these are the main source of car litter within the District. Promotional literature has been displayed and a message stuck onto takeaway bags. Car Litter bags and car air fresheners are to be distributed to encourage people to take their waste home with them. | Sept/Oct 08 (revised to Oct / Nov 08) |  |
| EXC11 SM | Braintree District Council Annual Report – produce and widely publicise an Annual Report which provides information to the public about the Council, what we are doing, how we are performing and how we provide value for money Comment : Council-tax payers in the District can now easily access information about our spending plans, activities, achievements, overall financial status and other details about the way we work through the publication of an Annual Report which covers the calendar year 2008. | July 2008 |  |








Projects aborted during Quarter 3







| Project ref | Project Title and Description | Target Date for completion | Status at end of Quarter 3 |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| C & G 7 PP | Path Networks – resurface our footpath networks in the open space areas at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bradford Meadows, Braintree Comment : There is insufficient funding to complete the Bradford Meadows project this financial year. This is because the work required to the River Walk, Witham, was more extensive than had been anticipated and had to be completed to meet essential health and safety requirements. This will be completed as part of the capital programme for 2009/10 subject to approval. | October 2008 2009/10 Subject to funding |  |





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| HL5 CD | <p>Improved Community Facilities in Witham:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with local communities and stakeholders about the possible provision of community facilities at Rickstones Playing Field <p>Comment: <i>The development of the Rickstones area will be a longer term project that will involve our partners such as Greenfields Community Housing Association and the PCT. It will also be linked to the Community Halls Review and the 3 Towns One Vision Strategy.</i></p> | March 2009 |  |
| PROS10 RE | <p>Haven Gateway Opportunities – work with the Haven Gateway Partnership (in which the ports of Felixstowe, Harwich, Ipswich and Mistley work together with public and private sector partners to promote economic opportunities and secure the future prosperity of the region) to agree joint working arrangements which will seek to secure infrastructure and environmental improvements and an increase in inward investment opportunities in the Braintree District.</p> <p>Comment: <i>Following an announcement by EEDA that they will be funding ‘Engines of Growth’ and not Sub Regional Economic Partnerships from April 2009, discussions are taking place with other LA districts to establish a way forward for local authorities which are outside recognised growth areas. Council is no longer pursuing a formal partnership arrangement with the Haven Gateway Partnership, but will continue to engage in projects where there is mutual interest in the potential outcomes.</i></p> | Develop Programme by December 2008 |  |

Projects delayed during Quarter 3 – new target dates set

| Project ref | Project Title and Description | Target Date for completion | Status at end of Quarter 3 |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| C&G1 PP | <p>Bulky Waste Collection Trial – carry out a trial whereby large items of bulky household waste (such as furniture) which need to be disposed of can be collected by a social enterprise company and recycled rather than going to land-fill.</p> <p>Comment: <i>A key staff vacancy has been filled on a temporary basis, so sufficient resource is now available to proceed with this project and meet the revised target date.</i></p> | <p>March 2009</p> <p>May 2009</p> |  |
| C&G2 PP | <p>Cardboard Recycling Trial – carry out a trial with local businesses aimed at increasing the amount of cardboard which is recycled by the business community</p> <p>Comment: <i>A key staff vacancy has been filled on a temporary basis, so sufficient resource is now available to proceed with this project and meet the revised target date.</i></p> | <p>March 2009</p> <p>May 2009</p> |  |

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|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| C&G12 LC | Reduce carbon emissions from the Council's buildings, vehicles and services as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a three-month trial of a new liquid pool cover at Halstead Pool Comment : <i>Our Leisure contractor DC Leisure is trialling the liquid pool cover at a couple of its 80 sites to assess its effectiveness and viability. If trials are successful BDC will implement this energy efficiency measure at our 3 Leisure Centres during 2009.</i> | Sept 2008 now March 2010 |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish the solar panels at the Discovery Centre Comment: <i>Further to meetings between ECC and BDC the turbine operation will be re-assessed and existing meter repaired/replaced, initial repair investigation to be carried out on solar panels, reed bed filtration system to be monitored. The refurbishment costs will be borne by BDC as ECC is reluctant to provide funding.</i> | Sept 2008 now March 2010 |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Green Driver Training for staff Comment: <i>Original SAFED training is no longer available. This will now be provided by the Energy Saving Trust starting in early 2009.</i> | Sept 2008 During 2009 |  |
| PROS4 TW | Halstead Town Centre – finalise the assembly of the area of land to the east of the High Street and market it for sale and redevelopment. Comment: <i>The last land owner has now signed the agreement for the appointment of a Marketing Agent, enabling the site to be marketed.</i> | July 2008 now January 2009 |  |
| HL1 PP | Playground Refurbishments - refurbish the playgrounds at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> King George V Playing Field, Braintree Comment: <i>Original consultation has been completed; however, due to low attendance at initial meetings, the consultation was extended to ensure full local engagement.</i> | March 2009 Revised to May 2009 |  |
| HL2 PP | New Play Area in Braintree – investigate options for and create a new toddlers' play area with new play equipment at Weavers Park in Braintree Comment: <i>Consultation with the Trustees of Braintree & Bocking Public Gardens is underway. The Trustees are seeking match funding of £15,000 from the Essex Environment Trust (EET) and their application is being considered by the EET at its meeting on 4 March 2009. This has put back the original target date.</i> | March 2009 Revised to May 2009 |  |
| HL4 RE | Changing facilities at Silver Street – provide new sports changing facilities at Silver Street Playing Field, Silver End Comment : <i>The project start date was delayed by 3 weeks whilst discussions took place and agreement was reached on the provision of a gas supply to the site. The project will be completed in mid-April 2009.</i> | October 2008 |  |

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|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| HL5 CD | Improved Community Facilities in Witham: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish and improve the facilities at Forest Road Community Hall in Witham Comment: <i>The refurbishment of Forest Road Community Hall has commenced and is on track to be completed by end of March. The facilities are also being considered as part of the Community Halls Review.</i> | March 2009 |  |
| HL 13 PM | New and Improved Cycle-ways and Cycle parking – promote cycling by improving and constructing new cycle-ways and by providing additional cycle parking as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of an improved surface on the Blackwater Rail Trail from Blue Mills Road to Sauls Bridge Witham and a link to Maldon Road Comment : <i>The improved surface from Blue Mills Road to Constance Close is complete. An Additional link to Maldon Road is dependent on the making of a footpath order by Essex County Council.</i> | March 2009 |  |
| HL14b PM | Green Flag Awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silver End Memorial Gardens: construct replacement toilet Comment : <i>Tenders were received in January 2009. Construction will start in March 2009, with completion at the end of April 2009.</i> | January 2009 March 2009 |  |
| H&T3 JA | New Housing and Homelessness Strategies – identify ways to increase the amount of affordable housing and minimise the impact of homelessness in the District through the production of new four-year housing and homelessness strategies - and complete those projects in them which are scheduled for 2008/2009 Comment: <i>A new Homelessness Strategy for 2008 – 2013 was approved by Cabinet in July 08. The first draft of a new Housing Strategy will be published at the end of Quarter 4.</i> | March 2009 September 09 |  |
| PRIDE1 SL | Easier Contact with Councillors - improve ways in which local constituents can contact their local Councillors by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out a feasibility study into other more innovative ways of holding councillor surgeries (including telephone and walkabout surgeries) Comment : <i>The Project is delayed pending a study being conducted as part of the review of decision making. A Report on the review is due to go to the Local Government Reform Sub-Group at the end of February.</i> | November 2008 (revised to March 2009) |  |
| PRIDE4 SL | Local Project Development – develop a programme of projects in each local area and deliver those which are scheduled for completion in 2008/09. Comment : <i>Work programmes have been agreed but projects have not been completed by target date.</i> | September 2008 (now Nov 2008) |  |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| PRIDE8 PP | Responsible Citizenship Campaigns - deliver a series of Responsible Citizenship Campaigns and programmes - both in house and in partnership with other organisations - aimed at promoting awareness and positive behavioural change in relation to the local environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast food litter (target date changed to Dec / Jan) Comment: <i>This is a national campaign and we have been advised that the commencement date has been deferred to the end of January 2009.</i> | Revised date Jan/Feb 09 |  |
| EXC4 Senior Managers | Customer Service Standards – update all of our customer standards and targets and publish them widely so that people can be clear about what to expect when they contact us and about the level of service they will receive when they need to use any of our services Comment: <i>Draft Corporate Service standards are being prepared and will be consulted on at the start of 2009.. These standards will be taken to Cabinet for consideration on 30 March 2009, and if agreed, will be implemented by June 2009. Service standards for the Corporate Policy & Communications Team will be included in the Business Plan for 2009/2010.</i> | October 2008 now June 2009 |  |
| EXC9 SM | Customer satisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a robust rolling programme to assess customer views about the way we provide our services and to identify improvements which can be put in place to ensure that customer satisfaction increases – both with the way we provide our services and with the Council overall • Carry out those activities and surveys in the programme which are scheduled for 2008/09 Comment : <i>This project has been hampered by a lack of skills and experience needed to put the whole process in place and an associated misjudgement of our capacity to deliver. This was dealt with through the performance management framework and the approach reviewed. It is an essential element to our new approach to marketing and communications which will be set out in a new Strategy to be considered by Cabinet in March. Temporary vacancies in the Marketing and Communications team will arise shortly into the new year and resourcing this project will be considered as part of the plans to fill the resulting gaps.</i> | October 2008 March 2009 |  |
| EXC10 SM | ‘Welcome Guide’ - review and reproduce the ‘Welcome Guide’ to provide useful information to people moving into the District Comment : <i>This project was deferred pending research on other publications from other agencies which provide information about public services in the area and concern about possible duplication and criticism about public spend on documents like this. This research has now been completed and it is clear that Welcome Guide provides a different service and type of information. The views of the new LSP Executive and Steering Group will now be sought in early February as to whether the Welcome Guide should be updated and re-published. If the response is positive (as it most likely will be) it will be re-published by the end of March 2009.</i> | December 2008 March 2009 |  |

Update on the Corporate Improvement Plan

Our Corporate Improvement Plan focuses on the four themes of our 'Shaping up for Excellence' improvement programme:

- ***Customer Service***
- ***People and Performance***
- ***Communications and engagement***
- ***Innovation and efficiency***

Each theme has an action plan. The following improvements have been put in place during October to December 2008:

Customer Service

- There have been major improvements in call handling in and out of the Customer Service Centre (CSC). The call routing system has been reviewed and improved to ensure that customers are getting to the right person first time, whilst minimising the menu options they have to choose before getting to a person.
- Call answering times have been significantly reduced in this quarter for the Customer Service Centre.
- National Customer Service week aimed to ensure that staff and members were aware of the work undertaken by the CSC, as well as other services in the authority. This proved a success from the feedback received.
- The Web Access module for Planning information has been improved to provide more information to customers
- Measurement of National Indicator 14 started in October 2008. This will identify where customers have contact of little or no value to them. We are currently looking at ways to co-ordinate this information across the authority.

People and Performance

- A proposal was developed for an improved employee suggestion scheme in order to improve employee engagement. 'Brainwaves' will be launched in April.
- A leadership development event was held for all senior managers to enable improved corporate performance.
- A corporate Learning Framework has been developed which will enable access to a wide range of learning activities directly linked to individual competencies within the Council's Competency Framework
- A learning agreement has been developed for Operations. Training has already taken place in IT, numeracy and literacy. NVQ's in horticulture and waste are being investigated.
- Skills for Life – 9 staff have undertaken training in adult numeracy and literacy, and achieved a 100% pass rate
- Regular communications were developed with all staff in order to promote the learning and development activity available within the organisation. Learning days per employee for this quarter are significantly higher than Q2.
- An Annual Award ceremony, recognising personal and team achievement in customer service, innovation & efficiency, contribution to the community, personal development and 'going the extra mile', was extremely well received.
- A critical analysis was conducted and improvements implemented to sickness absence management processes and

policies. This included briefing sessions for all Managers; improved reporting and monitoring; better management information; and absence review meetings. Work has started on promoting and encouraging healthier lifestyles and employee wellness. These structured actions are having the desired effect – sickness absence was greatly reduced, and a reasonable outturn for Q4 will put the Council in top quartile position.

- A presentation on succession planning and talent management was delivered to all senior managers in order to accurately profile workforce performance and its future potential.
- Introduction of childcare vouchers for the organisation was investigated with a view to implementation in the Spring.

Communications and engagement

- Information about the Council's achievements, improvements and financial management were set out clearly and in an understandable way in the 2008 Annual Report for Braintree District Council, published in January 2009.
- A survey of Community Transport users was conducted in order to identify improvements
- People were encouraged to recycle their Christmas trees and associated material at three roadshows held in December and through the preparation of a special edition of the Recycling Newsletter which was distributed to every household in the District. Figures will be monitored to see what improvement there is on last years' figures.
- Children and young people were encouraged to 'recycle' their toys at the first 'Toy Swap' in the District which was held at St. Peter's School in Sible Hedingham. It was hailed a great success and other venues will be explored.
- A new, more focused approach to partnership working was launched in October when the first meetings of the new Local Strategic Partnership Executive and Steering Group were held. A Constitution covering the governance arrangements will be produced in the New Year and a robust Action Plan showing the proposed outcomes and improvements for people and communities in the Braintree District will be developed for publication in May 2009.

Innovation and Efficiency

- The roll out of IDOX continued across the authority: there are now 170 staff using the system. During Quarter 3 a new test system was introduced and the whole system was upgraded as well as more services coming online.
- The GIS and UNIFORM systems have now been integrated to ensure accurate geographic information for planning officers, environmental officers, building control and the finance team.
- A review was carried out of how we manage projects and performance. As a result, improved governance arrangements are being designed, and a proposal for a Programme Management Office was prepared for consideration by Cabinet .
- As part of our Customer Access Strategy, mystery shopping has been undertaken on our Customer Service Centre. This has been completed in partnership with Colchester Borough Council, to provide a reciprocal service. The results are currently being analysed and an action plan is being produced to address any issues raised.

Section 4: Managing the Business

Performance Indicator Overview

We collect information in relation to 39 performance indicators on a quarterly basis. Detailed information is set out below. At the end of the third quarter:

| |
|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">31 are on target 6 are less than 5% below target 2 are 5% or more below target</p> |
|--|

Both of the indicators which are 5% or more below target are deteriorating compared with the same quarter last year.

22 of our quarterly reported Performance Indicators can be placed into national quartiles (ie they can be compared with the performance of other District Councils nationally). Using extrapolations of the national quartile figures for 2007/2008, calculations we have calculated that at the end of the 2008/2009 financial year:







- **10 are predicted to be in top quartile** (compared with original estimates of 10)
- **11 are predicted to be in second quartile** (compared with original estimates of 9)
- **1 is predicted to be in third quartile** (compared with original estimates of 2)
- **none are predicted to be in bottom quartile** (compared with an original estimate of 1)

In order to assess our overall projected position, information will be collected and reported separately for all Indicators - including those which are collected annually and which are not reported in this document.

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

This Part sets out details of the Council's key Performance Indicators which are collected on a quarterly basis.





It also sets out details of some of our Performance Indicators which are collected and reported **ANNUALLY** but which either merit comment at this stage or which are showing signs during this quarter that performance may not be to the required or targeted standard for year-end together with details and corrective actions.

| Key to Performance Data | | Performance at Quarter 3 |
|---|---|--------------------------|
|  | This Performance Indicator is 5% or more off target for the quarter | 2 |
|  | This Performance Indicator is up to 5% below target for the quarter | 6 |
|  | This Performance Indicator is on target for the quarter | 31 |
|  | Performance has improved compared with this time last year | 20 |
|  | Performance has deteriorated compared with this time last year | 11 |
|  | Performance is the same as it was this time last year | 3 |



NOTE – not all indicators can be compared with the same time last year











No Annually Reported Indicators were 5% or more off target at the end of Quarter 3.

Quarterly Reported Indicators where performance is **5% or more** off target at the end of Quarter 3

| SECTION 1 - Quarterly Collected Performance Indicators | Performance as at end of: | | | | Target for end of this Quarter | Trend compared with this time last year | Projected quartile position | | Status |
|--|---------------------------|--------|--------|----|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------|---|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | At start of year was: | Is now | |
| EHLP2 - Car Parking enforcement - % of Penalty Charge Notices paid without dispute | 68.38% | 72.28% | 64.54% | | 80% |  | n/a | n/a |  |
| Comment / Corrective Action: <i>The payment of parking fines is something over which the Council has very little control and this indicator does not lend itself to accurate target setting given the number of variables that affect performance. It would be appropriate to collect this information in a more meaningful way by with the number of tickets issued (to measure activity) and the number of appeals upheld (to measure quality).</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| BV8 - % of invoices paid on time | 97.43% | 96.80% | 96.71% | | 98.00% |  | Top | Top |  |
| Comment / Corrective Action: <i>Performance was adversely affected in November due to 65 of Fleet Management's invoices being outside the 30 day target (performance for the month was 94.09%). There was improved performance in December (99.2%), with the Fleet Section reviewing procedures to ensure improved performance is maintained.</i> | | | | | | | | | |

Quarterly Reported Indicators where performance is **up to 5%** off target at the end of Quarter 3

| SECTION 1 - Quarterly Collected Performance Indicators | Performance as at end of: | | | | Target for end of this Quarter | Trend compared with this time last year | Projected quartile position | | Status |
|---|---------------------------|--------|--------|----|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------|---|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | At start of year was: | Is now | |
| BV82(a)(i) - Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the Authority for recycling* | 24.45% | 25.60% | 28.06% | | 32.00% |  | Top | Top |  |
| Comment / Corrective Action: <i>Although the amount of recycled material has dropped by 6% compared with the same period last year, waste to landfill also dropped (by 10%). The effect of this is that the recycling rate is down, but landfill is down further and therefore the apparent drop in performance is due to a reduction in the total amount of refuse collected, not a reduction in the amount recycled. This should level out in the next quarter when historically compost tonnages are low and dry recycling high. It is not clear why the total volume of waste collected has dropped, but it could be a sign of reduced spending in general. The improvement in composting is a combination of a longer autumn growing season, an increase in the amount of people disposing of kitchen waste through the green bin and an extension of the wheeled bin roll-out.</i> | | | | | | | | | |















| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|--|-----------------------|---|--------|--------|---|
| BV 82(a)(ii) - Tonnes of household waste recycled* | 3735.90 | 3768.48 | 3540.94 | | 3,800 |  | Top | Top |  |
| Comment / Corrective Action: Estimated, as waste to landfill figure not available from ECC for December 08. See comment at BV82(a)(i). | | | | | | | | | |
| BV10 - Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected | 30.83% | 58.81% | 86.78% | | 87.4% (cumulative) |  | Second | Second |  |
| Comment / Corrective Action: Collection rate has dropped since November and the target for the year will be a challenge. With the current difficult economic climate, evidenced by a number of high profile businesses in the district having gone into liquidation in recent weeks, the Council is dealing sympathetically with requests to extend payment terms until 31 st March 2009. The Council also commenced, during December, a programme of writing to small businesses reminding them of the business rate relief scheme. | | | | | | | | | |
| CHLP7 - Telephone response time in the Customer Service Centre (secs) | 42.47 | 27 | 15.6 | | 15 |  | N/A | |  |
| Comment / Corrective Action: Major progress was made towards the target, but it was just missed because of an unpredicted number of heating-related calls for Greenfields during the week between Christmas and New Year, and extra calls taken on behalf of Greenfields on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. This was a temporary issue and figures are now back on track to meet the target for the final quarter. | | | | | | | | | |
| BV127b – Robberies per 1000 population | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.08 | | 0.05 |  | Top | |  |
| Comment / Corrective Action: There will be a presentation on the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership on 18 th Feb by Essex Police with a view to securing funding for a Analyst/Researcher which will help improve the timeliness of data provision | | | | | | | | | |
| BV109a – NI 157a Processing of planning applications: Major applications | 85.71% | 100% | 70% | | 86.00% |  | Top | Second |  |
| Comment / Corrective Action: The Development Control service has seen a reduction in the number of major applications handled. This means that a small number of "late" decisions can have a serious impact on performance. We cannot predict how many more major applications will be received in the last quarter but with the cumulative performance at 83.3% at the end of Q3, we expect to perform almost to target by the end of the year | | | | | | | | | |

Quarterly Reported Indicators where performance is On-Target at the end of Quarter 3 (categorised by the Corporate Strategy Priorities)

| Quarterly Collected Performance Indicators | Performance as at end of: | | | | Target for end of this Quarter | Trend compared with this time last year | Projected quartile position | | Status |
|--|---------------------------|--------|--------|----|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------|--------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | At start of year was: | Is now | |
| Corporate Priority :We deliver excellent, cost effective and valued service | | | | | | | | | |
| CHLP4a – Availability of telephone network | 100% | 100% | 100% | | 99% | ■ | N/A | | |
| CHLP4b – Availability of data network | 99.96% | 99.99% | 99.7% | | 99% | ↓ | N/A | | |
| CHLP4c – Availability of website network | 100% | 99.99% | 100% | | 99.50% | ↑ | N/A | | |
| CHLP5 – Percentage Enquiries resolved at first point of contact | 87% | 92% | 91.3% | | 75% | ↑ | N/A | | |
| CHLP6 – Transactions via the web-site | 8,449 | 9,388 | 9,438 | | 7,500 | ↑ | N/A | | |
| BV12 - Working days lost due to sickness absence | 2.31 | 1.67 | 2.28 | | 2.25 | ↑ | Bottom | Second | |
| BV9 - % of Council Tax collected | 30.81% | 59.64% | 87.48% | | 87.4% (cumulative) | ↑ | Second | Second | |






| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--|--------|---|--------|--------|---|
| BV78a - Speed of processing new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims | 22.6 | 19.3 | 21.4 | | 22.8 | ↑ | Top | Second | ✓ |
| BV78b - Speed of processing changes of circumstances for Housing and Council Tax Benefit Claims | 6.25 | 6.0 | 6.1 | | 6.25 | ↓ | Top | Top | ✓ |
| BV79a - Accuracy of processing – Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims | 99.20% | 99.20% | 99.2% | | 99.00% | ↑ | Second | Second | ✓ |
| BV156 - Buildings accessible to people with a disability | 65.20% | 65.20% | 65.20% | | 65% | ↑ | N/A | N/A | ✓ |
| BV109b – NI 157b Processing of planning applications: Minor applications | 82.93% | 87.61% | 94.59% | | 85.00% | ↑ | Second | Second | ✓ |
| BV109c - NI 157c Processing of planning applications: Other applications | 92.18% | 93.85% | 96.61% | | 93.00% | ↑ | Third | Second | ✓ |











| Quarterly Collected Performance Indicators | Performance as at end of: | | | | Target for end of this Quarter | Trend compared with this time last year | Projected quartile position | | Status |
|---|---------------------------|---------|---------|----|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------|--------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | At start of year was: | Is now | |
| Corporate Priority: The Environment is Clean and Green | | | | | | | | | |
| BV82(b)(i) - % of Household Waste Composted | 22.87% | 21.63% | 17.2% | | 10% | ↑ | Second | Second | ✓ |
| BV82(b)(ii) - Tonnes of household waste composted | 3493.1 | 3183.31 | 2171.39 | | 1,300 | ↑ | Top | Top | ✓ |





| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|--------|--------|--|-----------|---|--|-----|---|
| NI191 - Kgs residual waste collected per household. | 108.0 | 104.0 | 114.0 | | 119.5 | New indicator. No comparisons available | New Indicator. No Quartile figures yet | |  |
| BV218a - Abandoned vehicles - % investigated within 24 hrs | 97.70% | 100% | 100% | | 98.25% |  | Top | Top |  |
| BV218b - Abandoned Vehicles - % removed within 24 hrs of required time | 100% | 100% | 100% | | 98.00% |  | Second | Top |  |
| WCLP1 – Number of missed bins (per 100,000 collections) | 16.03 | 14.50 | 14.31 | | 35 |  | N/A | |  |
| WCLP2 - % and no. of Fly Tips cleared within 24 hrs of being reported | 98.89% | 98.84% | 98.92% | | 98.70% |  | N/A | |  |
| WCLP3 - % of cases of graffiti removed within 5 days | 100% | 100% | 100% | | 100% |  | N/A | |  |
| NI 195a – Improved street and environmental cleanliness: Litter | Not calculated | 4% | 3% | | not >18% | New indicator. No comparisons available | New Indicator. No Quartile figures yet | |  |
| NI 195b – Improved street and environmental cleanliness: Detritus | Ditto | 8% | 10% | | not > 23% | Ditto | Ditto | |  |
| NI 195c – Improved street and environmental cleanliness: Graffiti | Ditto | 0% | 0% | | not >2% | Ditto | Ditto | |  |
| <p><i>The targets for NI 195 a, b & c are based on those recommended by ENCAMS (Tidy Britain Group) who were commissioned by DEFRA to undertake an audit of cleanliness standards in our District. The above targets have been used as the LAA2 targets, in line with other Essex local authorities. Historically, our performance has been better than the targets and the actuals reflect this. For example, with NI195a, we are required to achieve a cleanliness standard of at least 82% and in Q3 we achieved 97%.</i></p> | | | | | | | | | |

| Quarterly Collected Performance Indicators | Performance as at end of: | | | | Target for end of this Quarter | Trend compared with this time last year | Projected quartile position | | Status |
|---|---------------------------|--------|--------|----|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------|--------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | At start of year was: | Is now | |
| Corporate Priority: Business is Encouraged and the Local Economy Prospers | | | | | | | | | |
| There are no Performance Indicators which are collected on a quarterly basis in relation to this Corporate Priority | | | | | | | | | |
| Corporate Priority: Everyone can enjoy a Healthy Lifestyle | | | | | | | | | |
| BV126 - Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households | 1.07 | 2.52 | 0.81 | | 2.50 | ↓ | Top | | ✓ |
| BV127a – Violent Crime per 1000 population | 3.1 | 2.88 | 3.07 | | 3 | ↓ | Second | | ✓ |
| BV128 – Vehicle Crimes per 1000 population | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.05 | | 1.75 | ↓ | Second | | ✓ |
| Corporate Priority: Housing and Transport meet Local Needs | | | | | | | | | |
| PLP1 – The number of passenger journeys made on the Braintree Community Transport scheme | 14,120 | 14,064 | 14,134 | | 13,684 | ↑ | n/a | | ✓ |
| BV183b - Length of stay in temporary accommodation (Hostel) (Measured in weeks) | 12.2 | 7.2 | 9.02 | | 12 | ↑ | Third | Third | ✓ |
| BV64 - Number of private sector dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished | 15 | 25 | 58 | | 25 | ↑ | Top | Top | ✓ |
| NI 156 - Number of households living in temporary accommodation | 67 | 60 | 47 | | 72 | ↑ | n/a | | ✓ |

Annually Reported indicators which merit comment this quarter

| Indicator | Progress | Anticipated Annual Status |
|---|--|---|
| BV166a - Score against a checklist of best practice for Environmental Health | Performance has reached 100% which means full compliance has been achieved. |  |
| BV216b Information on contaminated land | During 2007/08 there were sufficient savings on a post in Environment Protection to enable us to employ a consultant to inspect our high risk sites. This effort has brought us up to a point where we will be well in to the top quartile. This resource can not be sustained in future years, and as the priority sites have now been done it is now our intention to put this indicator as a low priority in our work plans for the future, hence the static targets for the next four years. |  |
| NI 185 CO ₂ reduction from local authority operations | BDC completed its Carbon Management Programme and started implementation and monitoring of its projects in April 2008. The production of an annual monitoring report mirrors the reporting requirements of NI 185 and will be delivered accordingly. A number of projects are underway. |  |
| NI 186 Per capita reduction in CO ₂ emissions in the local authority area | This is a Local Area Agreement indicator which BDC is delivering in partnership with the Local Strategic Partnership and other authorities in Essex. Existing projects have continued to be delivered successfully and the authority is implementing the newly identified projects. |  |
| NI 187 Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income related benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating | BDC with 36 other local authorities in the Eastern Region has used HEON to deliver this indicator, using methodology approved by GO-EAST. BDC selected a sample of benefit recipients and sent out the survey. Analysis is being carried out by HEON on completed surveys to produce the annual performance report. This report measures progress in tackling fuel poverty through the improved energy efficiency of households inhabited by people claiming income-related benefits. |  |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| NI 188 Adapting to Climate Change | BDC is working with the Essex Partnership and the local authorities of Essex to ensure Braintree district adapts to climate change. Braintree has already signed the Nottingham Declaration, adapting to climate change is a corporate target of the organisation, and an assessment of the impact of climate change on the authority has been completed. |  |
| NI 189 Flood and coastal erosion risk management | Under the Essex Local Resilience Forum, various groups including the Severe Weather Group, have progressed work on flood risk including consultation with the Environment Agency to produce detailed local flood maps. The MET Office is developing a 'severe rainfall event' website and BDC is acting as a Local Authority pilot study. |  |
| NI 182 Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services | Performance is currently running at 87.75% |  |
| NI 184 Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law | We are currently achieving a 93% compliance rate. |  |
| BV2a - The level of the Equality Standard for local government to which the Authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability | Level 3 was achieved in Oct 08 |  |
| BV2b - The quality of an Authority's Race Equality Scheme and the improvements resulting from its application | The scheme was published on the website and was assessed as part of the Equality Standard Assessment Level 3 |  |
| BV226a - Total amount spent by the Local Authority on Advice and Guidance services provided by external organisations | The Citizens Advice Bureau has requested a further £15,000 p.a. from next year which is being considered by the Cabinet on 2/2/09 |  |
| BV213 - Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service(s), and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation. | The indicator is calculated by recording the number of cases assisted through successful casework intervention and dividing this figure by the number of households in the Local Authority area to produce a figure per thousand households. The current target is 4% of the total population which equates to 270 households; Actual performance for April – December 08 is 5% (285 households). |  |
| BV170a – The number of visits to/uses of local authority funded or part funded museums and galleries per 1,000 population | Q3 actual: 220. Q3 target: 115. New web pages on the Braintree District Council website will compensate for falling web hits on the www.enjoybraintreedistrict.co.uk website |  |
| BV170b – The number of those visits to local authority funded or part funded museums and galleries that were in person, per 1,000 population | Q3 actual: 101. Q3 target: 80. The number of visits is on target for the end of the year and a new exhibition opened on 16 th January 2009 Silks of Life: Traditions, Fashions & Culture of Pre-Revolutionary China. |  |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| BV170c – The number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups | Q3 actual: 4446. Q3 target: 4092. Currently the number of bookings for the final quarter 2008-2009 from school groups is lower than predicted, possibly due to the economic downturn. This will be closely monitored and schools will be marketed directly. A new Education Pack is being created to be launched in April 2009. |  |
| CSLP6 - The number of contacts with young people taking place through the NACRO Sport in the Community Project | The engagement figure is currently ahead of target. We anticipate a significant increase on previous year performance. |  |
| BV86 - Cost of household waste collection per household | Projected year end figure at Q3 is £70 - £71 per household. The additional cost is due to the loss of grant income this year from Essex County Council & the Waste & Resources Action Programme (totalling c.£300,000) and a reduction in income from Uttlesford who withdrew from the arrangement for BDC to handle their dry recycling. These issues were not foreseen when the targets were set. |  |
| BV205 - The local authority's score against a 'quality of planning services ' checklist | Development work to the current web access module will deliver all the requirements of the Pendleton checklist and will deliver 100% performance for this indicator. Work programmed for Q4 2008/9. |  |
| BV3 – The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by the authority | The un-weighted results of the Place Survey are due in the middle of January. The Audit Commission advises that the weighted results will be published on the 3 March together with national comparisons. A report outlining the results and the conclusions arising from them will be presented to Cabinet in March. In addition the County Council will shortly be carrying out field work on the 'Tracker Survey' for the Local Area Agreement which will be broken down to District level with the results being available in March. Discussions will take place shortly on whether we wish the sample size (400 for each District) to be increased. In 2009 we will also be developing a programme of service specific customer surveys aimed at identifying satisfaction with services and views on how they can be improved. | n/a |

Managing our Business Key Performance Indicators

Financial Performance

The overall position for the General Fund is a projected Full Year spend of £ 17.745 million, against a budget of £17.863 million. Combined with a favourable variance of £298.3k on the Housing Revenue Account, this gives a total projected underspend of £416,600. The overall projected variance at Quarter 2 for the General Fund and HRA was a total £720,300 under budget. The position has changed mainly on the General Fund (by £250,500) largely due to a number of one-off / short-term issues that are further explained in the commentary below.

General Fund Commentary:

Based on the income and expenditure for the first three quarters of the year, the projected outturn for the General Fund revenue account for the year is to be an underspend of £118,300 or 0.7%%, after meeting the target for efficiencies of £335,310. Details of the variances by business plan that make up this overall position are presented in the attached summary. Charts showing income received for a number of the main sources are also attached. A synopsis of the main issues having an impact, together with a number of areas of risk is provided below:

Key Issues:

Positive impact

Income is up against budget by a net £516,700 before including an additional recharge to the HRA of £300,000 which also benefits the General Fund (see HRA commentary below). The main area of additional service income is on waste management which stems from the short-term agreement with Uttlesford District Council to receive and dispose of some of its recyclable waste. There is also an increase from “tipping away” payments from Essex County Council which reimburses the Council for being directed to take waste to different landfill sites.

Investment income remains higher than budgeted as the average cash balances for the year continue to be higher than originally anticipated - £49.6m compared with an original estimate of £45.8m. Investment returns have not fallen as sharply as the drop in market rates due to the investments already made prior to the cuts in Base Rate.

A final reconciliation of client and contract price issues dating back to April 2003 on supporting people which has been necessary prior to the contract being assigned over to Greenfields has resulted in additional backdated grant being awarded. In addition a provision set aside in 2007/08 based on an expected "claw back" of grant is no longer required and has been reversed back to revenue account in this Quarter's forecasts.

Negative Impact

The slowdown in the housing market is continuing to have a direct impact on the income from land charge searches, with numbers falling and a shift in mix of the type of searches requested – from full searches to personal searches. The current projected impact is a net £254,600, which is slightly higher than Quarter 2. There are also signs now that income levels on building control may also be suffering in the current economic climate with a downturn recorded in the levels achieved in the last quarter compared with previous years.

Expenditure is over budget by £698,400, the majority of which relates to one-off costs incurred in 2008/09, or where on-going, provision has already been made for the unavoidable elements in future budget proposals.

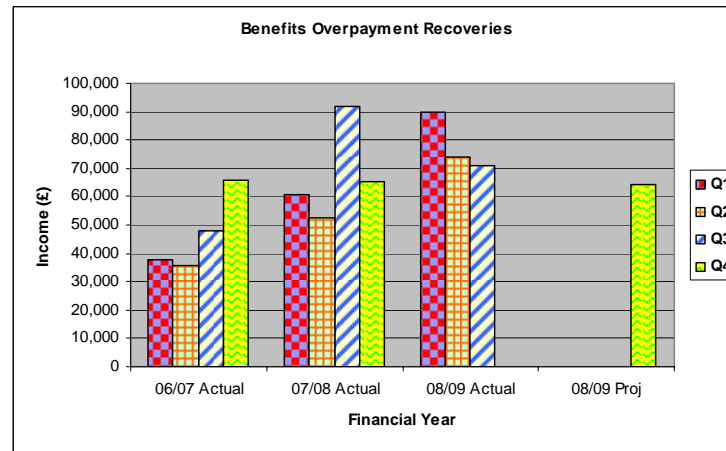
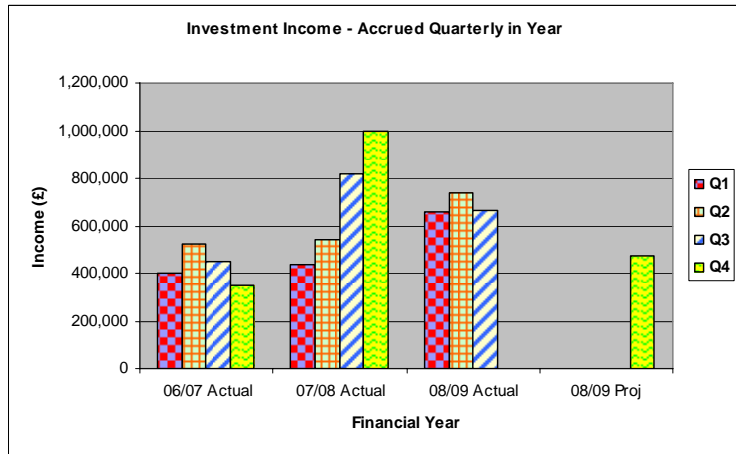
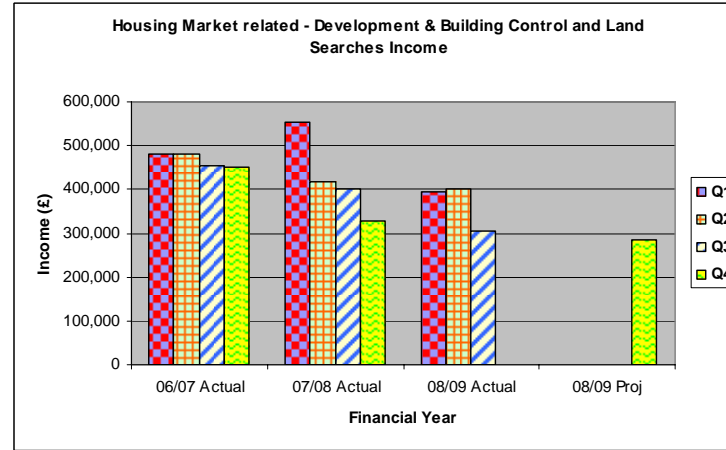
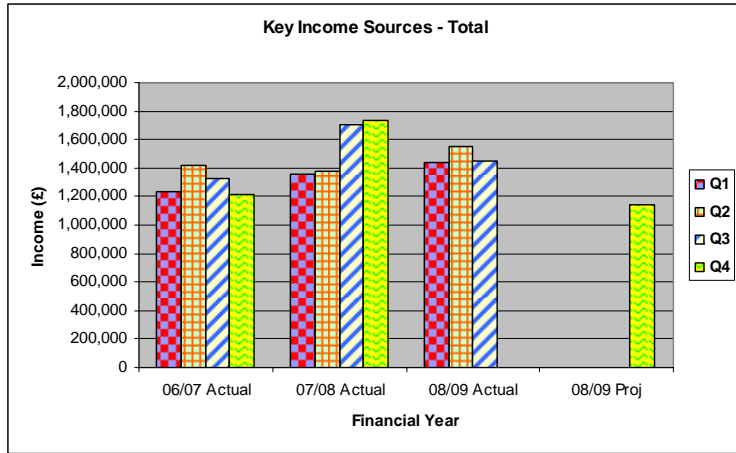
The main one-off costs incurred (or provided for) are:

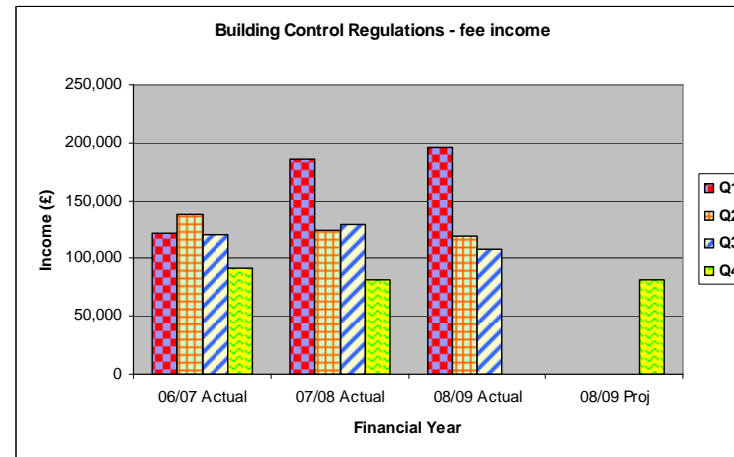
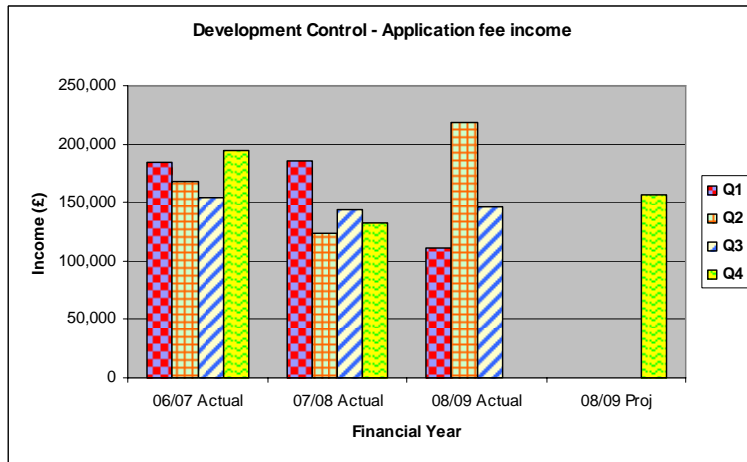
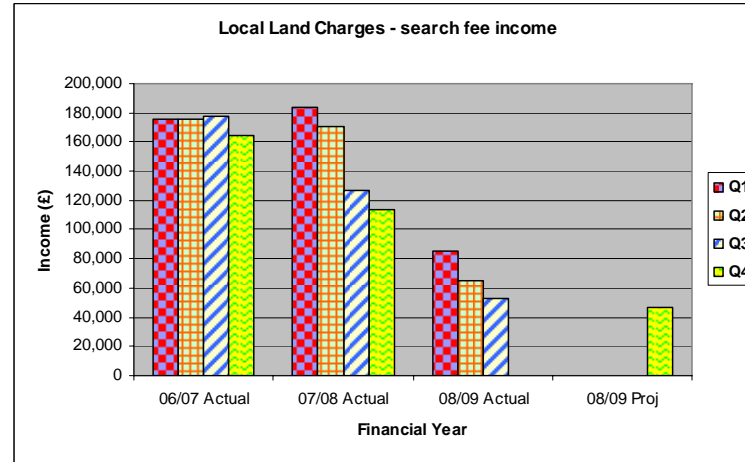
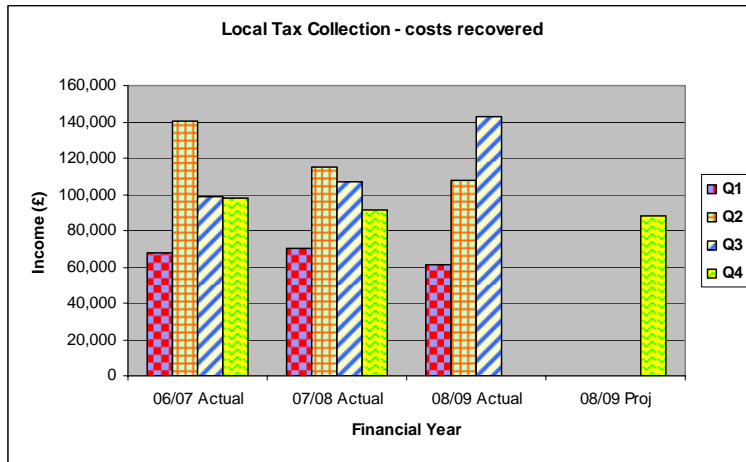
- Leisure operator claims for loss of income on facilities closed due to capital works being carried out (£121,500)
- Redundancy costs across a number of service areas, as a result of agreed restructuring, which will lead to future savings on staff costs (£115,000)
- Costs relating to asset disposals which, following a change in accounting practice, can no longer be offset against the capital receipt (£85,700).

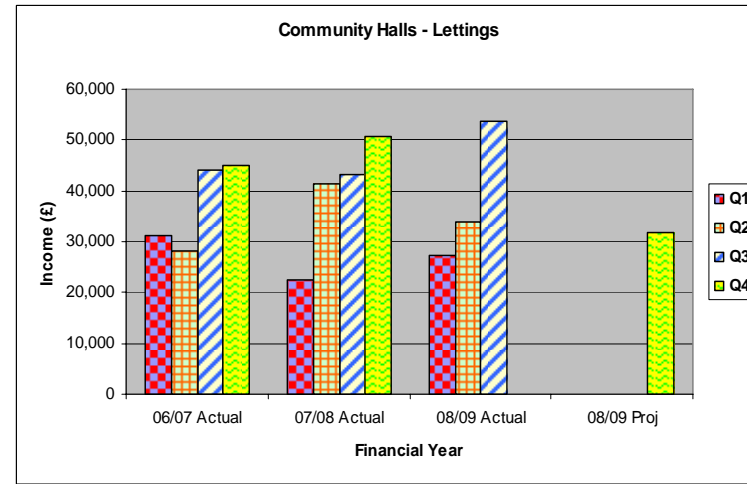
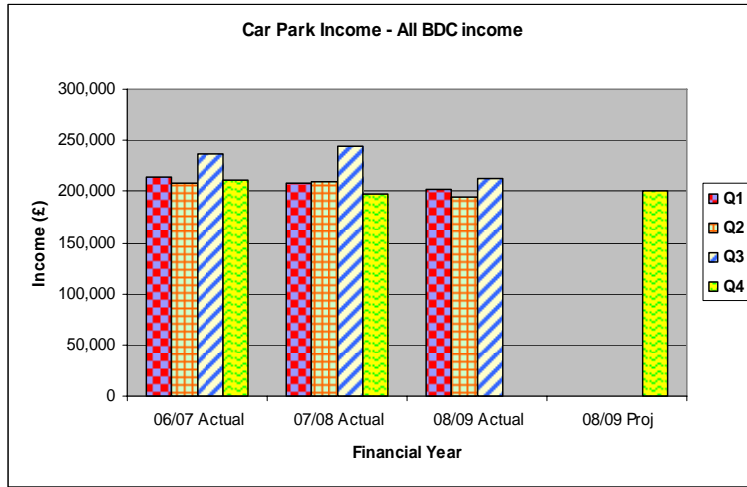
Provision has been made for increased energy costs following renewal of electricity and gas contracts. At the present time the impact across business plans is to be quantified as new billing information comes through, and therefore a corporate provision has been made in the forecasts. Provision has already been made in future budget plans for the estimated impact on subsequent financial years.

Increased costs have arisen across a number of front-line service areas, such as parks and open spaces, cemeteries, and grounds maintenance. The expenditure is largely in response to immediate health and safety and other responsive maintenance issues. An element of "catch-up" maintenance has also been carried out which means the level of spend should now reduce.

| FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT STATEMENT 2008/09 – FULL YEAR REVIEW AS AT QUARTER 3 | Budgets £'000 | | | | Actual £'000 | | | | | Traffic Light Indicator RAG |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| | Approved Controllable Budget | Adj/ Vire | (a) Updated Controllable Budget | Full Year Spend | Budget variance | | Allocated Efficiency Target | (b) Net Variance | (b) as % of (a) Variance as % of budget | |
| | | | | | Exp Adverse/ (Favourable) | Income Adverse/ (Favourable) | | | | |
| General Fund - Business Plans | | | | | | | | | | |
| Community Services | 2,251.7 | (159.6) | 2,092.1 | 2,099.4 | (1.7) | 9.0 | 22.2 | 29.5 | 1.4% | AMBER |
| Corporate Management Plan | 803.7 | 0.0 | 803.7 | 742.1 | (16.6) | (45.0) | 14.4 | (47.2) | (5.9%) | GREEN |
| Corporate Policy And Communications | 612.9 | (59.0) | 553.8 | 510.0 | 21.3 | (84.0) | 15.1 | (47.6) | (8.6%) | GREEN |
| Customer And ICT | 1,546.5 | 0.3 | 1,546.7 | 1,508.2 | (49.3) | 10.8 | 25.4 | (13.1) | (0.8%) | GREEN |
| District Development | 751.5 | (9.4) | 742.1 | 1,064.2 | (27.5) | 324.8 | 41.7 | 339.0 | 45.7% | RED |
| Enterprise And Culture | 1,871.1 | 14.0 | 1,885.2 | 2,056.2 | 161.6 | 9.5 | 16.2 | 187.3 | 9.9% | RED |
| Environmental Health | 1,359.2 | 13.6 | 1,372.8 | 1,313.1 | (70.0) | 10.3 | 51.7 | (8.0) | (0.6%) | GREEN |
| Financial Services | 88.0 | 5.1 | 93.1 | (275.3) | 102.8 | (471.2) | 80.4 | (288.0) | (309.3%) | GREEN |
| Housing Services | 803.0 | 0.0 | 803.0 | 598.3 | (67.3) | (137.4) | 21.6 | (183.1) | (22.8%) | GREEN |
| Human Resources | 370.8 | 0.0 | 370.8 | 364.4 | (6.5) | 0.0 | 6.5 | 0.0 | 0.0% | GREEN |
| Law And Governance | 1,397.3 | 33.5 | 1,430.8 | 1,428.9 | 6.2 | (8.1) | 15.6 | 13.7 | 1.0% | AMBER |
| Operations | 5,583.9 | 84.4 | 5,668.4 | 5,559.9 | 86.5 | (194.9) | 24.5 | (83.9) | (1.5%) | GREEN |
| Business Plan Controllable | 17,439.6 | (77.1) | 17,362.5 | 16,969.5 | 139.5 | (576.2) | 335.3 | (101.4) | (0.6%) | GREEN |
| Corporate Financing | 1,051.0 | 77.1 | 1,128.2 | 1,111.3 | 223.6 | (240.5) | 0.0 | (16.9) | 1.5% | GREEN |
| Efficiency Savings Target | (335.3) | 0.0 | (335.3) | - | 335.3 | 0.0 | (335.3) | - | - | |
| Charges to GF Capital Projects | (292.5) | 0.0 | (292.5) | (292.5) | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Total - General Fund | 17,862.9 | (0.0) | 17,862.9 | 17,788.3 | 698.4 | (816.7) | 0.0 | (118.3) | (0.7%) | GREEN |
| Note (1) - Net Expenditure variance = Gross Exp variance + income variance less expected variance based on a share of the vacancy factor | | | | | | | | | | |
| Housing Revenue Account | | | | | | | | | | |
| Housing Revenue Account | | | | | (298.3) | 1,699.8 | (1,998.1) | 0.0 | (298.3) | GREEN |







General Fund Balances:

Based on the current projection the movement on the General Fund unallocated balances for the year is estimated to be a net withdrawal of £129,110, based on:

- Addition of the projected surplus for the year of £118,300
- Less £50,000 for the Economic Fund to fund initiatives supporting the community in the difficult economic climate.
- Less £40,000 required for additional grant agreed to support the Braintree District Museum Trust.
- Less £157,410 contribution towards capital projects at Silver Street Pavilion and Spring Lodge being carried out in the current year which was agreed to be met from a revenue contribution (agreed in June 2008).

The latest estimate of unallocated balances at the end of the financial year is £2.81m

Risks to the projections for the year:

The continued fall in interest rates is impacting on the level of return on re-investment of funds. The impact has been negated in the current year due to earlier investments, although provision has been made in future budget proposals for a significant reduction in investment income. The revised investment criteria places greater emphasis on investments with only the highest credit rated institutions and preference for those institutions that are named institutions of the Government's Credit Guarantee Scheme.

The Council's discussions with the leisure management operator over the extent and justification of claims for loss of income and additional costs are still in progress and therefore amounts included in the forecasts are provisional.

The annual pay claim for a cost of living rise, effective from 1st April, is still subject to the outcome of arbitration. In the meantime a payment on account to staff has been agreed of 2.45%, which reflects the employers' side current offer.

The Council is exposed to the economic downturn in many ways through its service activities, which may impact on income levels and/ or expenditure assumed in this Quarterly review.

Housing Revenue Account Commentary:

The main transactions projected for the year include:

- Income and expenditure relating to liabilities prior to the housing transfer, along with those relating to the small number of properties retained by the Council.
- Contribution towards corporate overheads for on-going financial and housing management support, along with a charge for pensions relating to ex employees and pensioners of the HRA.
- Investment income on HRA related balances and charges
- Amortised debt costs offset largely by housing subsidy received from the government

The net effect of these transactions is a projected net surplus on the HRA of £298,340, which is a reduction on Quarter 2. This is mainly due to the transfer of Craig and College House now not expected until the end of the financial year, and interest on balances being less.

The HRA balance at the end of the year is currently projected as £5.157m.

Capital Position :

The current capital programme totals £7,044,940, of which £5,543,750 is profiled to be spent in the current financial year, with the balance to be spent in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Approx 2/3rd of the capital programme budget for 2008/09 has either been spent or committed, or is now awaiting final accounts. There is currently an overall projected under spend across all projects totalling £49,416, the two main areas being spend on the council offices and monies remaining from the rural development fund..

At the present time the Braintree Swimming Pool final costs are yet to be determined. The value of works carried out has largely been agreed with the contractor; however, an unresolved matter relates to the contractor's 22 week extension of time claim.

However, a counter claim by the Council for building delay is being prepared. A meeting with the contractor has been set-up for February with a view to reaching agreement on this matter.

With regard to resources to fund the capital programme, the developer, Croudace Homes, which had agreed to purchase the former Riverside Pool site has recently withdrawn its offer. Other developers which had bid for the site are being approached. Until the sale of this site or other assets identified are sold the programme will be funded temporarily from the capital receipt received for the transfer of the housing stock.

| Programmed Capital Expenditure 2008/09 | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | Latest Budget 2008/09 | Actual spend to end of Quarter 3 | Capital grants approved, not yet drawn by recipient | Projects completed, awaiting final accounts | Budget remaining on projects in progress |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| General Fund | 3,688.0 | 1,728.9 | 78.9 | 365.1 | 1,515.1 |
| Housing Investment | 1,855.7 | 805.9 | 761.0 | - | 288.8 |
| Total | 5,543.7 | 2,534.8 | 839.9 | 365.1 | 1,803.9 |

Of 53 projects in the programme for 2008/09, 24 have been completed, of which 8 are awaiting final accounts, and 29 are in progress, of which 16 are expected to be completed by the year end.

Our Customers

The following is a selection of our customer performance measures:

| Customers : Indicators of Performance | 2008 | | | | 2009 | | |
|--|--------|--------|--|---------------------------|------|---------------------------|--------|
| | QTR1 | QTR2 | QTR3 | Change on previous period | QTR4 | Change on previous period | Target |
| % of enquiries resolved at first point of contact | 87% | 92% | 91% | - 1% | | | 75% |
| Average telephone response time in the Customer Service Centre | 42 sec | 27 sec | 15.6 | - 42% | | | 15 sec |
| Number of transactions carried out via the Council website | 8449 | 9388 | 9438 | 1 % | | | 7500 |
| Number of unique visitors to the Council website | 73839 | 71322 | 68592 | - 4% | | | n/a |
| Number of customer complaints responded to in 7 working days | 73% | 80% | 90% | 10% | | | 80% |
| Number of positive articles reported in the local press | 192 | 187 | 140 | - 25% | | | n/a |
| NI14 – The proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer | - | - | Phone: 12.5% Face to Face: 4% | n/a | | | n/a |

In Q3 call answering was very close to its target for the first time this year. This is a significant achievement, and has been a result of a number of different actions put into place to remedy performance on this indicator.

At the beginning of December, Customer Services were informed that they would be no longer required to provide the Customer Service Centre function on behalf of Greenfields Community Housing from September 2009. As a result of this there are 6 staff who will be transferring to Greenfields under TUPE. A project is currently being scoped to mitigate the reduced level of income that the loss of this SLA will cause.

In December, consultation started on new corporate Customer Service Standards, as part of the Shaping Up for Excellence programme. The aim of these standards is to ensure our Customers know what to expect when they contact us or try to access our services. These standards will be going to Cabinet on 30th March 2009.

Quarter 3 is the first quarter that the new National Indicator 14 was required to be reported. The aim of NI14 is to understand the level of avoidable contact that a customer has with the authority, to identify what is causing this unavoidable contact and ultimately to reduce it. The measurement of this indicator has been concentrated in the Customer Service Centre for this quarter as a pilot. The results are not due to be benchmarked with other authorities this year, but we are currently working with other authorities in Essex to identify robust methods of measuring performance against this target, which will allow us to track patterns and identify any issues.

Complaints

Quarterly category analysis trend for 2008/09 (the figures for 2007/2008 are shown in brackets):

| Complaint Category | QTR1 | QTR2 | QTR3 | Change on previous period | QTR4 | Change on previous period |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Justified | 33 (47) | 50 (67) | 44 (27) | - 6 | (27) | |
| Not Justified | 38 (87) | 56 (102) | 52 (37) | - 4 | (51) | |
| Partially Justified | 9 (14) | 15 (14) | 12 (6) | - 3 | (17) | |
| Total | 80 (148) | 121 (183) | 108 (70) | - 13 | (95) | |

A summary of the local ombudsman cases for the period are: 1 housing complaint, resulting in no or insufficient evidence of maladministration, and 1 planning complaint which was categorised by the Ombudsman as premature; the complaint to be put through the Council's complaints procedure first.
























Value in the Delivery of Major Services

The Council is developing a new approach to the annual assessment of the 'Value' provided by its operations and services. This is based on a balanced combination of measures of Economy (i.e. delivery at reasonable cost), Efficiency (i.e. making good use of resources) and Effectiveness (i.e. achieving objectives and giving satisfaction for customers). In due course, there will be Corporate and Service-specific versions, at different levels of detail.

The following table is a provisional Corporate assessment of Value across six major areas of service provision, together amounting to 60% of the Council's Services. For each of these areas there is (a) a measure of the cost per head of population in the District, compared against the average for all Districts in the country; (b) a number of key performance indicators that measure the effectiveness of delivery compared to national quartiles, and (c) an index of user and resident satisfaction with the service. The analysis makes use of the most recently available data, some of which is not up to date. For 2009/10 onwards, these measures will be improved by the results of more regular satisfaction surveys, and the incorporation of National Indicators.

This snapshot suggests that overall Value is good, with most of the individual indicators assessed as being Green or Amber, with two exceptions. The cost of waste collection is very high compared to the average of all councils; a pattern that is already being addressed through a number of initiatives. Resident satisfaction with parks and open spaces was also low when the last survey was conducted in 2006/07. However, since then there has been significant investment in improving the District's facilities, so that current satisfaction would probably be substantially better.

Value in the Delivery of Major Services

| Area of Service Provision (% of the Council's total service delivery expenditure) | Cost per head of population | Effectiveness of Service delivery (From Best Value Performance Results for 2007/08) | | User/resident satisfaction (From 2006/07 residents survey) |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Waste Collection (21 %) |  £ 29.51 33% above average | BV 82a i - % of household waste recycled BV82b i - % of household waste composted (42.8% combined – Top Quartile) BV84a – Kg of household waste per head of population (409.5 – Third Quartile) <i>To be replaced by:</i> NI 192 - % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting |   |  BV 90a - Satisfaction with waste collection (77% - third Quartile) |
| Recreation and Sport (14 % including Open Spaces) |  £ 19.32 14% below average | <i>To be measured by:</i> NI 8 – Adult participation in sport and active recreation | |  BV119a - % of residents satisfied with sports and leisure facilities (59% - third Quartile) |
| | | <i>To be measured by:</i> NI 57 – Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport | |  BV 119e - % of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces (68% - bottom Quartile) |
| Street Cleansing (7%) |  £ 9.32 5% below average | BV 199a – Local street & environmental cleanliness – litter and detritus (7% - second) BV199b - Local street and environmental cleanliness – graffiti (2% - second Quartile) <i>To be replaced by:</i> NI 195 and NI 196 – Improved Street and Environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus, fly-posting and fly tipping) |   |  BV 89 - Satisfaction with cleanliness (68% - third Quartile) |
| Planning (7% including Development Control and Building Control) |  £ 9.10 38% below average | BV 109 a. 60% major applications determined in 13 weeks (87.3% - Top Quartile) |  |  BV 111 - Satisfaction with the planning service by those making a planning application (75% - second Quartile) |
| | | BV109b - 65% minor applications determined in 8 weeks (77.0% - Third Quartile) |  | |
| | | BV109c. 80% other applications determined in 8 weeks (89% - Second Quartile) |  | |
| Environmental & Public Health Services (7%) |  £ 9.07 26 % below average | <i>To be measured by:</i> NI 184 - Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law (currently 93 %) <i>To be measured by:</i> NI 185 – CO2 reduction from local authority operations | |  NI 182 – Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services (New assessment - currently 87.8%) |
| Benefits Administration (5%) |  £ 7.07 44% below average | BV 78a - Speed of processing new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims (22.8 days – Second Quartile) |  |  BV 80g - Overall satisfaction with the Benefits Office (77% - third Quartile) |
| | | BV 78b - Speed of processing changes of circumstances for Housing and Council Tax Benefit Claims (6.3 days – Top Quartile) |  | |
| | | BV 79a - Accuracy of processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims (99% - Top Quartile) |  | |

Scoring for cost per head : Green = 10% or more below average, Amber = +/- 10%, Red = more than 10% above average

Scoring for BVPI's and satisfaction: Green = top or second Quartile, Amber = third quartile, Red = bottom quartile

Our People

The following is a selection of our People performance measures:

| People : Indicators of Performance | 2008 | | | | 2009 | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|------|---------------------------|--------|
| | QTR1 | QTR2 | QTR3 | Change on previous period | QTR4 | Change on previous period | Target |
| Current staff numbers – total headcount (FTE) | 595 (533.5) | 588 (522.7) | 586 (520.2) | -0.34% | | | n/a |
| Permanent staff (FTE) | - | - | 537 (483.9) | n/a | | | n/a |
| Temporary staff (FTE) | - | - | 49 (36.3) | n/a | | | n/a |
| Level of employee turnover | 2.66% | 4.76% | 3.07% | -1.69% | | | n/a |
| Number of vacancies (FTE) | 22 | 27 | 32 (27.6) | 0.84% | | | n/a |
| Number of appointments on first attempt | 93% | 90% | 100% | 10% | | | n/a |
| Number of leavers | 16 | 28 | 18 | -0.64% | | | n/a |
| Number of starters | 27 | 19 | 22 | 13% | | | n/a |
| Working days lost to sickness per employee (Year end prediction) | 9.24 | 7.96 | 8.35 | 0.39 | | | 9.00 |
| Number of learning days | 462 | 364 | 741 | 49% | | | n/a |
| Average learning days per employee | 0.87 | 0.7 | 1.26 | 55% | | | 3.5 |
| Number of staff reaching retirement age in 5 years | 4% | 7% | 6.31% | -0.69% | | | n/a |

The Council's Workforce Development Action Plan (2008/09) contains an extensive set of objectives for continuous improvement. This supports the HR Strategy and the Shaping up for Excellence Corporate Improvement Plan – particularly with respect to the People and Performance theme. Achievements in the projects carried out during the last three months are reported earlier in this report (page 15).

Our Priority Strategic Risks

The Council's current risk profile is unchanged since the last quarterly report. A Risk Review will be conducted in February 2009, when the likelihood and impact of risks will be considered, and risk management actions will be updated.