



# Third Quarter Performance Management Report

1st October to  
31st December 2024



**Braintree**  
District Council

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## Section 1: Introduction and Summary

### Purpose of the Report






The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the third quarter of 2024/25 in relation to the Annual Plan 2024/25. This sets out the key activities being implemented to deliver the corporate priorities and summarises the measures in place by aligning key performance indicators to the priorities within the Corporate Strategy 2024 – 2028. Further detail is given in relation to a set of business performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, our people and health and safety.

This report does not contain details of the numerous activities ongoing in each service area that also contribute to delivering what is important and will make a difference to all in the District. Full details of all projects and performance indicators used to measure the outcomes are available upon request.




### Summary of the Corporate Projects current position for the end of the quarter

Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Communities	1	13	1	-	-
Prosperity	4	7	2	1	-
Environment	5	7	2	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>




#### KEY:

-  Project completed
-  Project on target
-  Project scope/target date requires attention
-  Project requires amendment
-  Project aborted/closed

### Summary of the Key Performance Indicators position for the end of the quarter

Status of indicators			
			Data Only
6	7	4	4

#### KEY:

-  Performance Indicator has achieved target
-  Performance Indicator is up to 5% below target
-  Performance Indicator is 5% or more off target

## **Summary Position**

At the end of the third quarter ten projects have completed, 27 projects are on track, six projects are off track, and eleven performance indicators have missed target.

Eight projects completed in the third quarter, where:

- Round two of the Halstead Community Fund concluded, with a second wave of applications sought to make use of the remaining funding.
- Work to repurpose space at the Plaza saw a gym installed for clients.
- The Digital Business Expo was delivered.
- The District Jobs Fair was delivered.
- Procurement of electric light commercial vehicles was successful
- Refurbishment of two play areas was completed.
- Refurbishment of three skate parks was completed.
- The North Essex Councils Climate Partnership was established and continues to meet on a two-monthly basis.

Five projects have an amber status. Projects with an amber status are:

- The 3G football pitch at Witham Football Club where additional budget and specification checks were required, resulting in a delay to construction start date.
- The affordable housing supplementary planning document (SPD), where the local plan consultation has pushed back the SPD consultation.
- Witham Enterprise Unit viability assessment, where additional financial analysis is required.
- Adoption of an Air Quality strategy where timelines require extension to align with the Essex County Council approval schedule.
- The Waste SPD, where revisions are required ahead of a public consultation.

One project has a red status:

- The Witham and Halstead Town Centre Improvements where further approvals are required to complete works on non-Braintree District Council land. A phased approach to deliver the project has been agreed, but delivery timescales remain unclear where approval has not yet been given.

Further information regarding the completed, on track, amber and red statuses can be seen within the detail for the respective projects.

Six performance indicators have met or exceeded target and eleven have not met target. For the performance indicators that have not met target, seven have missed target by less than 5% and four have missed target by more than 5%.

Performance indications which have missed target by less than 5% are:

- Number of visitors to our leisure centres has been impacted by the Council's leisure partner experiencing system issues. It is expected that the level of participation is higher than the reported figure.
- Percentage of household waste sent for recycling, reuse and composting, where anticipated reduction of green waste tonnages over the winter period has caused a reduction in overall recycling rate.
- Kilograms of household waste collected, where a higher than anticipated October outturn resulted in a missed target for the third quarter.
- Percentage of fly-tips cleared within 24 hours, where vehicle issues and an administration error resulted in 6 fly tips exceeding the 24 hour target.
- Percentages of invoices paid on time which is considered to be due to changes in staffing in areas where there are high payment volumes.
- Business rates collection rate saw a reduction against target, where additional rateable sites were introduced in the third quarter before there was an opportunity to collect before the end of the reporting period.

- Collections for Council Tax saw a minor fluctuation compared to last year, though small fluctuations year to year are expected.

The following indicators missed target by more than 5%:

- Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes where changes to the local council tax support scheme has changed the profile of cases resulting in fewer but more complex cases.
- Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the customer service centre whilst continuing to receive large volumes of calls in relation to complex matters.
- Percentage of stage one complaints responded to within timescales where overdue complaints continue to exceed 10% of total complaint numbers.
- Percentage of DFGs approved within timescales where the council has received an increased volume of DFGs across the 24/25 financial year.

Further details of all performance indicator out turn can be found in the 'Performance Indicators in detail' section of the report.

The Council has made a number of key achievements in the third quarter:



- 31 cases of homelessness were prevented
- 113 affordable homes were delivered
- 123 businesses received support
- The success of the 'Fellas fair' resulted in a second event being organised and the creation of an ongoing 'Fellas forum'
- Community safety social media campaigns reached in excess of 48,000 people and received over 1,100 engagements
- The landlord incentive scheme has seen 38 households assisted into privately rented accommodation throughout the year so far
- The jobs fair saw very positive feedback with 95% of attendees saying they would recommend the event
- Refurbishment of play areas and skateparks in the district has enhanced community spaces for children and young people.
- Work continues at pace at Witham Leisure centre, with solar panels now visible on the solar canopy.





## Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy

# Communities



### Priority 1: Improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for individuals and families and reduce health inequalities focusing on prevention and early intervention

Project title & progress	Target date & status
<p><b>1.1 - Working with the Mid-Essex Alliance, develop a programme of local activities targeted towards addressing the priorities outlined in the Thriving Places Index.</b></p> <p>The Healthy Housing workshop took place in November as planned and was attended by the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Essex County Council Public Health, Provide, and three council representatives for Health, Housing and Economic wellbeing. The workshop identified 5 priority areas of work: enhanced winter respiratory service, review of energy efficiency grants, cross-agency data layering, establishing patient support groups across the localities, and expansion of the 'Making Every Contact Count' training.</p> <p>The Economic Wellbeing workshop was attended in November by officers from Essex County, Maldon District, Colchester City and Braintree District Councils. The workshop identified the key link to the North Essex Economic Forum, which Essex County Council will work on developing.</p> <p>The Braintree Health and Wellbeing panel partners have identified the areas of the district most in need of support, being Witham Central, Bocking North &amp; South, and Halstead Trinity. Priority areas of work include creation of more joint 'place' priorities spanning multiple service areas, community discovery days to find out what residents want, alignment of the healthy weight forum to priority areas with the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, identifying community safety activities, and linking existing activities to the priority areas such as beat the street, park play and Active Braintree.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p><b>1.2 - Continue to support residents and communities impacted by the cost-of-living crisis through initiatives raised by the £1m new homes bonus.</b></p> <p>The community supermarket project continues to develop, in partnership with Maldon Community &amp; Voluntary Services and Essex County Council. A steering group is due to be established in the new year to engage with partners and the community to establish best practice. Work is also ongoing to further publicise the Healthy Start Scheme which provides free food and vitamins for families with children under four on low income.</p> <p>Reach Community Projects returned their first quarterly monitoring report, detailing the 13 cases they have opened. The scheme has already returned positive outcomes for 9 of these cases providing over £31,000 of debt management support, and over £30,000 of access to benefits which were not being claimed. These outputs are expected to rise as other cases are assessed and supported.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>





<p>Using a cost-of-living grant provided by The Council, The Citizens Advice Bureau has employed a cost-of-living advisor who will provide a support service to residents in Braintree, Witham and Halstead.</p>	
<p><b>1.3 - Subject to a successful bid for funding from the Football Foundation, build the new 3G Pitch at Witham Sports Ground.</b></p> <p>Since the initial tender was produced, the Council has seen cost increases across construction materials and labour. To ensure the project delivers to budget the Council reviewed all aspects of the works with the contractor in the third quarter. This additional review was not a part of the original timescales, and has delayed the start of the construction work. However, as a result of the review, the Council has mitigated the effect of increasing cost, and the project is still due to deliver in full.</p> <p>Discharge of planning conditions has commenced, whereby additional steps are required to ensure that the project does not negatively impact on local residents.</p> <p>It is anticipated that work on site will commence in the first half of the fourth quarter, dependant on weather, and will last around 16 weeks. As a result of the additional costing review, the target date is likely to be extended in the fourth quarter.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>1.4 - In partnership with Healthwatch Essex, host a Fellas Fair event in the district.</b></p> <p>The planned Fellas Fair comedy night took place in November at the Halstead Empire Theatre and was well attended receiving much positive feedback. As a result, further UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding has been sought to host a second event due to take place on 13 March 2025. The Fellas Fair also provided the opportunity to gather feedback from attendees, which highlighted the desire to provide a more regular opportunity for men to engage with healthcare professionals in a supportive environment.</p> <p>As a result further funding has been secured to launch a Fellas Forum, which will run on a monthly or twice monthly basis, and encourage attendees to take part in group activities such as walking, fishing, BBQ-ing, and table tennis. This is aimed not only to provide access to healthcare professionals, but also create a social setting and improve mental health, much like the 'Mens Shed' programme. The first session is due to take place on 19 March 2025 in Earls Colne.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 




## **Priority 2: Provide affordable, high quality and safe homes that meet the needs of our residents**

<p><b>2.1 - Deliver the Home Upgrade grant phase 2 for people living in cold homes or struggling with winter fuel bills.</b></p> <p>The Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) scheme deadline was extended for batch applications to 31 January and therefore the council continued to promote the scheme to new applicants until 15 November.</p> <p>The 'Warm Homes: Local Grant' will replace HUG2 in April 2025. Discussions are now taking place regarding the new scheme and how it will be delivered. The Council provided a letter of support to Essex County Council who have agreed to act as Lead Authority for the Essex Local Authority partners and submitted an Expression of Interest on behalf of all the Essex local authorities to bid for funding. The Council is anticipating notification from central government in February regarding the allocation and additional guidance documents. Essex County Council have built in some time in the proposal to complete the Delivery Assurance Check (DAC) in August 2025, with the project starting September 2025.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>2.2 - Introduce a landlord incentive scheme.</b></p> <p>In the third quarter 27 referrals were made to the landlord incentive scheme, and the scheme continues to spend around £2,000 per case to place households in the private rented sector. To date the scheme has placed 38 households made up of 47 adults and 28 children, which as a result has allowed those families to celebrate Christmas in a long term home rather than temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Work will continue in the fourth quarter to support further households into private rental agreements, and develop relationships with both landlords and letting agents to increase awareness and support for the scheme.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 




## **Priority 3: Reduce social isolation and loneliness and support communities to build positive social networks and connections.**

<p><b>3.1 - Launch round 2 of the Halstead Community Fund.</b></p> <p>Round 2 of the Community Fund completed in the first quarter with three organisations receiving funds. £70,000 remained available within the fund and as such round 3 of the Community Fund launched on 2 September. The window for applications has now closed, receiving 6 applications which will be assessed and scored before grant agreements are drafted.</p>	<p>December 2024</p> 
<p><b>3.2 - Continue to work with partners to deliver various activities and initiatives supporting people experiencing loneliness or social isolation.</b></p> <p>The Braintree District Social Isolation and Loneliness Forum met on 16 October. The main focus of the forum was to discuss ongoing and upcoming projects. The forum discussed the monthly Ukraine get together in Witham, the 12 week Wellbeing Journey</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 



<p>and cookery classes at The Well Cafe in Witham, an update on Braintree Museum activities, and a Christmas Day Community Lunch in Halstead led by Soulfood and United in Kind.</p> <p>In the fourth quarter the forum is planning to create an action plan to understand what is happening in the district during 2025 to help people at risk of loneliness and social isolation and identify any gaps that need to be addressed.</p>	
<p><b>3.3 - Award contract and start to build Witham Community Centre.</b></p> <p>The design and build contract is being finalised and the contractor are ready to begin working on the project once the contract has been signed.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>3.4 - Provide a Community Garden through funding from the Changing Futures Programme.</b></p> <p>Sessions at the community garden started on 6 June and have seen around 3-4 participants per week, as well as visitors, volunteers and interest from those walking through the park. The community garden has had the same regular 3 participants each week at the Braintree Garden throughout December. The last session before Christmas was on 19 December and there has been 14 participant hours in December.</p> <p>The Wilderness Foundation (WFUK) are continually working at promoting the garden to a wider audience, via their newsletter and social media pages. The Council is specifically targeting local groups such as the Braintree Community Hub. The WFUK are continuing to promote the sessions and have created a video with the Council to help with promotion, which is currently being edited.</p> <p>The Council is also exploring funding routes to continue the sessions into the 2025/6 financial year.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>3.5 - Support and expand community-led walking activities to 10 in the district.</b></p> <p>Intelligent Health, the partner working with The Council to deliver the Beat the Street programme, has appointed a Local Engagement Coordinator who is working with stakeholders to map community assets and landmarks into the game. Work has also started to promote the programme, ensuring that engagement can take place in schools ahead of the launch.</p> <p>The data sharing agreement has also been finalised, and discussions are taking place around how insight from the programme can be aligned to work that Essex County Council is undertaking to identify health determinants in partnership with Chelmsford and Maldon Councils.</p> <p>Work will continue into the fourth quarter to finalise the game map and promote the programme as far as possible before launch in March 2025.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 

**Priority 4: Develop safer and more resilient communities empowering residents to take ownership of local projects and initiatives**

<p><b>4.1 - Through the safer streets funding, prevent violence against women and girls in public, neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour in Halstead.</b></p> <p>In the third quarter a second J9 domestic abuse awareness training session took place, providing attendees with both training and resources to provide additional support within the community.</p> <p>The second night of action took place in Halstead, attended by officers from Braintree District Council, the street warden from Halstead Town Council and four police officers. Additional licence checks were conducted for venues and taxis, and the Chelmsford SOS bus was available all night to provide emergency first aid and support to vulnerable people.</p> <p>The eighth and ninth Halstead Safer Streets steering group meetings took place in the third quarter, discussing upcoming events in the fourth quarter and working to identify funding opportunities to continue key activities once the programme concludes.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> 
<p><b>4.2 - Continue to administer the Councillor Community Grant Scheme.</b></p> <p>A total of 14 grants were awarded in the third quarter, totalling £8,999. Funding this quarter contributed to deliver ongoing funding to 'Dancing with Dementia' provided by the Dance Network Association, refurbishments of St Mary's Church Hall, repairs to Wethersfield's St Mary's Church clock, and funding to reposition Witham Town Council's defibrillator.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>4.3 - Oversee the coordination of the Community Safety Action Plan to increase awareness of child exploitation, domestic abuse, fraud and cybercrime.</b></p> <p>Braintree District Council attended the Rural Crime Summit, led by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner's office discussing rural fly tipping, plant theft, and protection of rural and isolated communities from wildfires.</p> <p>The 16 Days of Activism social media campaign took place through November and December, with posts focussing on victims, perpetrators, support services and training. The campaigns reached over 18,000 people online and received in excess of 450 engagements.</p> <p>The Women's Safety social media campaign which took place over Christmas reached over 30,000 people and received in excess of 650 engagements.</p> <p>Monthly Operation Dial Saturday patrols continued through the third quarter, and the new Public Spaces Protection Order has resulted in 3 fixed penalty notices being issued.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 

#### **4.4 - Continue to support local investment in communities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year 3).**

Work continues to coordinate delivery of the Social Spark Programme in the Braintree District, which will focus on 3 key areas. These are: training community leaders, Social Entrepreneurship and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) capacity building.


The business case presented in the second quarter has been approved, with the grant funding agreement having been drafted, the project is awaiting appropriate governance to be completed before implementation.




March 2025









## Priority 1: Ensure district growth is sustainable and accessible with strong connectivity and infrastructure

Project title & progress	Target date & status
<p><b>1.1 - Deliver physical improvements to Halstead and Witham Town centres.</b></p> <p>The Witham and Halstead town centre improvement works includes the replacement and refurbishment of the street furniture, and areas of surfacing on Newland Street, Witham (between Mill lane and Witham Library), and High Street, Halstead (Halstead Library and Market Hill). The contract for the improvement works were awarded in May 2023, and work then started to progress the necessary permissions and confirm the exact detail of the scheme. The street furniture licence was first submitted to Essex Highways in September 2023, which highlighted the uncertainty around ownership for the existing street furniture. A way forward was agreed with Essex Highways, and the licences were agreed in July 2024.</p> <p>Due to further permissions being needed for larger elements of the work, including street lighting improvements, paving replacements, and road signage, a decision has been made to phase the works.</p> <p>Phase 1 across both towns will include bins, benches, way finding monoliths, painting works (excluding streetlights), and noticeboards.</p> <p>Phase 2 across both towns will include paving repairs, street lighting, and road signage replacements.</p> <p>In August 2024, the Council were advised that an additional permission was required, Essex Highways confirming in October 2024 that a minor works agreement (MWA) between Braintree District Council and Essex Highways is needed. The MWA requires discussion between both authorities to agree the scope of the project and how the work will be executed. Essex Highways have agreed to progress the MWA for both towns and phases concurrently, prioritising the phase 1 works, so to progress the licenced work in phase 1 as soon as possible.</p> <p>The timescales to deliver the project are currently uncertain and are dependant on the agreement of MWAs for both phases. Work can start on site soon after an MWA is agreed, and it is intended that phase 1 works will commence whilst the phase 2 MWA is discussed.</p> <p>A revised target date will be provided in the fourth quarter.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>


<p><b>1.2 - Work with communities to implement neighbourhood plans in Steeple Bumpstead, Hatfield Peverel and Earls Colne.</b></p> <p>The Hatfield Peverel neighbourhood plan was adopted in the second quarter. The Steeple Bumpstead plan has been agreed to go to referendum, after which the result will be reported to full council. The Earls Colne plan is now at the examination stage.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>1.3 - Revise the Local Plan in line with recent changes to National Planning Policy Framework.</b></p> <p>Work to revise the Local Plan continued in the third quarter, with Options and Issues documentation and evidence being prepared ahead of a public consultation due to launch in January.</p>	<p>June 2026</p> 
<p><b>1.4 - Develop an affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</b></p> <p>The affordable housing SPD consultation has been prepared in the third quarter, and is due to launch on 7 March so as not to overlap with the Local Plan consultation. As a result, a revised target date will be sought in the fourth quarter.</p>	<p>December 2024</p> 
<p><b>1.5 - Develop a design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</b></p> <p>The initial consultation on the Design SPD has been completed in the third quarter. Officers continue to work on the design code and will use the feedback and findings from the consultation to develop the code ahead of a second consultation planned in summer 2025.</p>	<p>December 2026</p> 

**Priority 2: Attract and support growth, providing high quality employment opportunities in high growth sectors and industries**

<p><b>2.1 - Develop the Council's inward investment activity in association with the North Essex Economic Board (NEEB).</b></p> <p>The contract to develop and deliver a report on potential investment sites across the NEEB geography was awarded in the third quarter, with work underway to identify potential investment sites across the NEEB member districts. Desk-top research is underway whilst districts identify sites of interest and collate necessary details for submission.</p> <p>The NEEB website has also undergone an upgrade to support the inward investment work.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>2.2 - Create an additional meeting area and multi-media space at the Plaza.</b></p> <p>The demand for occupancy space and profile has changed since the proposal for the works was put forward. The proposed space has been repurposed to provide gym facilities based on feedback from customers and to support revenue generation from the space.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 

<p>In light of the change in demand for occupancy space, the original business case was reviewed to determine whether the meeting and multi-media pods would still add value to the same degree as originally anticipated. Considering feedback from customers, it was acknowledged that there would not be sufficient demand for the pods, and therefore at this stage the council has decided not to proceed. The Hatchery continues to provide appropriate meeting space, whilst customers can now benefit from the new gym facilities. This project is now complete.</p>	
<p><b>2.3 - Provide planning permission for the remaining plots at Horizon 120.</b></p> <p>Following the granting of planning permission for plot 5 in September, planning applications for plots 6 – 8 were submitted in the third quarter, and have been granted pre-application approval. The applications will be decided at Planning Committee in March 2025. The required earthworks and soil relocation is anticipated to take place in the fourth quarter, and as a result the target date has been amended to March 2025 to allow for both the decision at planning committee and for the groundworks to take place.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>2.4 - Confirm the viability of the Council delivering the enterprise site at Witham.</b></p> <p>Having completed one round of viability assessments, the Council has decided to move forward with additional discounted cashflow analysis to build on the work that has already been completed. With additional work required, this project is amber as it is now overdue.</p>	<p>December 2024</p> 


**Priority 3: Provide tailored business support and access to funding to help businesses thrive and innovate**

<p><b>3.1 - In association with the North Essex Economic Board, provide business support services focused on enhancing digital skills, financial management and business growth.</b></p> <p>Proactive and reactive contact with businesses requiring support continues, with over 603 interventions recorded in November alone. A contact exercise with the North Essex Finance Brokers concluded in December to identify further opportunities for engagement.</p> <p>11 NEEB events took place in the third quarter, five of which occurred in the Braintree District, all of which supported business networking. A further seven events are planned for January covering growth, marketing and artificial intelligence.</p> <p>NEEB is now in contact with over 400 individuals who are seeking to start or scale a business, or develop a business idea, and able to offer support at an early stage.</p> <p>Performance against the majority of the programme KPIs are on or ahead of track.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
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<p><b>3.2 - Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver a Green Business Expo.</b></p> <p>The Green Business Expo took place in June at the Plaza, delivering Net-Zero support and advice to 33 businesses.</p>	<p>June 2024</p> 
<p><b>3.3 - Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver a Digital Business Expo.</b></p> <p>The Digital Business Expo for employers took place on 10 October seeing attendees from 36 local businesses, 100% of which would recommend the event to others and stated that the event improved their understanding of AI, digital transition and the economic outlooks of their businesses. 40% of attendees will be adopting new technology as a result of the Expo, and 30% will be creating new roles.</p> <p>The Digital Business Expo for students took place on 26 September, 86% of which would recommend the event, and 82% of which felt the event would help them to get a job in a digital role. 80% said the event had improved their knowledge of what digital skills they would need, and 86% felt the event had improved their awareness of digital scams.</p> <p>Due to the success of the event, a further student day was scheduled to take place on 9 December. This project is now complete.</p>	<p>October 2024</p> 





**Priority 4: Develop skills that are attractive to employers and support residents to access opportunities to improve their economic well-being**

<p><b>4.1 - Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver a green skills programme.</b></p> <p>The Green Skills programme official launched on 13 September delivered by Essex ACL. Courses offered range from level 2 to level 5 in domestic retrofitting and energy assessment. The Council continues to proactively promote the programme, with uptake of the programme performing positively and anticipated to meet its targets by the end of the financial year.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p><b>4.2 - Organise and deliver a jobs fair in the district.</b></p> <p>The jobs fair took place on 2 November at Queen's Hall in Halstead. 161 attendees received information and guidance from 22 different exhibitors. Feedback from the event was extremely positive, 95% of attendees would recommend the job fair to others with 85% saying that it had helped with their job searching. 69% fed back that the jobs fair had helped in considering career pathways.</p> <p>100% of the exhibitors found the event useful stating that 82% of attendees were of good or excellent quality. Additionally, 24% of exhibitors were able to fill vacancies as a result of the jobs fair.</p> <p>Planning has already begun for another event to take place in 2025.</p>	<p>October 2024</p> 






# Environment

## Priority 1: Ensure district growth is sustainable and accessible with strong connectivity and infrastructure

Project title & progress	Target date & status
<b>1.1 - Enhance the play areas at Meadowside in Braintree, and Oxford Meadow in Sible Hedingham.</b>  Refurbishment work at both play areas completed in November, with any snagging issues rectified through December. Play areas are now open to the public again, and this project is now complete.	March 2025 
<b>1.2 - Develop a renewable energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</b>  In the second quarter the target date for the renewable energy SPD was revised to December 2025 to allow for focus on the Local Plan revision. Work has paused on this project during the third quarter, the decisions made around the Local Plan will inform the direction of the renewable energy SPD.	December 2025 
<b>1.3 - Upgrade the skateparks at Spa Road in Witham and Weavers Park in Braintree.</b>  The construction works at both sites has completed, with all sites now open to the public. To celebrate the refurbishments three Skate Jam events were organised at each of the parks, including one at Ramsay Road, Halstead.  The events saw live music, skating competitions and lessons for users, with over 530 people attending across the three events. All events saw positive feedback, with residents particularly grateful for the activities for children and generous prizes for competition winners.	October 2024 
<b>1.4 - Revise The Council's Tree Strategy.</b>  The Tree Management Protocol, which guides the work undertaken by the Landscape Services team and is the substantive part of the Tree Strategy, is in place and has identified priority work which needs to be addressed. The revision of the remaining elements of the Tree Strategy is important, however the outstanding surveying work needed on existing tree stock in line with the management protocol is of highest priority.  As a result, the target date for this project has been extended to March 2026 to allow for this work to happen.	March 2026 

**Priority 2: Continue to deliver a cohesive and integrated response to climate change adaptation and mitigation**

<p><b>2.1 - Develop a local Air Quality Strategy.</b></p> <p>The Council continues to work with Essex County Council, and all other Essex district councils, to develop an Essex-Wide air quality strategy. The strategy is in draft format and is due to be put to public consultation at the end of January 2025, after which adoption is anticipated later in 2025.</p> <p>In order to align the Council's timescales on this project with that of Essex County Council, and as a result the target date for this project will be revised in the fourth quarter once the schedule for adoption by Essex County Council is known.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p><b>2.2 - Procure 14 Electric Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs).</b></p> <p>Procurement of the 14 electric light commercial vehicles was successful, with the vehicles currently undergoing the final modifications required before entering service. Final preparations are underway on site for the electric charging infrastructure, which is due to be completed in the fourth quarter.</p>	<p>December 2024</p> <p></p>
<p><b>2.3 - Install solar panels at Witham Leisure Centre.</b></p> <p>With Sport England funding in place the solar contract was awarded to a contractor, who were able to provide two large solar canopies in the car park of the leisure centre as well as optimum solar coverage on the leisure centre rooftop. The contractor mobilised on 4 November with extensive car park management planning beforehand.</p> <p>Social media and press releases have been published in partnership with Fusion to advise residents and users of the site of the project and its progress. Banners have been added to the car park and external fencing of the leisure centre with a QR code to direct users to a live webpage with up-to-date information on scheduled works and alternative parking arrangements.</p> <p>Trenches were dug in the car park for cable runs from inverters to kiosks to the building itself. These groundworks were reinstated, and the car park was jet washed, cleaned and any white lines reinstated. The anchor holes for the car park canopies were drilled and completed within two days with the upright steel frame for the canopies installed shortly after.</p> <p>Both the double and single car park canopies are now in place and solar panels are installed on part of the double canopy. Works have been planned to prioritise the reopening of one length of car parking spaces as soon as safe to do so in January.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the car park will fully reopen by 31 January 2025.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>

#### **2.4 - Take part in establishing a Climate and Environment Partnership and work programme across the North Essex Councils.**

The Climate Change Project Manager built a communication and document sharing platform for the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership which will allow efficient sharing of documents for shared best practice opportunities. This has resulted in strong efficiencies in time as well as ensuring all shared documentation is up to date and relevant for all officers across the nine councils.

The fifth meeting of the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership took place on 10 October and was hosted by Maldon District Council, with Braintree District Council administering the event. The morning session focused on energy efficiency opportunities with presentations on heat networks, renewable energy and community energy. Updates were also given on the Air Quality Strategy. Two Braintree officers attended an afternoon working session developing a joint climate risk register across the local authority partners.

The North Essex Councils Climate Partnership met again in December and this meeting was hosted by Braintree District Council. The focus was on a review of achievements to date and a rescope of future plans. Following the session, the Council updated CEOs of progress and targets for 2025. The future working streams include scoping collaborative large-scale energy efficiency for council estates and energy generation projects as a partnership, and creating a joint risk register for climate change across North Essex. These workstreams are scheduled for development in January 2025.

Braintree District Council have played an active part in establishing the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership and have been lead facilitator for most of the joint sessions.

The partnership now meet routinely every eight weeks to progress joint working opportunities but also have regular and less formal communications between meetings and have formed and developed strong working relationships between climate change officers.

March 2025




### **Priority 3: Support residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and be more resilient to climate related impacts**

#### **3.1 - Allocate funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support at least ten Community Infrastructure initiatives in relation to decarbonisation.**





Site visits were conducted to see projects and case studies were published on social media and on the Council's website for projects at Great Notley Parish Council, Braintree Cricket Club, Witham Town Football Club, Birdbrook Community House Trust and Feering Parish Council. Continued communication and support has been provided to all recipients to both support successful project completion and successful data feedback on carbon emission savings.

March 2025



<p><b>3.2- Deliver a campaign to encourage motorists around schools to switch off their engines when stationary outside schools.</b></p> <p>The Council is working with Notley Green Primary School to act as a showcase for the campaign. The Council has received positive engagement from the school's eco group and have provided an information pack to parents. In addition, the school will be running an assembly for pupils using the Council's toolkit and has already received a pledge from a parent. It is hoped that this will encourage other schools to adopt the campaign.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
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**Priority 4: Improve the way that we manage waste and encourage residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle more**

<p><b>4.1 - Collaborate with other Essex Authorities to establish and adopt a new Waste Strategy for Essex.</b></p> <p>The Waste Strategy for Essex was adopted at Cabinet in September, providing a strategy for waste collection and disposal across Essex over the next 30 years.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p><b>4.2 - Work with other authorities, including Essex County Council, to develop and deliver waste minimisation and recycling initiatives that deliver on the requirements of Waste Reforms and the Essex Waste Strategy.</b></p> <p>Following research and benchmarking activity, options for waste collection methodology were presented to Cabinet in December. Cabinet approved for the preferred option to move to public consultation, which is due to launch in January and conclude in March 2025. 16 live engagement events are planned for the duration of the consultation, with the possibility to add more if consultation analytics highlight any key areas of missed engagement.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p></p>
<p><b>4.3 - Develop a waste Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</b></p> <p>Following internal consultation with key stakeholders, including operations, revisions are required to the waste SPD ahead of screening and a public consultation. It is likely that the consultation will take place in the new financial year, therefore a revised target date will be published in the fourth quarter.</p>	<p>December 2024</p> <p></p>
<p><b>4.4 - Deliver a behaviour change campaign to increase recycling, reduce waste and encourage reuse.</b></p> <p>October saw numerous social media campaigns including 'recycle week', fly tipping appeals, public litter bin reminders and promotion of recycling roadshows, as well as material aimed at reducing food waste in connection with Halloween. The newsletter also supported Essex County Council's 'choose to reuse' campaign and promotion of international E-waste day.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>

November campaigns focussed mainly on battery recycling and correct disposal following a fire in a waste collection vehicle. The festive recycling roadshows also were again promoted on social media and the newsletter. A competition was run in primary schools giving pupils the opportunity to name 5 refuse vehicles and 5 waste collection vehicles.

December campaigns tied in with Christmas, focussing on making Christmas more sustainable covering decorating, wrapping, gifting, food waste and Christmas tree recycling. Informative messages surrounding Christmas bin collection schedules and garden waste suspension were also published. All Council channels were used to promote the up-coming waste collection service consultation.



# Climate Change Action Plan



## Introduction

Work has begun on strategically reviewing the delivery of the Climate Action Plan for the first three quarters of the year and ensuring projects are on track for delivery. Projects are being prepared for closure or amendment. Performance Indicators and accompanying data are being reviewed. Members of the Climate Change Delivery Board are working to identify projects and actions to be included in the 2025-26 Climate Action Plan.

## Learning & Development

On 11 December, the Climate Change team led a training session on climate change for Members. The evening session gave up to date scientific information on the subject, gave an update on what the Council are doing to address this and allowed Members the opportunity to feedback their thoughts and ideas. This feedback was collated and shared with members of the Climate Change Delivery Board (CCDB) accordingly and will be discussed in the CCDB January meeting.

Officers attended various Climate Change network groups including the Anchors Group, Home Upgrade Grant Consortium and the CORE and ALEO Groups.

## Resources

The format for the new Climate Change webpages was agreed with the IT Team, with focus on providing residents and businesses with signposting for climate change and sustainability support.

A meeting was held with Anglian Water, who discussed water reduction support for residents. A resource pack was shared with the marketing team and the Council have ordered 100 bath buoys and 200 low flow shower heads which will be distributed from Causeway House reception.

The Staff Eco Group meeting was hosted with a focus on waste reduction and recycling over the festive period.

## Energy Conservation

The LED lighting project at Witham Leisure Centre, funded by Sport England, is underway and the project is currently out for tender.

Plans were made with the event organisers for Officers to attend the Financing Net Zero Leaders Summit on January.

The Local Area Energy Planning Scenarios and Pathways Workshop was attended and workstreams completed to support the session.

Feasibility work was completed with the support of the Greater South East Net Zero Hub to further develop opportunities for renewable energy generation in the future.

### **Built Environment**

The Council represented the service area at the Essex County Council Net Zero Homes Summit.

As part of the Green Doctor Service, a total of 529 measures in residential properties have been provided/installed since April 2024 by Groundworks who deliver the scheme across the Braintree district.

The Winter Warmth booklet has now been printed and is in circulation together with other useful literature including the Winter Fuel Allowance Guidance booklet produced by the Communities Team.

The Council continues signposting residents to the ECO4 / Flex scheme. A total of 11 interventions (including loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, Air Source Heat Pump, solar panels, boilers, storage heaters TRV's) have taken place since August 2024.

### **Transport**

A new 12-month maintenance warranty contract has been agreed with BP Pusle for the Council's electric vehicle chargers. Visits have now been made or are planned to all the non-working units to ensure they are now working and available for all users.

The electrical substation has now been completed at Lakes Road for electric vehicle charging and the site returned to normal use. The Council is waiting on EDF to connect the meter in the kiosk to enable the electric vehicle chargers to be powered up.

Housing & Communities have successfully received grant funding to deliver Beat the Streets program in March 2025 and the climate change team have supported H&C with identifying co-benefits for climate of an active travel project. This support will continue over the forthcoming months until project completion.

### **Business and the Green Economy**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund funded Green Skills Program launched on 13 September with the aim of supporting residents and businesses with upskilling regarding retrofit. Qualifications range from entry-level to Level 5. The Council have been promoting this through various channels.

The Lean 2 Green decarbonisation package for businesses, funded by Essex County Council, continues to be promoted and several businesses have now signed up.

### **Natural Environment**

The Council have been attending regular, monthly meetings with Essex County Council to support with the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy public consultation was promoted via media channels and has now closed.

Essex County Council are also hoping to further engage with all local authorities within their Climate Focus Area and are working with The Council in its role as sponsor of the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership (NECCP) to support this. This includes a potential NECCP Nature Conference in January 2024 and the Climate Change Team are supporting Essex County Council to scope this.

The UKSPF Community Gardens and Orchards grant scheme launched and closed and the applications were processed and scrutinised.

### Adapting to Climate Change

Officers attended the launch webinar for the Met Office Local Climate Service. This platform allows the Council to access district-focused climate predictions and forecasts which will support with adaptation to climate related events.

As part of the working group for the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership, Officers from Colchester, Maldon, Uttlesford and Braintree began work on a joint Climate Risk Register which will support future planning for extreme weather events as well as more standardly expected wetter, milder winters and warmer, drier summers.

The Council have continued to publish and promote severe weather warnings, including yellow weather warnings, flood warnings and winter-ready preparation communications.

The Council have continued to take an active role in the Essex Resilience Forum to monitor and plan for extreme weather events amongst other emerging risks. The Council continues to engage with town and parish councils both on a one-to-one basis and through regular wider meetings such as the Supporting Communities webinar.

Advice on winter preparedness and preparation during an emergency was published in the Contact Magazine in autumn 2024. The article has links to various partners including for Property Flood Resilience Grants and flood preparation.



# Fit For The Future

## **Programme Update**

Progress continued in the third quarter following the implementation of the Transformation Acceleration Plan, which has enhanced the approach to the programme. Specifically, work has been undertaken to;

- Aligning the transformation programme with the organisation's strategic goals.
- Implementing a structured, phased approach to facilitate delivery, ensuring alignment among staff and leadership, and developing actionable improvement steps.
- Establishing a clear methodology for transformation workstreams

This has enabled the capture of key interdependencies, identified cross-cutting themes and milestones, and improved programme oversight to the Head of Transformation, supporting resource utilisation and decision-making aligning to the transformation programme outcomes.

A Transformation Hub has been established to improve communication and collaboration, comprising key delivery personnel from across the organisation. This has also identified the need for additional support to deliver the programme. In response to this a Resource Plan is being developed, which will look at how to best use existing resources, and consider secondments and apprenticeships to support in-house upskilling and career development.

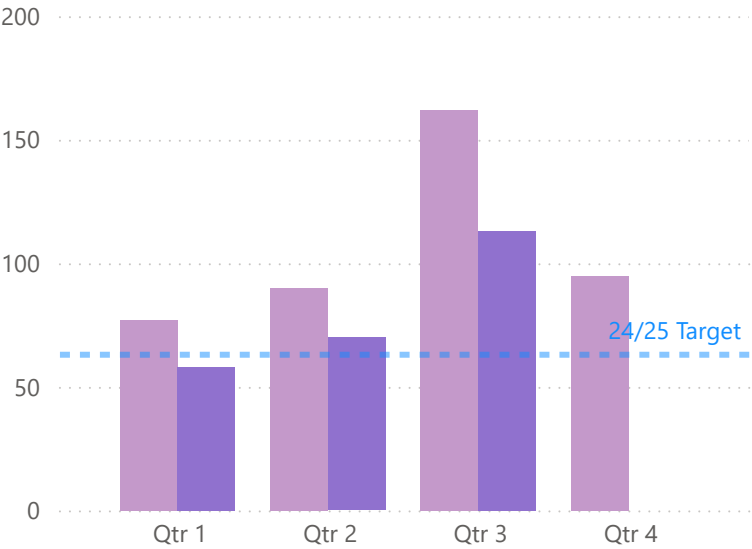
A refreshed Communication and Engagement Plan has been created to support stakeholder management and engagement, key to ensuring the organisation stays up to date on progress & create awareness regarding collaboration and opportunities across the organisation. This is being supported by an internal communications officer.

The announcement of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution on 16 December has raised questions about the focus and priorities of the Fit For The Future programme and its fit within Braintree's long-term vision and wider Local Government reform. It is anticipated that there will be further reviews and assessments of projects under Fit For The Future required in the fourth quarter as the Council understands more about LGR and Devolution, following formal announcements on the Devolution Priority Pipeline.

# Performance Indicators in detail

## Number of affordable homes delivered

Financial year ● 23-24 ● 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

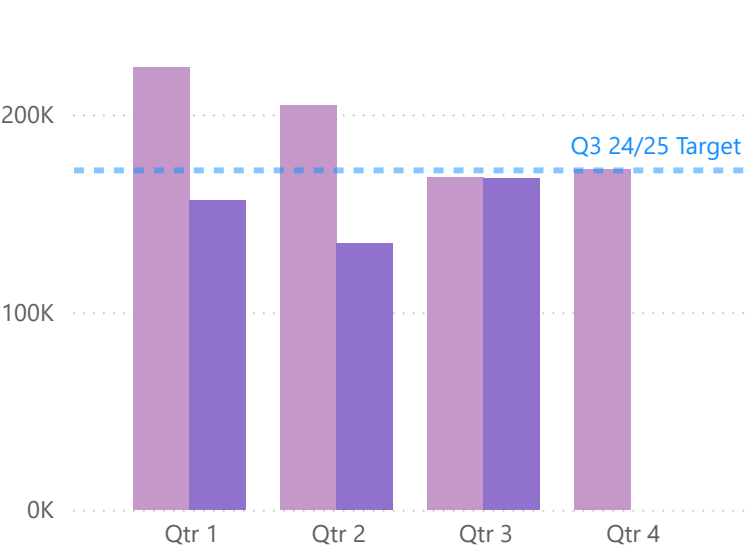
241

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	77	63
23-24	Qtr 2	90	63
23-24	Qtr 3	162	63
23-24	Qtr 4	95	63
24-25	Qtr 1	58	63
24-25	Qtr 2	70	63
24-25	Qtr 3	113	63

Comments: The number of affordable homes delivered in the third quarter exceeded target by a total of 50. This indicator is now on track over the course of the year, and only needs 11 more affordable homes delivered in the fourth quarter to achieve the annual target.

## Number of visitors to our leisure centres

Financial year ● 23-24 ● 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

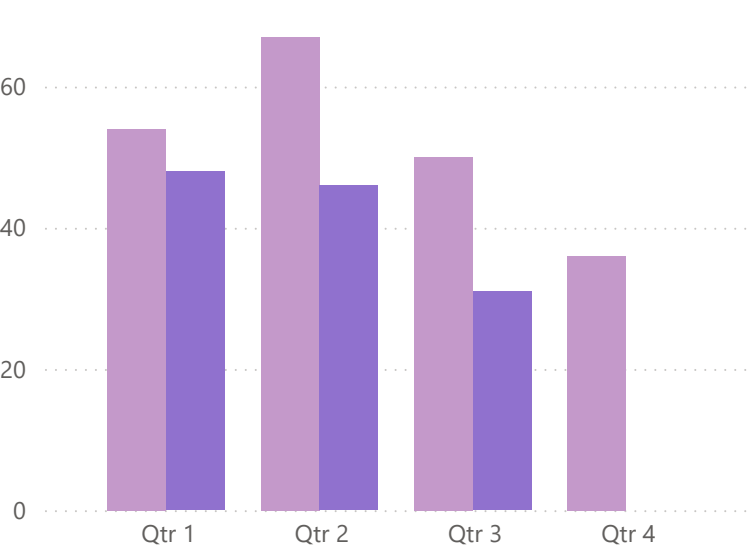
458,978

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	223,864	170,951
23-24	Qtr 2	204,842	182,993
23-24	Qtr 3	168,300	137,154
23-24	Qtr 4	172,071	162,194
24-25	Qtr 1	156,554	228,341
24-25	Qtr 2	134,916	208,939
24-25	Qtr 3	167,508	171,666

Comments: The reported number of leisure centre visitors continues to be lower than the previous year. The Council's leisure partner has reported system issues, which are believed to be contributing to the lower outturn, and it is expected that participation levels are higher than is represented in the provided figures. The Council continues to work with its leisure partner to address these issues.

## Number of homelessness cases prevented

Financial year ● 23-24 ● 24-25



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

YTD cumulative:

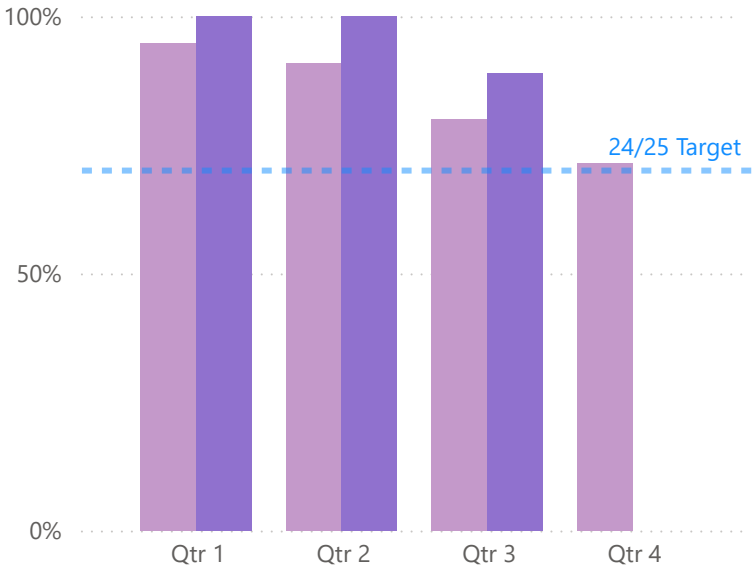
125

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
23-24	Qtr 1	54
23-24	Qtr 2	67
23-24	Qtr 3	50
23-24	Qtr 4	36
24-25	Qtr 1	48
24-25	Qtr 2	46
24-25	Qtr 3	31

Comments: The number of homelessness cases prevented in the third quarter was 31. Whilst this represents a downturn, homelessness approaches reduced by 25% in the third quarter compared to the second quarter. In addition, early intervention activity remained consistent between Q2 and Q3, meaning that a higher proportion of households were offered early support prior to formal action being required.

Major planning applications decided on time

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

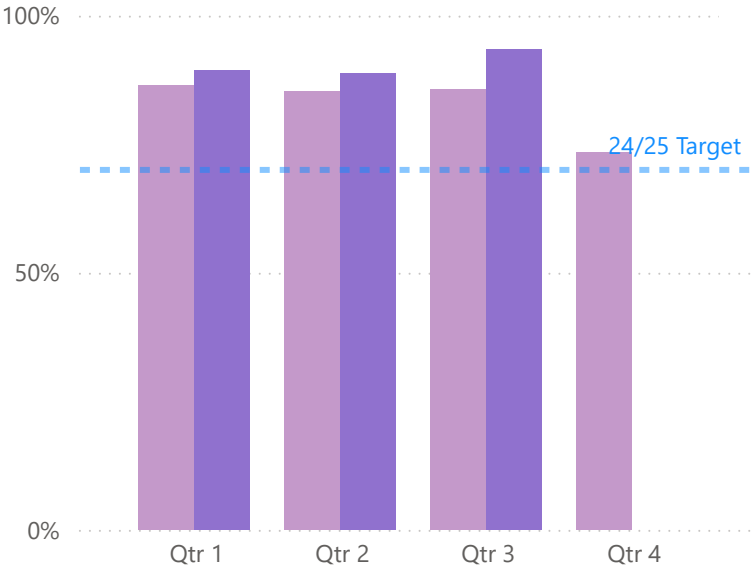
95.83%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	94.74%	70%
23-24	Qtr 2	90.91%	70%
23-24	Qtr 3	80.00%	70%
23-24	Qtr 4	71.43%	70%
24-25	Qtr 1	100.00%	70%
24-25	Qtr 2	100.00%	70%
24-25	Qtr 3	88.89%	70%

Comments: 8 out of 9 of major planning applications were decided on time in the third quarter, meaning the target has been met every quarter in the last two years. The year-to-date outturn is 95.83%.

Minor planning applications decided on time

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

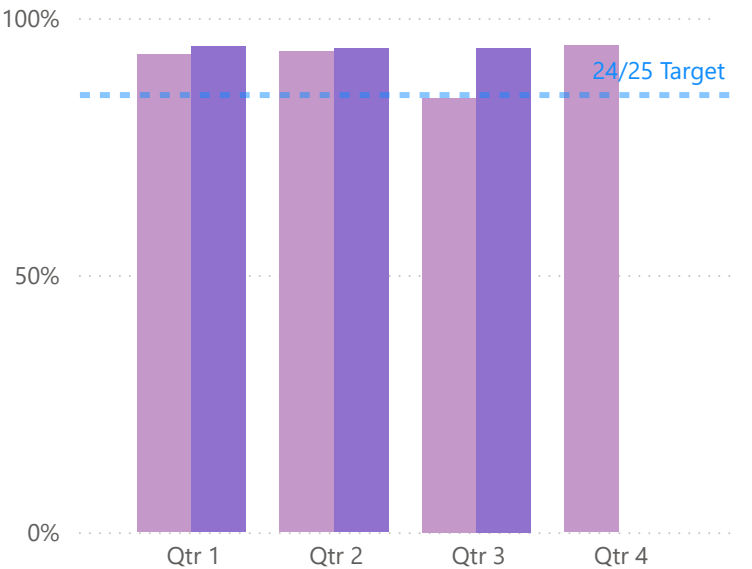
90.47%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	86.36%	70%
23-24	Qtr 2	85.26%	70%
23-24	Qtr 3	85.58%	70%
23-24	Qtr 4	73.33%	70%
24-25	Qtr 1	89.29%	70%
24-25	Qtr 2	88.71%	70%
24-25	Qtr 3	93.42%	70%

Comments: 93.42% of minor planning applications were approved in time in the third quarter, meaning that the target has been exceeded for the seventh consecutive quarter.

Other planning applications decided on time

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

94.21%

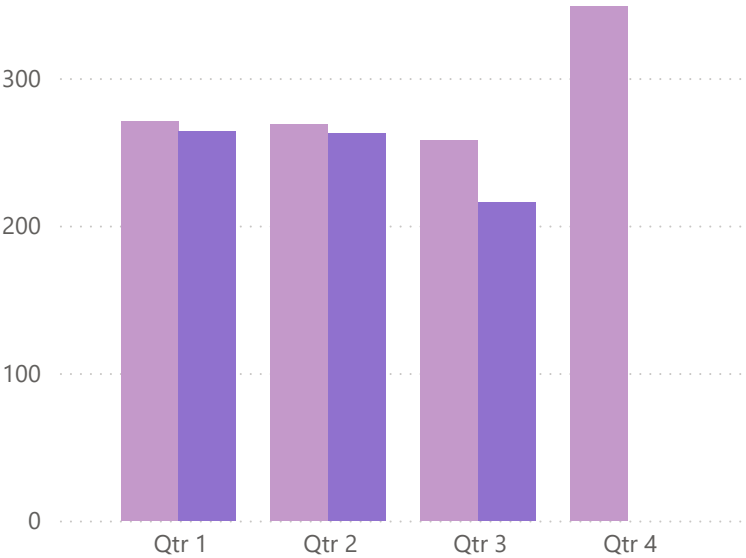
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	92.86%	85%
23-24	Qtr 2	93.53%	85%
23-24	Qtr 3	84.44%	85%
23-24	Qtr 4	94.70%	85%
24-25	Qtr 1	94.41%	85%
24-25	Qtr 2	94.05%	85%
24-25	Qtr 3	94.16%	85%

Comments: The third quarter outturn for other planning applications decided on time was 94.16%, well in excess of the 85% target. This is the fourth consecutive quarter this target has been exceeded.



Number of new start up businesses

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

YTD cumulative:

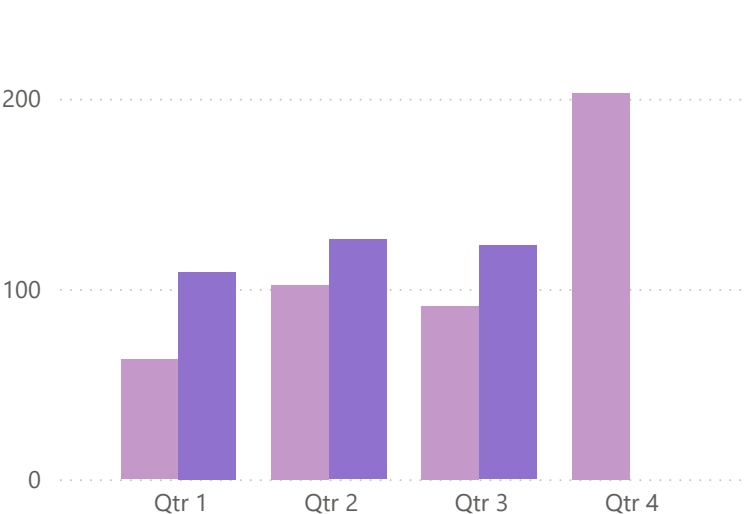
743

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
23-24	Qtr 1	271
23-24	Qtr 2	269
23-24	Qtr 3	258
23-24	Qtr 4	349
24-25	Qtr 1	264
24-25	Qtr 2	263
24-25	Qtr 3	216

Comments: 216 new businesses were registered in the third quarter, a reduction in comparison to the same quarter last year. This does not at this stage indicate a trend, and will be reviewed again in the fourth quarter.

Number of businesses accessing business support

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

YTD cumulative:

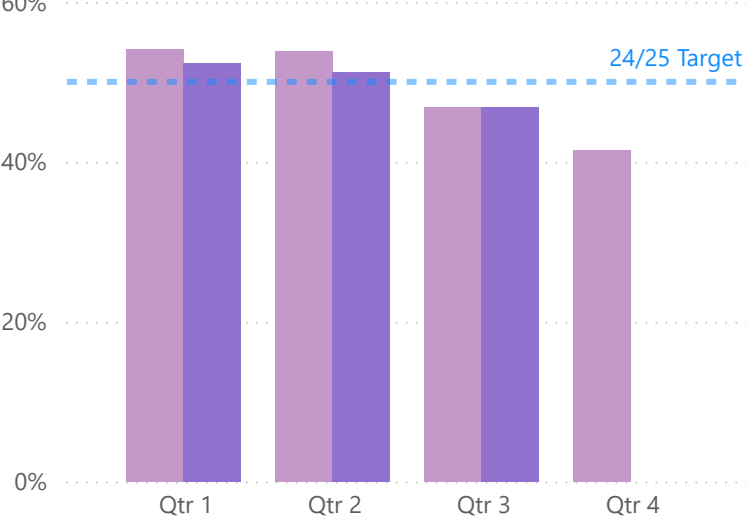
358

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
23-24	Qtr 1	63
23-24	Qtr 2	102
23-24	Qtr 3	91
23-24	Qtr 4	203
24-25	Qtr 1	109
24-25	Qtr 2	126
24-25	Qtr 3	123

Comments: 123 businesses access business support in the third quarter, level with the second quarter outturn of 126. This continues the increased performance against the previous year.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

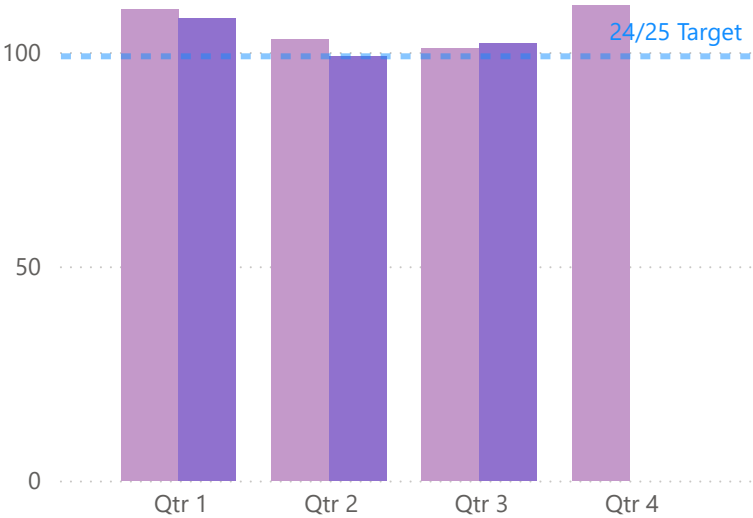
50.17%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	54.14%	60%
23-24	Qtr 2	53.88%	60%
23-24	Qtr 3	46.87%	60%
23-24	Qtr 4	41.44%	60%
24-25	Qtr 1	52.39%	50%
24-25	Qtr 2	51.29%	50%
24-25	Qtr 3	46.84%	50%

Comments: Third quarter outturn for recycling rate has missed target following on from a successful first and second quarter outturn. This result is expected due to the winter suspension of garden waste collection. However, unlike in previous years, collection will resume in early January.

Kilograms of residual waste per household

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Lower

YTD cumulative:

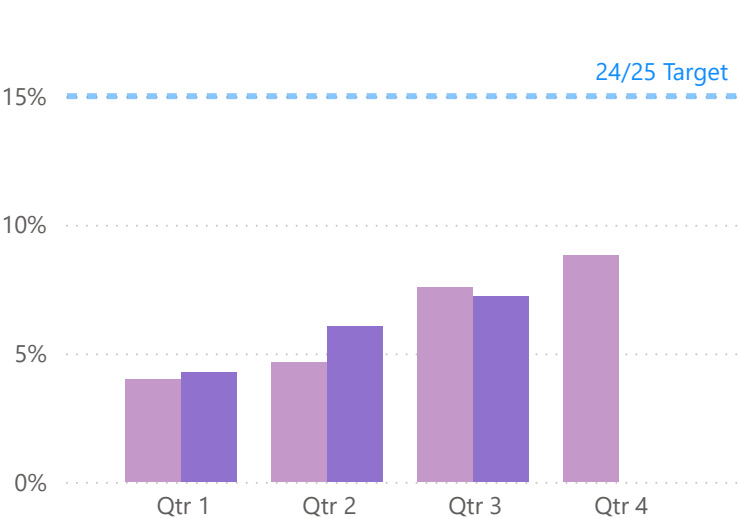
309

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	110	117
23-24	Qtr 2	103	117
23-24	Qtr 3	101	117
23-24	Qtr 4	111	99
24-25	Qtr 1	108	99
24-25	Qtr 2	99	99
24-25	Qtr 3	102	99

Comments: The third quarter return for residual waste missed the new lower target of 99kgs per household, returning 102kgs across the period. This was the result of a higher October return (36kgs), where November and December both achieved the monthly target of 33kgs.

Recycling contamination rate

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Lower

YTD cumulative:

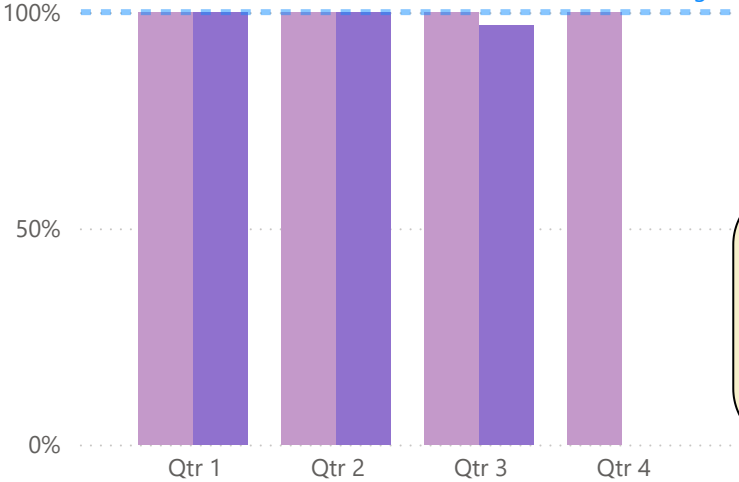
5.84%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	4.00%	15%
23-24	Qtr 2	4.66%	15%
23-24	Qtr 3	7.55%	15%
23-24	Qtr 4	8.80%	15%
24-25	Qtr 1	4.24%	15%
24-25	Qtr 2	6.06%	15%
24-25	Qtr 3	7.21%	15%

Comments: Recycling contamination rate was below target for the third quarter returning a rate of 7.21%. This is following a trend of increasing rate. However, this figure appears to increase as the year goes on, and returns are still well below the target rate.

Percentage of fly tips cleared within 24hrs (numbers reported within table)

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

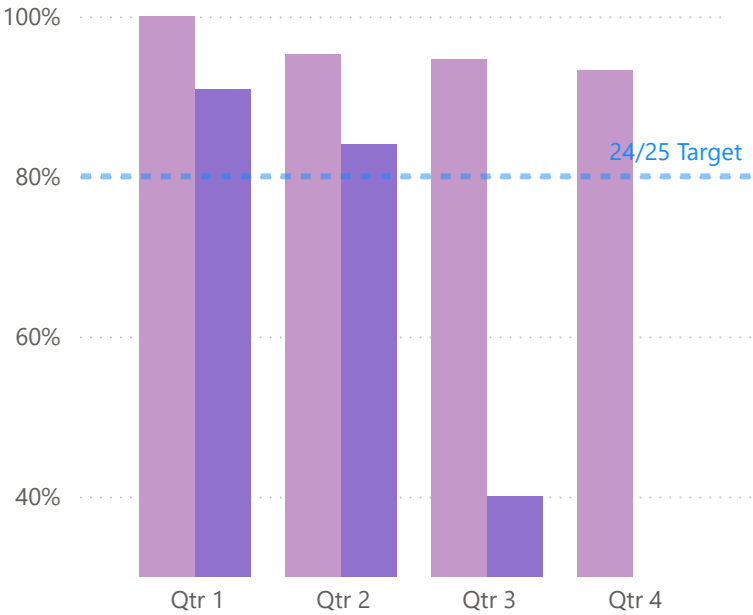
99%

Financial year	Quarter	Number	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	294	100%	100%
23-24	Qtr 2	323	100%	100%
23-24	Qtr 3	236	100%	100%
23-24	Qtr 4	196	100%	100%
24-25	Qtr 1	173	100%	100%
24-25	Qtr 2	218	100%	100%
24-25	Qtr 3	196	97%	100%

Comments: In the third quarter, 97% of fly tips were cleared within 24 hours (190 out of 196). 4 of the missed clearances were due to urgent vehicle maintenance being required, the remaining 2 were the result of delayed allocation.

Percentage of DFGs approved on time

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

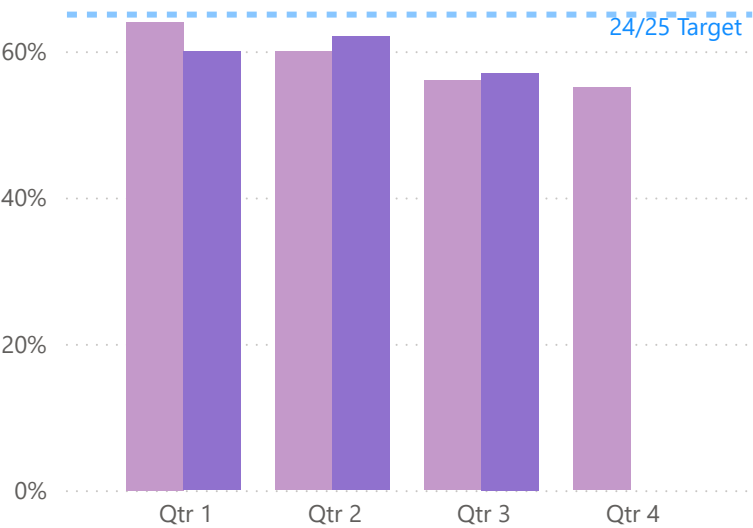
78.08%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	100.0%	80%
23-24	Qtr 2	95.4%	80%
23-24	Qtr 3	94.6%	80%
23-24	Qtr 4	93.3%	80%
24-25	Qtr 1	90.9%	80%
24-25	Qtr 2	84.0%	80%
24-25	Qtr 3	40.0%	80%

Comments: The percentage of DFGs approved on time missed target in the third quarter, returning 40% (6/15). In 2024 the Council has received high numbers of applications which has reduced the amount of grant funding available substantially. Legislation means that the Council cannot reject any applications, and so new applications remain open until funding can be allocated. The Council continues to prioritise urgent and critical grants for those most in need from the year's funding still available. Due to the timescales involved, improvement in this metric is unlikely for at least two further quarters.

Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the customer service centre

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

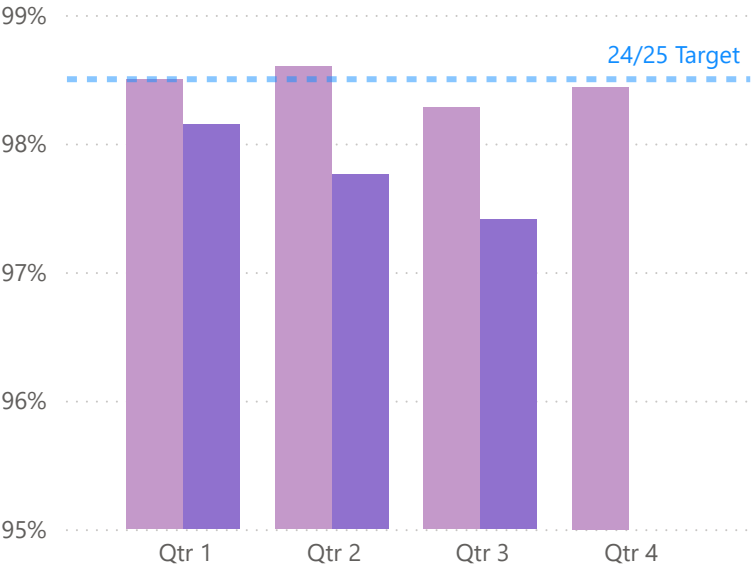
60%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	64%	70%
23-24	Qtr 2	60%	70%
23-24	Qtr 3	56%	70%
23-24	Qtr 4	55%	70%
24-25	Qtr 1	60%	65%
24-25	Qtr 2	62%	65%
24-25	Qtr 3	57%	65%

Comments: The third quarter outturn figure highlights the difficulty of balancing customer services' broad role with the increasing need for specialised knowledge in certain areas. Whilst the customer services team is equipped to handle a wide range of general enquiries, there are occasions when the complexity or specificity of the query necessitates transferring the call. The main services where calls are being transferred include Housing, Council Tax, Licensing and Planning.

Percentage of invoices paid on time

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

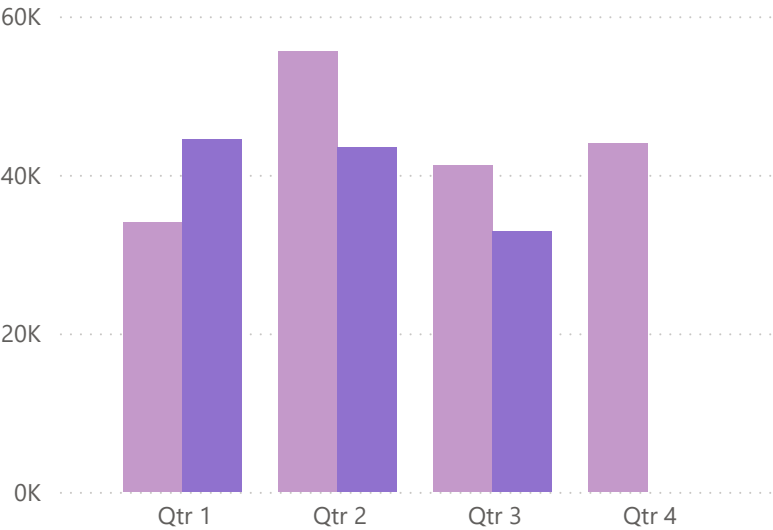
97.8%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	98.5%	98.0%
23-24	Qtr 2	98.6%	98.0%
23-24	Qtr 3	98.3%	98.0%
23-24	Qtr 4	98.4%	98.0%
24-25	Qtr 1	98.2%	98.5%
24-25	Qtr 2	97.8%	98.5%
24-25	Qtr 3	97.4%	98.5%

Comments: Performance has continued to dip in the third quarter, which is considered to be due to changes in staffing in areas where there are high payment volumes. Finance continues to work with services to ensure processes and procedures are adhered to, although this is expected to take some time to embed.

Number of people transacting with the Council online

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

YTD cumulative:

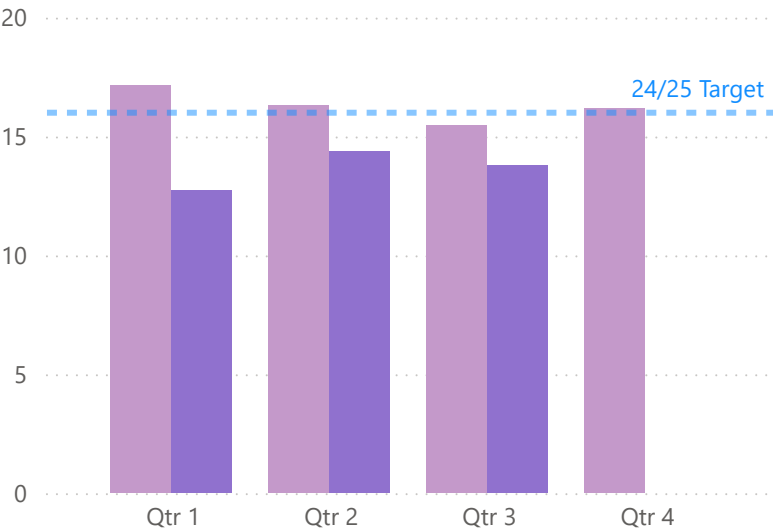
120,876

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
23-24	Qtr 1	33,995
23-24	Qtr 2	55,634
23-24	Qtr 3	41,222
23-24	Qtr 4	43,982
24-25	Qtr 1	44,532
24-25	Qtr 2	43,440
24-25	Qtr 3	32,904

Comments: The number of online transactions in the third quarter showed a reduction compared to the previous period and the previous year, notably in October and November. The reduction compared to the previous year is due to the 'early bird' sign up for garden waste collection in October and November 2023

Days taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Lower

YTD cumulative:

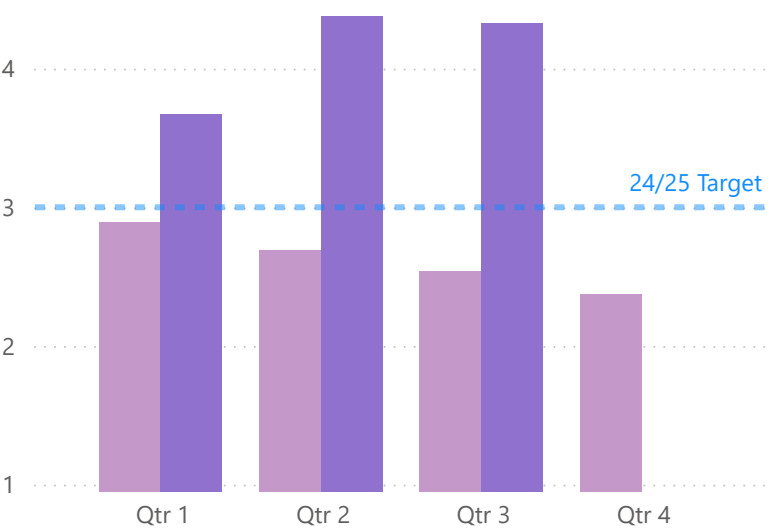
13.62

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	17.13	18
23-24	Qtr 2	16.31	18
23-24	Qtr 3	15.47	18
23-24	Qtr 4	16.18	18
24-25	Qtr 1	12.73	16
24-25	Qtr 2	14.37	16
24-25	Qtr 3	13.77	16

Comments: The time taken to process new benefit claims has remained below the lower target for 24/25 in the third quarter with an outturn of 13.77 days.

Days taken to process housing benefit claim changes

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Lower

YTD cumulative:

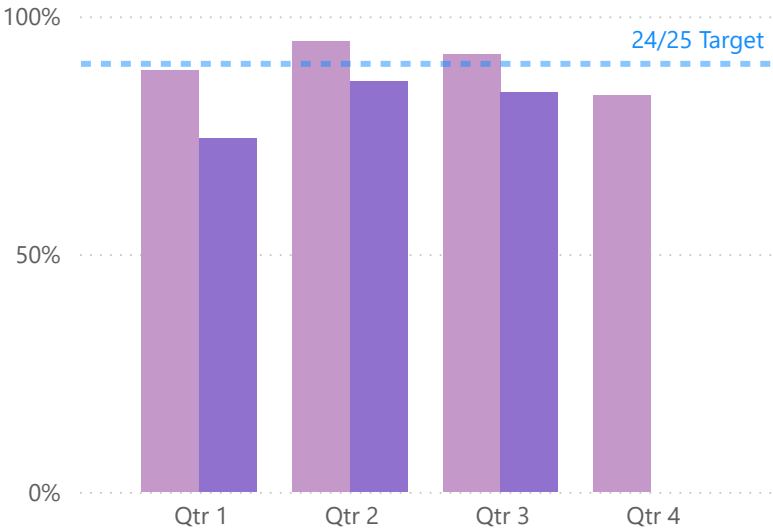
4.13

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	2.89	5
23-24	Qtr 2	2.69	5
23-24	Qtr 3	2.54	5
23-24	Qtr 4	2.38	5
24-25	Qtr 1	3.67	3
24-25	Qtr 2	4.38	3
24-25	Qtr 3	4.33	3

Comments: The new local council tax support scheme has resulted in a positive fall in overall caseload; however this means that the remaining claim changes are more complex, which causes an increase in average processing time. The majority of claims are being processed within target, however outliers which are often due to delayed information, distorts the average. Caseload is also being managed with reduced staffing resources as the service prepares for migration of Housing Benefit cases to Universal Credit.

Percentage of stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescale

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

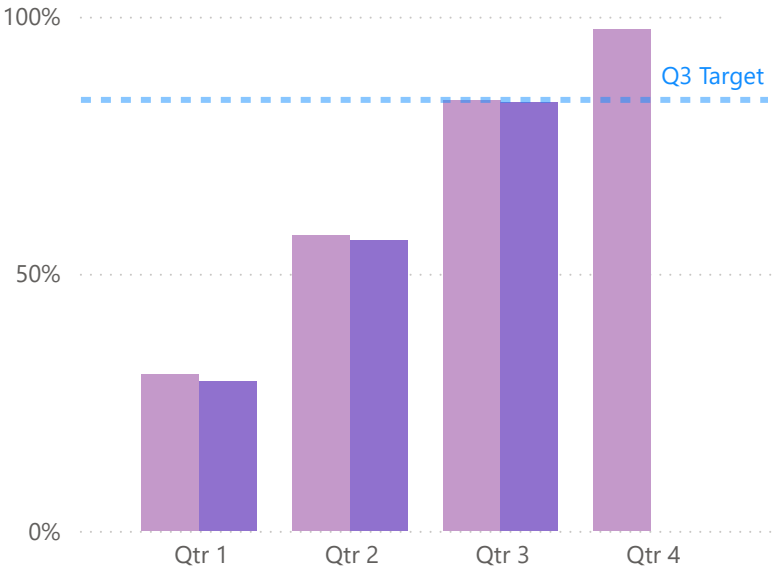
80.06%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	88.61%	90%
23-24	Qtr 2	94.74%	90%
23-24	Qtr 3	92.04%	90%
23-24	Qtr 4	83.46%	90%
24-25	Qtr 1	74.33%	90%
24-25	Qtr 2	86.27%	90%
24-25	Qtr 3	84.09%	90%

Comments: Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale missed target by just under 6% in the third quarter. This is mostly as a result of overdue operations complaints, though one planning and one governance complaint also went overdue. It should be noted that the third quarter saw a significant reduction in stage 1 complaints (88 vs 153) when compared to the second quarter.

Collection rate for Council Tax

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

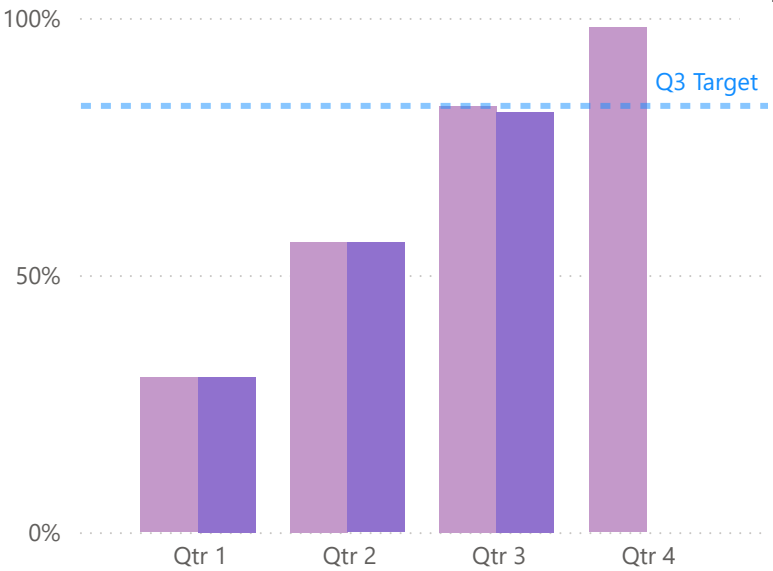
83.38%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	30.45%	30.10%
23-24	Qtr 2	57.42%	57.44%
23-24	Qtr 3	83.81%	84.23%
23-24	Qtr 4	97.59%	97.71%
24-25	Qtr 1	29.06%	30.45%
24-25	Qtr 2	56.41%	57.42%
24-25	Qtr 3	83.38%	83.81%

Comments: Council tax collection rate missed target in the third quarter by 0.43%. This represents a minor deviation from the target of last year's performance, and minor fluctuations are anticipated throughout the year. Outturn in November achieved target, and it is expected that by the end of the year collection rate will achieve target.

Collection rate for Business Rates

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Status:

Desired trend: Higher

YTD cumulative:

81.70%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	30.12%	31.26%
23-24	Qtr 2	56.40%	56.90%
23-24	Qtr 3	82.90%	82.26%
23-24	Qtr 4	98.13%	98.92%
24-25	Qtr 1	30.17%	30.12%
24-25	Qtr 2	56.27%	56.40%
24-25	Qtr 3	81.70%	82.90%

Comments: Business rates collection missed target by 1.2% in the third quarter. This was due to significant additional rateable sites in the third quarter without sufficient time to collect sums due prior to the end of the reporting period. It is anticipated that by year end collection rate will achieve target.

## **Complaints**

The quarterly complaints analysis is detailed below. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

<b>Complaint Category</b>	<b>Q1 23/24</b>	<b>Q2 23/24</b>	<b>Q3 23/24</b>	<b>Q4 23/24</b>	<b>Q1 24/25</b>	<b>Q2 24/25</b>	<b>Q3 24/25</b>
Justified	43	95	56	64	115	102	<b>56</b>
Not Justified	23	40	35	41	62	33	<b>25</b>
Partially Justified	13	17	20	20	14	23	<b>11</b>
Not known	0	0	1	4	5	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>94</b>

### **Comments:**

The third quarter saw a marked reduction in the volume of complaints received by the Council, a 41% reduction compared to the second quarter, and the lowest complaint volume since the first quarter of 2023. This was driven by a significant reduction in the number of complaints received by Operations (83 vs. 141), though other service areas also saw few complaints. Planning received two complaints. The Customer Service Centre, Environment and Governance all received one complaint.

Three complaints progressed to stage 2 in the third quarter, and three complaints were escalated to stage 3.

84.1% of complaints were responded to within timescale, which is below target. It should be noted that the total number of overdue complaints (14) was less than the second quarter (21) and the first quarter (48), but due to the lower overall number of complaints, the target was still missed.

### **A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:**

Two new complaints were received in October. The first in relation to the handling of a planning application. The LGO was informed that the complainant had not engaged with the Council via the Corporate Complaint procedure. Subsequently the LGO declined to investigate complaint as they were unlikely to find fault.

The second complaint referred to the Housing Allocation Policy and banding decision. The matter has been referred to an LGO Investigator following initial enquiries. The Council is awaiting the investigator's enquiries.

One new complaint was received in November regarding Planning Enforcement. The LGO declined to investigate complaint as there was not enough evidence of fault in the way the Council reached its decisions on the planning enforcement matters.

One new complaint was received in December regarding the Planning Service and Monitoring Officer. The complaint was in respect of the Council's alleged failure to follow its Planning Enforcement Policy and Standards and the subsequent complaint to the Monitoring Officer. The LGO determined that it would not investigate the complaint as it would be reasonable for the complainant to exercise right of appeal to the High Court.



## Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	482	489	502	501	499	509	<b>505</b>	-4	-
Headcount – Permanent employees					463	467	<b>464</b>	-3	
Headcount – Fixed term contract					36	42	<b>41</b>	-1	
Total staff FTE	435.98	444.29	457.18	458.54	458.52	467.96	<b>465.91</b>	-2.05	-
Level of employee turnover	3.9%	1.8%	2.0%	3.4%	2.4%	3.1%	<b>1.98%</b>	-1.12%	-
Number of leavers	19	9	10	17	12	16	<b>10</b>	-4	-
Number of starters	15	16	23	16	10	26	<b>6</b>	-20	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee*	1.34*	1.73*	5.87	5.9	6.22	5.65	<b>6.01 days</b>	+0.36	8.0
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	84.6%	68.3%	55.2%	48.7%	80.8%	67.4%	<b>51.5%</b>	-15.9%	-
Number of learning hours	1078	617	751	833	688	842	<b>1068</b>	+226	-
Number of delegates	200	235	347	379	345	314	<b>363</b>	+49	-
Number of apprentices **	19	20	20	21	21	20	<b>23</b>	+3	-

Year on Year Headcount	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	481	492	499	492	486	501

\* From the third quarter 23/24, The Council has moved to reporting working days lost to sickness on a rolling 12 month basis, to allow a more meaningful comparison going forward.

\*\* BDC's apprenticeship programme runs throughout the year. The figures reflect various apprenticeships ranging from level 3 through to a degree level 6

## **Health & Safety**

The following is a selection of our health and safety performance measures. The data is for information purposes only.

Health and safety is a crucial responsibility of everyone within the organisation. This information is used to improve the management of health and safety of staff, our customers, residents and other non-employees we come into contact with. Monitoring is undertaken by the corporate health and safety committee and action plans will be put in place where necessary.

<b>Health &amp; Safety: Indicators of Performance</b>	<b>Q1 23/24</b>	<b>Q2 23/24</b>	<b>Q3 23/24</b>	<b>Q4 23/24</b>	<b>Q1 24/25</b>	<b>Q2 24/25</b>	<b>Q3 24/25</b>
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	13	22	12	5	5	16	<b>16</b>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	12	22	9	5	5	14	<b>14</b>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	1	0	3	0	0	2	<b>1</b>
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	14	9	45	19	25	0	<b>10</b>
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	0	4	2	5	3	2	<b>2</b>
Number of near miss incidents	2	1	0	0	0	1	<b>0</b>
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	2	1	1	1	0	0	<b>0</b>
Number of claims settled	0	1	3	2	0	2	<b>0</b>

### **Comments:**

The third quarter saw 16 accidents or incidents reported, equal to the second quarter.

Of the accidents reported relating to employees, eight occurred whilst handling or lifting objects, two were the result of being struck by an object and one 'slip or trip' was reported. Three incidents occurred during the third quarter; one in relation to an unsafe wall structure, one in relation to a battery emitting smoke, and one where a waste collection vehicle caught fire as the result of an incorrectly recycled battery.

One employee accident resulted in the 10 days of lost time, where the employee fell after climbing on a wall to clean, which resulted in a wound to the leg. This accident followed the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). One contractor accident occurred when a person fell from a ladder resulting in a broken arm. This incident was also classified under RIDDOR.

Two verbal/physical incidents were reported both of which were verbal and happened in the presence of staff. One incident involved an argument between partners, and the other involved racial component which was not directed at staff.

No near misses were reported, and no insurance claims were made or settled.

# Financial Summary

## **Summary**

The review of the financial performance and projection for the year at this third quarter shows an overall positive variance of £2.5 million with three main areas contributing to this position. Firstly, treasury management income, which is projected to outperform budget due to a combination of higher-for-longer interest rates and increased cash balances. Secondly, take-up on the garden waste subscription service is higher than was originally anticipated. The better-than-expected performance on treasury management and the garden waste service is now reflected in the budget approved for next year. The third area is the Council Tax Sharing Agreement where an improved third quarter has resulted in a projected increase in the share-back of income from the major preceptors.

While Asset Management and Sustainable Development are projecting an adverse position, in both areas this has reduced from the position reported at the second quarter. Service charge costs and lower income from lettable space in Causeway House has been partially offset by extra commercial rent income within Asset Management.

The main reason for the budget variance for Sustainable Development remains a projected underachievement of income from planning applications, partially offset by net underspends on staffing and receipt of one-off government funding.

There is a small improvement in the position for Environment compared to the previous quarter; however, an adverse variance remains related to increased staffing costs in Building Control, coupled with a forecast drop in service income. This in part reflects a difficult labour market at the time of new regulatory requirements.

Capital expenditure for the year up to the quarter end was £3.2 million with the main areas of spend being on community facilities, climate change projects, Shared Prosperity projects, and grants for residential disability adaptations. There is currently a projected underspend across several projects totalling £426k and slippage of continuing projects into next year forecast to be £3.6m.

## **Background**

Full Council agreed a net budget of £19.6m. Budgets may be updated during the year in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure, and monitoring is then against the updated budgets.

Budgets have been updated for the pay award implemented from April 2024, and also to reflect the Cabinet decision to ringfence £360k of the in-year overachieved income in Operations for costs relating to the Waste Service review covering project delivery, communications, and engagement.

The quarterly financial review is a collaborative process between the central finance team and service managers which considers the budgetary position at the end of each quarter and establishes an updated outturn projection. The assessment uses information that is available at the time with forecasts made based on previous experience and applying assumptions for the remainder of the year. The projection set out below is therefore subject to changing circumstances with many aspects of financial performance affected by external factors and service demands.

Outturn performance will be confirmed after the fourth quarter, and which will be used to review the budget position ahead of the 2026/27 budget process.

## General Fund Revenue Spending

The tables below show the latest projected outturn by service:

Business Plan Service	Updated Budget £'000	Forecast Spend for the year £'000	Current Forecast Variance £'000	Previous Quarter Variance £'000	Forecast RAG Status
Asset Management	(2,819)	(2,748)	71	132	A
Community & Leisure	932	926	(6)	12	G
Corporate Management Plan	1,642	1,614	(28)	(26)	G
Economic Development	188	66	(122)	(112)	G
Environment	940	1,039	99	109	R
Finance (incl. Treasury Management)	876	(367)	(1,243)	(1,124)	G
Governance	1,408	1,384	(24)	61	G
Housing Services	993	990	(3)	(3)	G
ICT & Facilities	2,085	1,956	(129)	(78)	G
Marketing & Communications	697	688	(9)	(10)	G
People & Performance	1,142	1,087	(55)	(8)	G
Operations	7,456	6,534	(922)	(1,313)	G
Strategic Investment	149	149	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,607	1,670	63	163	A
<b>Service Plan Total</b>	<b>17,296</b>	<b>14,988</b>	<b>(2,308)</b>	<b>(2,197)</b>	<b>G</b>
Corporate Financing	2,605	2,110	(495)	(232)	G
Pay Award Provision	-	-	-	171	
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	-	300	300	
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>19,601</b>	<b>17,098</b>	<b>(2,503)</b>	<b>(1,958)</b>	<b>G</b>

Business Plan Service	Staffing Expenditure			Other Expenditure			Gross Income		
	Updated Budget	F//Cast	Variance	Updated Budget	F//Cast	Variance	Updated Budget	F//Cast	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset Management	575	572	(3)	1,244	1,368	124	(4,673)	(4,723)	(50)
Community & Leisure	904	885	(19)	539	525	(14)	(503)	(476)	27
Corporate Management Plan	1,785	1,741	(44)	93	109	16	(242)	(242)	0
Economic Development	221	139	(82)	(32)	(72)	(40)	0	0	0
Environment	1,857	1,917	60	82	85	3	(997)	(961)	36
Finance	2,774	2,591	(183)	26,276	26,374	98	(28,383)	(29,541)	(1,158)
Governance	930	886	(44)	827	853	26	(273)	(279)	(6)
Housing Services	1,548	1,548	0	(48)	(51)	(3)	(497)	(497)	0
ICT & Facilities	1,064	1,001	(63)	1,048	982	(66)	0	0	0
Marketing & Communications	566	546	(20)	305	317	12	(171)	(172)	(1)
People & Performance	1,077	1,016	(61)	72	78	6	0	0	0
Operations	7,867	7,759	(108)	6,702	6,817	115	(7,004)	(7,933)	(929)
Strategic Investment	359	359	0	(148)	(148)	0	(61)	(61)	0
Sustainable Development	2,887	2,634	(253)	519	615	96	(1,795)	(1,575)	220
<b>Service Plan Total</b>	<b>24,414</b>	<b>23,594</b>	<b>(820)</b>	<b>37,479</b>	<b>37,852</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>(44,599)</b>	<b>(46,460)</b>	<b>(1,861)</b>
Corporate Financing	762	684	(78)	3,538	3,356	(182)	(1,696)	(1,931)	(235)
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	300	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>24,876</b>	<b>24,278</b>	<b>(598)</b>	<b>41,017</b>	<b>41,208</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>(46,295)</b>	<b>(48,391)</b>	<b>(2,096)</b>
<b>As percentage</b>			<b>(2.4%)</b>			<b>0.5%</b>			<b>(4.5%)</b>

## General comments

- Staffing projections are based on vacancies and other known changes at the quarter end and reflect service expectations for the remainder of the year.
- The central pay award provision has now been reflected in service lines funded from overachieved Treasury Management income.
- A vacancy allowance of £300k is included in the base budget anticipating that staffing costs may be lower than budgeted due to normal staff turnover and other changes.

## Main changes (+adverse/ -positive) from the previous quarter

The change in forecast from the second quarter is an improvement of £545k. The main reasons for this change relates to the following areas:

- **Treasury Management Income (-£200k)** - Cash balances continued to remain higher than budgeted, in part due to slippage in capital spending and reduced drawdown on reserves; and interest rates remaining higher than previously expected as the Bank of England continues to take a cautious approach to monetary policy.
- **Council Tax Sharing Agreement (-£174k)** – Performance at the end of the third quarter combined with that from all Essex authorities means the maximum percentage share-back under the agreement is now anticipated from preceptors. This assumes performance is maintained in the final quarter.
- **All Other Services (-£173k Net)** – a net positive variance mainly due to staffing and income related variances.

## Specific comments on the main service variances (+adverse/ -positive)

### Asset Management

- Reduced income at the Plaza from the Makerspace partially offset by income from Shared Prosperity Fund initiatives and lower operating costs (Net +£36k)
- Lower income at Victoria Square due to vacant units partially offset by lower service charge costs (+Net £62k)
- Additional cost of industrial sites including utilities and repairs (+£31k). Increase in overall rental income from industrial units following rent reviews (-£152k).
- Additional rental cost from leased properties which are sub-let (+£27k)
- Reduced income due to unlet vacant space at Causeway House (+£31k)
- Net other property related variances including higher utility and maintenance (+£36k).

### Economic Development

- Economic Development underspend due mainly to vacancies (-£122k) but as the service is part funded from reserves; this has been offset by a commensurate reduction in the use of reserves shown under Corporate Financing.

### Environment

- To comply with new Building Safety Regulator Operational Standards and faced with an extremely difficulty labour market, interim staff have been appointed to the Building Control service to fill vacant permanent posts resulting in net additional costs. This, combined with a forecast shortfall in the fee earning account results in an overall adverse variance for the service (+£126k)
- Additional income in Public Health & Housing and a saving due to a staffing vacancy in Environmental Protection (-£27k)

### Finance

- Additional treasury management income due to higher-for-longer interest rates and higher cash balances (-£1.162m)

- Net underspend on staffing due to vacancies, and reductions in contracted hours or staff appointed at lower scale points than assumed. Several vacancies have been held whilst the service plans for future reduction in workloads due to the migration of Housing Benefit caseload to Universal Credit, and also while opportunities for shared roles between partners were being explored (-£183k)
- Local tax system costs are higher which is in part due to investment in the council tax support banding scheme which has led to efficiencies reflected in staffing underspends (+£46k)
- Other variances relating to banking charges, postage, and audit fees, partially offset by lower insurance premiums (+£56k).

### **ICT & Facilities**

- Staffing underspends within the service from vacant posts. (-£63k)
- Corporate ICT systems (-£41k)
- Net other underspend (-£25k) mainly on operating costs for Causeway House (e.g. energy and maintenance).

### **People & Performance**

- Staffing underspends from reduced hours, staff appointments on lower spinal point than estimated and a projected underspend on the central apprenticeship budget as costs are being met by services directly (-£55k).

### **Operations**

- Net saving (-£108k) across all staffing budgets (including operational staff) mainly due to vacancies and a mini-restructure.
- Car parking income overachieved mainly on pay & display, partially offset by increased collection costs (-£111k).
- Cemeteries is projecting higher income and lower costs which appear to relate to the current profile of requests for burials and interments (-£61k).
- The subscription-based garden waste collection service is projected to generate additional net income (-£612k) bringing forward the achievement of the original MTFS target assumed by 2025/26. Cabinet approved a carry forward of £360k in December 2024 from the additional income to support resourcing required to prepare for the introduction of new waste collection arrangements. The position remains subject to demand for the service and the potential for additional costs due to increased collection route capacity being required.
- Income from the sale of recyclate material, composting credits and tipping away payments are projected to be higher due to market prices and tonnages as well as diversion of waste from Cordons Farm (-£129k)
- Income from the sale of glass is projected to be higher due to a significant increase in market price (-£137k)
- Demand for commercial waste and bulky waste services continues to increase resulting in a net additional income (-£69k)
- Other expenditure is lower (-£55k) across operations, including vehicle running costs, and depot costs.

### **Sustainable Development**

- Net staffing variance due mainly to vacancies in Development Management and Landscape Services, partially offset by agency cover (-£253k). The projected underspend due to vacancies in Development Management increased since the second quarter and does provide some mitigation against the shortfall in income.
- Projected cost of planning appeals in excess of the current balance held in reserve (+£45k). Costs are difficult to predict and are variable, therefore, an addition to reserve was included in the budget for next year.
- Landscape services spend with ECC, and tree maintenance contractor costs are projected to be higher (+£60k). Additional funding for the service and tree management has been provided in next year's budget.
- One-off new burdens funding from the Planning Skills Delivery Fund (-£65k) to offset the additional base budget provided in the budget while waiting for confirmation of a successful bid.

- Projected shortfalls in income from Planning Application and Pre-Application partially offset by additional income from Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs). Income can be highly variable and subject to economic conditions, with several major applications in the pipeline which, if received before the year end, would improve the overall reported position. (Net +£272k).
- Other variances (+£4k) including a shortfall in income from charges for the Self-Build and Custom Build Register.

### **Corporate Financing**

- The gainshare from the Council Tax Sharing Agreement with preceptors is projected to be higher than assumed based on collection performance. A maximum share-back percentage of 9% for the whole year is now predicted compared to 7% at the previous quarter. The share-back percentage is subject to final performance, including that for all Essex billing authorities (-£255k)
- Staffing costs recharged to capital are estimated to be lower than budgeted, based on current project officers' timesheet data (+£30k)
- External interest costs are lower due to internal borrowing defraying the requirement to increase external debt (-£229k)
- Reduction in use of reserves as a contra to the underspend projected on Economic Development (+£122k)
- Central provision for increased staff costs and retention. Allocation is subject to approved business cases (-£150k)
- Net other variances: higher cost of apprentice levy, offset by saving from staff annual leave purchase scheme, business rates transitional provision and transparency code grant funding (Net - £13k)



## Capital Programme

The current overall capital programme is £15.8m, including £0.6m in respect of projects and passported S106 funds to be delivered by third parties. The table below shows the budget amount profiled to be spent in the current year; actual spend for the year up to the end of the third quarter; and, where applicable slippage and forecast variance

	Budget Profiled 24/25 £000	Actual Spend 24/25 £000	In-year Variance 24/25 £000	Slippage (-or deduction from future budget) £000	Forecast Project Variance 24/25 £000	Expected Remaining Spend 24/25 £000
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	238	66	172	-166	0	6
Horizon 120 - The Plaza	253	16	237	-75	-162	0
Manor Street regeneration	107	0	107	0	-107	0
Witham Community Centre	1,400	95	1,305	-1,293	0	12
Town Centre improvements	713	28	685	-537	0	148
Industrial estate improvements	30	30	0	0	0	0
Property planned maintenance	840	120	720	-477	-3	240
Information technology systems & equipment	383	118	265	-78	-33	154
Community facilities, play areas, parks & open spaces	1,244	703	541	-80	-2	458
Cemetery improvements	11	0	11	0	0	11
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	73	69	4	0	0	4
Operational equipment	383	134	249	-108	-88	53
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	1,229	127	1,103	-723	0	379
Climate change initiatives	853	381	473	-34	0	438
Shared / Rural Prosperity Fund	623	277	346	0	0	346
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	1,344	867	476	0	0	476
Capital salaries	253	164	90	0	-30	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,977</b>	<b>3,194</b>	<b>6,784</b>	<b>-3,571</b>	<b>-426</b>	<b>2,787</b>

## Changes to the programme

- The overall programme has increased by £1.3m mainly due to additional funding for Disabled Facilities Grants or DFGs (£281k) and the addition of the Witham Sports Ground Artificial Grass Pitch project (£945k), which is being funded from S106 and external grant.

## Capital receipts & other resources

- The total receipts generated for the year up to the end of the quarter was £2.1 million. This consists of the following:
  - Sale of 3 surplus areas of land for residential use generating £714k.
  - Right-to-buy receipts of £234k, generated in the quarter from 2 sales. These were the first sales to complete since Feb 2024. Eastlight have advised that a further 39 sales are in the pipeline suggesting a latent demand as interest rates have started to reduce.
  - VAT savings £288k
  - Sale and leaseback of operational vehicles £645k
  - Other capital receipts totalling £178k
- New capital grants and contributions received in the year total £1.9 million consisting of:
  - Better Care Funding £1.152m for providing DFGs.
  - Funding of £281k from Eastlight to part fund DFGs.
  - Capital grants of £132k and £320k received from the Shared Prosperity Fund and DEFRA (food waste collections for flats) respectively.
- Sport England have awarded grants for climate change related projects at Witham Leisure Centre (total £375k); and for a new Artificial Grass Pitch at Witham Sports Ground (£290k). These grants are claimed retrospectively as project expenditure is incurred.

## **Treasury Management**

Investments at the start of the year totalled £56.3m which increased over the third quarter with an average amount under management of £76.7m and a peak of £86.5m. New investments of £115.1m have been made, and £93m matured, resulting in £78.4m being held at the end of the quarter.

Investments totalling £19 million were maintained across a range of long-term pooled funds with varying exposures to property, equities, and other financial assets. The remainder of funds under management were held in short-term investments comprising money market funds; Debt Management Office Account (UK Government); bank deposits; and liquid cash held with Lloyds Bank.

Dividend income earned for the year up to the end of the quarter was £726k and interest on short-term investments totalled £2.195 million, a combined total of £2.921 million; an overall annualised return of 5%.

The closing market value of shares and units in long-term pooled funds was £22.5 million, representing an unrealised gain of £3.5 million.

## **General Fund Balances**

Based on the above forecast, General Fund balances are estimated to be £10.9m by the end of the year, a net increase of £2.3m.