



Fourth Quarter Performance Management Report

1st January to 31st March 2025

& Annual Performance Management Report

1st April 2024

to 31st March 2025



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 fourth quarter and the end of the year, 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 at the end of the year

Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Communities	12	3	-	-	-
Prosperity	9	3	2	-	-
Environment	9	5	-	-	-
TOTAL	30	11	2	-	-




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 at the end of the year

Status of indicators			
			Data Only
7	4	6	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 year, 30 projects have completed, 11 projects are on track, and two projects are off track. Then performance indicators have missed target, with seven achieving target.

20 projects completed in the fourth quarter, including outcomes such as:

- The trial of the landlord incentive scheme provided secure housing to 51 households and secured funding for the next year
- The contract was awarded for the construction of the Witham Community Centre
- The Beat the Street scheme was delivered engaging with over 11,000 residents
- The Councillor Community Grant scheme awarded over £77,000 to community projects
- Planning permission was awarded for the remaining plots at Horizon 120
- Work to confirm the viability of the Witham Enterprise Units developed options to deliver the site
- Play areas were refurbished in Braintree and Sible Hedingham
- The solar canopy was completed at Witham Leisure Centre
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund supported 11 community decarbonisation initiatives

Two projects have an amber status:

- Witham and Halstead town centre regeneration, where permissions are still being sought for phase 2 works on Essex Highways assets
- The Design Supplementary Planning Document, where resourcing challenges have necessitated a review of the project timeline

Further information regarding the completed, on track, and amber statuses can be seen within the detail for the respective projects. Some projects have had their target date adjusted in line with the appropriate change management procedures.

At the end of the year seven performance indicators have met or exceeded target and ten have not met target. For the performance indicators that have not met target, four have missed target by less than 5% and six have missed target by more than 5%.

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

- The percentage of household waste recycled
- Percentage of fly tips cleared in 24 hours
- Percentage of invoices paid on time
- Collection rate for Council Tax

The following indicators missed target by more than 5%:

- Number of visitors to leisure centres
- Kilograms of residual waste collected per household
- Percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved within timescales
- Percentage of calls resolved at the first point of contact in the customer service centre
- The average number of days to process housing benefit claim changes
- Percentage of stage 1 complaints resolved within timescales

Further details of all performance indicator out turn, both for the fourth quarter and the end of the year, can be found in the 'Performance Indicators in detail' section of the report.





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>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.</p> <p>Following the Livewell Stakeholder workshop held in November, a Livewell Strategic Action plan was developed to include the actions identified with partners during the workshop.</p> <p>Braintree District Council have created a 3-year Public Health Degree Apprenticeship role, which has been match funded by Essex County Council Public Health, and from April 2025 will focus on developing the Healthy Housing action plan.</p> <p>The Centre for Thriving Places has received additional funding until June 2025, which will be used to refresh the Thriving Places Index data which was gathered in November.</p> <p>The Livewell Strategic Action plan will address the Thriving Place Index Priorities and will be reported on through the coming financial year.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>1.2 - Continue to support residents and communities impacted by the cost-of-living crisis through initiatives raised by the £1m new homes bonus.</p> <p>Work continued on the Community Supermarket and the pilot is scheduled to take place at the end of April.</p> <p>In the fourth quarter over 400 people were fed by the food bank, 171 of which were children. The 'Food & More' service now hosts additional partner services such as the Council's community support and employment officer, Hope House homelessness drop-ins, and drug & alcohol recovery support.</p> <p>The Witham UCR Community Pantry used grant funding to provide 30 families with food and other essentials, focussing on times of need over the school holidays. Similarly, the Braintree Baby Bank used grant funding to replenish supplies of baby clothing and toiletries after a decline in donations attributed to the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Community Support Officers and Council Tax Recovery Officers are now able to distribute Fuel Bank vouchers, which has resulted in an increased number of vouchers distributed. Since January 15 have been issued, compared to 33 for the whole of 2024.</p> <p>Work has continued to develop an information pack to be provided to those on Local Council Tax Support to inform residents of additional benefits they may be entitled to but not claiming.</p>	<p>August 2026</p> <p></p>



<p>On 31 March the Cost-of-Living Small Grants Scheme was re-launched, offering up to £100k for microgrants (up to £1k) and small grants (up to £10k).</p> <p>Delivery of cost-of-living initiatives will continue into the new financial year, and so the delivery date of this project has been extended to reflect the continuation of this work.</p>	
<p>1.3 - Subject to a successful bid for funding from the Football Foundation, build the new 3G Pitch at Witham Sports Ground.</p> <p>Following finalisation of the contract, construction started on-site in February and is due to be completed by the end of May.</p> <p>Due to delays incurred in the third quarter to accommodate an additional costing review, the target date for this project has been extended to June 2025, and as a result the status has changed from amber to green.</p>	<p>June 2025</p> 
<p>1.4 - In partnership with Healthwatch Essex, host a Fellas Fair event in the district.</p> <p>Using UK Shared Prosperity Funding, Healthwatch Essex organised a second comedy night following the success of the first event in the third quarter. Over 150 people attended the event hosted at the Empire Theatre in Halstead in March.</p> <p>The event aimed to encourage open discussions and raise awareness of men's health issues, providing a platform for men to engage with health and care professionals in a supportive environment. Throughout the event, guest speakers shed light on men's health issues.</p> <p>Following the two comedy nights, a Braintree District Fellas Forum has been created, funded by Braintree District Council and Active Braintree Foundation. The first forum occurred on 19 March in Earls Colne.</p> <p>This project has completed, having delivered two events and the creation of an ongoing forum.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 




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

<p>2.1 - Deliver the Home Upgrade grant phase 2 for people living in cold homes or struggling with winter fuel bills.</p> <p>The Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) scheme concluded at the end of March and is to be replaced in the coming financial year by a new 'Warm Homes: Local Grant'. The Council continues to work with Essex County Council and other Essex local authorities on how this will be delivered, with the project anticipated to start in September 2025.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
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<p>Across the year, 12 households have had works completed through the scheme, with a further 11 presently undergoing improvement works, totalling 23. Improvement works include installation of insulation, renewable energy, double glazing, air source heat pumps and draughtproofing.</p> <p>This project is now complete. The Council's work to support residents in installing energy efficiency measures will continue to be reported in the upcoming financial year.</p>	
<p>2.2 - Introduce a landlord incentive scheme.</p> <p>Since the launch of the scheme, a total of 147 referrals were received. Of those, 51 households were accommodated in privately rented accommodation, instead of facing the risk of homelessness, at an average cost of £2,000 per household. The scheme has housed 65 adults and 38 children so far.</p> <p>In addition to the 51 households accommodated by the scheme, a further 13 independently secured their own private accommodation, 21 were accommodated through Gateway to Homechoice, and 5 were housed in supported accommodation.</p> <p>The scheme has also tracked the social value of interventions, recording outcomes such as access to secure housing, access to private outdoor space, improved financial prospects and relief from depression or anxiety. It is estimated that for every £1 invested, the scheme delivers over £9 of perceived social value, both to the individuals and other public services. In addition to the social value added by the scheme, over £123k has been saved on temporary accommodation costs.</p> <p>The scheme has now been introduced, embedded and will continue to deliver into the next financial year, therefore this project is now complete.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 


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




<p>3.1 - Launch round 2 of the Halstead Community Fund.</p> <p>Round 2 of the Community Fund completed in the first quarter with three organisations receiving funds. As £70,000 remained available within the fund, round 3 of the Community Fund launched on 2 September. The window for applications has now closed receiving 6 applications, with all grant funding now distributed.</p>	<p>December 2024</p> 
<p>3.2 - Continue to work with partners to deliver various activities and initiatives supporting people experiencing loneliness or social isolation.</p> <p>The Braintree District Social Isolation and Loneliness forum met in January and is now a group of over 50 partners which continues to grow each month.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 

<p>A number of partners attended the Wealth & Health days in Braintree, Halstead and Witham providing guidance, advice and signposting to local services.</p> <p>The Council also supported Kinder Minds at a re-launch event at Pollyfields Care Home.</p> <p>In the fourth quarter, planning for 2025-26 started to develop an action plan to map activities taking place throughout the district and to identify any gaps in provision. The group is already looking forward to the Pop-Up Lounges and Agewell fair taking place in June 2025.</p> <p>This project has completed for this financial year. Further activity delivering against this priority will be reported in the coming financial year.</p>	
<p>3.3 - Award contract and start to build Witham Community Centre.</p> <p>The contract to design and build the Witham Community Centre was signed and sealed in the fourth quarter, and design work has commenced. Progress of the build will be tracked and reported through the 2025/26 financial year.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p>3.4 - Provide a Community Garden through funding from the Changing Futures Programme.</p> <p>The Braintree Community Garden at the Rec was built in April 2024 and funded by the Essex County Council Changing Futures Programme to provide community garden sessions for complex and disadvantaged adults.</p> <p>The Wilderness Foundation UK were then funded by the UKSPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) to deliver sessions to complex and vulnerable adults from April 2024 until the end of March 2025.</p> <p>The sessions started on 6 June and have been seeing around 4 participants per week, as well as visitors, volunteers and interest from those walking through the park. One of the regular attendees has flourished throughout her time at the sessions and now helps run the sessions, as well as going through the formal process to become a volunteer for the WFUK.</p> <p>WFUK are continually working on promoting the garden to a wider audience, via their newsletter, social media pages, events and local community pages. They also created a video with Braintree District Council to help advertise the session.</p> <p>WFUK have submitted a business case to the Council for UKSPF funding post March 2025.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p>3.5 - Support and expand community-led walking activities to 10 in the district.</p> <p>The Beat the Street Local Engagement Coordinator and Essex Professional Coaching (EPC) continue to engage with schools and community groups. The steering group</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 

<p>meet monthly to receive updates from Intelligent Health and offer support to EPC with school engagement.</p> <p>The game went live on 5 March and ends on 16 April with 11,394 individuals signed up, with 4,777 Children, 5,392 Adults and 1,225 who did not specify their age. This represents 127% of the targeted 9,000 participants.</p> <p>A total of 61,560 Miles has been covered at the end of March, which is an average of 5 miles per player, with 228,911 total beat box swipes.</p> <p>Next steps include the continued promotion of the game and health surveys. A celebration event is being organised by the local engagement coordinator to take place on 25 of April at the Braintree District Museum.</p> <p>Other community led walking activities have been established and are organised by members of the community. The council will continue to explore ways to continue engaging the communities with walking activities.</p>	
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Priority 4: Develop safer and more resilient communities empowering residents to take ownership of local projects and initiatives

<p>4.1 - Through the safer streets funding, prevent violence against women and girls in public, neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour in Halstead.</p> <p>In January the teen tennis classes and self-defence classes for women and girls in Witham began. The self-defence classes received good turnout, particularly with the sessions for 11 to 13 years old which were fully booked.</p> <p>The Halstead Wealth and Health Fair also took place in January at Halstead Fire Station where officers engaged with approximately 50 people about cost-of-living and Safer Streets.</p> <p>The tenth Safer Street steering group took place on 10 February where partners gave updates on their deliverables and discussed community engagement events and the upcoming Spot It Stop It training session which took place in March.</p> <p>Across the Halstead Safer Streets programme CARA has delivered a total of 811 specialist counselling sessions for women and girls, which includes 597 sessions for adult women (18+), 163 sessions for girls aged 13-17 years and 51 sessions for girls under 12.</p> <p>A consultation was conducted with local partners to finalise a Braintree Safer Streets bid which included several interventions that aim to reduce anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood crime and violence against women and girls in specific areas of Braintree.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> 
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<p>4.2 - Continue to administer the Councillor Community Grant Scheme.</p> <p>The Councillor Community Grant Scheme concluded for the year in the fourth quarter, with £77,868 awarded across 99 grants.</p> <p>The grants awarded across the year have contributed to a variety of initiatives across the district including: defibrillators, repairs to church clocks and halls, delivery of dementia support activities, refurbishment of community sports facilities, installation of renewable energy, and funding for a repair café.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p>4.3 - Oversee the coordination of the Community Safety Action Plan to increase awareness of child exploitation, domestic abuse, fraud and cybercrime.</p> <p>Since implementation, six fixed penalty notices have been issued as a result of the public spaces protection order (PSPO) covering Braintree town centre. Monthly Saturday Operation Dial patrols took place across the quarter, providing advice on the PSPO and homelessness.</p> <p>Days of Action took place in both February and March with Community Safety Partners. In total over 170 people were engaged, 78 anti-fraud packs were given out, 132 people were provided with community safety items such as card defenders, purse bells, reflector bands & car key signal blockers. 6 people were referred to Open Road drug and alcohol services, 1 bike was security marked, advice was given on reporting crime, dog care and micro chipping, and health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Five Anti-social Behaviour case reviews have been presented to officers, two of which relate to a property with persistent issues. There are also two Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews in progress.</p> <p>The 2024/25 Community Safety Action Plan has now concluded, with partners providing monitoring reports for the year. Through the fourth quarter work has taken place to prepare for the 2025/26 action plan.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p>4.4 - Continue to support local investment in communities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year 3).</p> <p>The fourth quarter saw the implementation of the programme, as agreed in the third quarter. The programme consisted of three key work streams: Community Organising, Social Entrepreneurship, and Third Sector Leadership.</p> <p>Community Organising saw two workshops delivered, focussing on exercises designed to help community groups plan and deliver community engagement activities. The first workshop was held three times across Braintree, Witham and Halstead, with the second workshop bringing participants from across the district together to practice the learnings from the first workshop. Across the 4 sessions there were 85 attendees,</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 

representing groups from across Braintree, Witham, Halstead, Coggeshall, Bocking, Great Yeldham and Sturmer.




The Social Entrepreneurship workstream saw two workshops focussing on how to set up a social venture, including how to set up a new project and how to branch a project out from an existing organisation. The sessions also included support on financial planning and how best to use different funding sources, in addition to stakeholder engagement.



The Third Sector Leadership workstream involved both one-day masterclasses hosted at the plaza, and an online webinar curriculum. The masterclasses took place each month from January through April and saw a total of 45 attendees. The webinars saw a total of 165 hours of learning completed. Across the workstream 435 hours of learning was delivered to delegates, compared to the target of 105.

This project has now completed.






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

Project title & progress	Target date & status
<p>1.1 - Deliver physical improvements to Halstead and Witham Town centres.</p> <p>The Minor Works agreement (MWA) for the phase 1 works has been provisionally agreed by Highways, pending submission of accreditations and road space bookings being submitted by the contractors. Additional modelling works which were requested by Essex Highways have been funded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and were completed on 31 March.</p> <p>Phase 1 works are due to commence on Braintree District Council land on 2 April, and will include improvements to benches, bins, wayfinding signage, painting and noticeboards. The Council is currently awaiting an Essex Highways decision on the proposed road layout changes in both Witham and Halstead to facilitate the phase 2 works. Recognising that the delivery of this project has been delayed, it has an amber status given change control updates made to the project's timescale for delivery.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>1.2 - Work with communities to implement neighbourhood plans in Steeple Bumpstead, Hatfield Peverel and Earls Colne.</p> <p>In the fourth quarter the Steeple Bumpstead referendum took place, with the matter due to be reported to full Council in June 2025. After the report to full Council the neighbourhood plan will be implemented.</p> <p>The Hatfield Peverel plan was adopted in September 2024.</p> <p>The Earls Colne plan now requires sign off to hold a referendum and is currently awaiting the appropriate governance completion to allow this.</p> <p>Work to implement Steeple Bumstead and Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood plans has concluded. The Earls Colne plan will be reported against in the upcoming financial year and will be delivered alongside another round of neighbourhood plans in a new project. As a result, this project is now complete.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>1.3 - Revise the Local Plan in line with recent changes to National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>The responses to the Issues and Options consultation are due to be reported to the Local Plan Sub Committee in April 2025 and will be taken into account as work is undertaken to progress to a formal Regulation 18 Consultation. The teams are currently completing the site selection process, and recommendations on whether to</p>	<p>June 2026</p> <p></p>



<p>allocate sites put forward through the Call for Sites process are being taken currently by the Local Plan Sub Committee in meetings scheduled in May and October.</p> <p>Reporting against the progress of the Local Plan revision will continue into the next financial year.</p>	
<p>1.4 - Develop an affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>All available resource is being utilised to deliver the Local Plan Review. The affordable housing SPD is due to be put to consultation as the next step in its delivery, and the consultation will be arranged as soon as resources become available.</p> <p>The target date for this project has been extended from December 2024 to December 2025 to allow for the delivery of the Local Plan revision.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 
<p>1.5 - Develop a design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>The first public consultation on the design supplementary planning document concluded in the third quarter, and work has been ongoing during the fourth quarter to interpret the results. Alongside this analysis, the drafting of the document has been progressing. The next stage of the process will be the hosting of public workshops which will be shaped by the data collected from the first consultation.</p> <p>Staff turnover and the subsequent recruitment requirement has impacted on the preparation of the draft and therefore future milestones. In the first quarter of 2025/26 a revised project timeline will be implemented. As a result of the uncertainty around the target date, this project is currently marked as amber.</p>	<p>December 2026</p> 


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

<p>2.1 - Develop the Council's inward investment activity in association with the North Essex Economic Board (NEEB).</p> <p>The first draft of a list of potential sites in North Essex has been completed and will be used to drive discussion amongst stakeholders. Some identified sites are stand-alone, but others have been identified in the context of wider developments and will need careful consideration.</p> <p>All sites have been initially assessed and graded based on their scale and connectivity to strategic infrastructure. This will provide a framework for the development of the activity required to progress activity into the next financial year.</p> <p>The target date for this project has been extended until May 2025 to allow for districts to provide feedback, and to allow for the creation and publication of the prospectus and website.</p>	<p>May 2025</p> 
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<p>2.2 - Create an additional meeting area and multi-media space at the Plaza.</p> <p>This project completed in the third quarter, where a gym was installed for clients following a change in demand for meeting space.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>2.3 - Provide planning permission for the remaining plots at Horizon 120.</p> <p>Planning permission for plot 5 was granted in September 2024. Following the Planning Committee meeting in March, planning permission was secured for the delivery of three new buildings at Horizon 120 on plots 6-8, with 33.5 acres securing planning permission for the development of Phase 2 of the estate.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>2.4 - Confirm the viability of the Council delivering the enterprise site at Witham.</p> <p>Viability assessments for the delivery of the Witham enterprise site concluded in the third quarter. In the fourth quarter, the Council continued to explore delivery options for the site by arranging for a site valuation and beginning market testing the opportunity for a commercial developer to deliver the enterprise centre.</p> <p>Whilst the project to confirm the viability of delivery options has completed, progress towards delivery of the site will continue to be reported in the coming financial year.</p>	<p>December 2024</p> <p></p>

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

<p>3.1 - In association with the North Essex Economic Board, provide business support services focused on enhancing digital skills, financial management and business growth.</p> <p>Through the fourth quarter the business support programme has continued to deliver proactive and reactive contact with business across the Braintree District and the wider NEEB area. The programme has also worked closely with The Department for Work and Pension, HMP Chelmsford, schools and the Greater Essex Careers Hub. Furthermore, the programme has encouraged contact with a wider range of businesses by attending support events, campaigns, awards ceremonies and business weeks.</p> <p>At the end of the year, the performance indicators for Braintree District have all exceeded their target with the exception of a school event, where one was targeted but not delivered. However, the targets for business support, jobs safeguarded and created, new businesses created, and adoption of new processes or technologies have all exceeded their target for the district.</p> <p>This project is now complete for 2024/5 and further work to deliver business support will be reported on in the upcoming financial year.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>3.2 - Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver a Green Business Expo.</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></p>

<p>3.3 - Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver a Digital Business Expo.</p> <p>This project completed in the third quarter where the Digital Business Expo for employers took place on 10 October, and the Digital Business Expo for students took place on 26 September. Due to the success of the event, a further student day was scheduled to take place on 9 December.</p>	<p>October 2024</p> 
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Priority 4: Develop skills that are attractive to employers and support residents to access opportunities to improve their economic well-being

<p>4.1 - Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver a green skills programme.</p> <p>The Green Skills programme launched on 13 September offering courses ranging from level 2 to level 5 in domestic energy retrofitting and energy assessment.</p> <p>Since the launch of the programme, there has been a lower than anticipated demand in entry level courses, particularly at level 2. The delivery partner, Adult Community Learning, is assessing the profile of applicants and courses available to best meet demand, and ensure that there is sufficient resource to deliver the higher level qualifications which are in demand. The level 3 domestic energy assessment qualification has been more popular than anticipated and spaces on the course have been increased.</p> <p>This project is now complete, having launched the programme in the third quarter. Reporting against the delivery of the programme will continue into the next financial year.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 
<p>4.2 - Organise and deliver a jobs fair in the district.</p> <p>The jobs fair took place on 2 November at Queen's Hall in Halstead.</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>October 2024</p> 







Environment



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

Project title & progress	Target date & status
<p>1.1 - Enhance the play areas at Meadowside in Braintree, and Oxford Meadow in Sible Hedingham.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p>✓</p>
<p>1.2 - Develop a renewable energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>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 paused on this project during the third quarter as the decisions made around the Local Plan and anticipated changes to national planning legislation will inform the direction of the renewable energy SPD.</p> <p>The Council is tracking the outcomes of other local authority renewable energy policy currently under review to inform the development of the renewable energy SPD later in 2025.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> <p>▶</p>
<p>1.3 - Upgrade the skateparks at Spa Road in Witham and Weavers Park in Braintree.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>October 2024</p> <p>✓</p>
<p>1.4 - Revise The Council's Tree Strategy.</p> <p>The council continues to undertake priority survey work on existing tree stock in line with the Tree Management protocol. In the third quarter the target date for this project was extended from March 2025 to March 2026, to allow for this priority work to take place ahead of the revision of the remaining elements of the Tree Strategy.</p> <p>Progress against the Tree Strategy revision will be reported against in the upcoming financial year.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p>▶</p>



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



2.1 - Develop a local Air Quality Strategy. The Council continues to work in partnership with Essex County Council to develop a county-wide Air Quality Strategy. In the fourth quarter Essex County Council publicly consulted on the strategy, and it is anticipated that the strategy will be presented to county members for a decision in September. As a result, the target date for this project has moved from March 2025 to December 2025 to allow for the appropriate governance and decisions to be made at a County level before the strategy can be adopted at a district level.	December 2025 
2.2 - Procure 14 Electric Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs). Procurement of the 14 electric light commercial vehicles was successful, with the vehicles now in service.	December 2024 
2.3 - Install solar panels at Witham Leisure Centre. The solar array systems were commissioned by the District Network Operator and passed witness testing on 7 March, just in time for sunny weather. At peak, the solar panels have performed best on 30 March since installation, generating 1,754.49kWh. The live feed application demonstrates current usage and can show anomalies with the energy usage at the leisure centre. To date, the application reports a 14 ton carbon emission saving which will be verified as part of the Council's Greenhouse Gas Emissions annual reporting. Final claims have been submitted to Sport England and reimbursed. Communications have been underway to promote the success of this project including the designing of a large sign for outside the leisure centre with a call to action for residents to consider both LED lighting and solar energy at home. A press release has been prepared and the Council's website has been updated to show the project completion and link to support for residents and businesses interested in solar energy.	March 2025 
2.4 - Take part in establishing a Climate and Environment Partnership and work programme across the North Essex Councils. 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

<p>3.1 - Allocate funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support at least ten Community Infrastructure initiatives in relation to decarbonisation.</p> <p>All eleven applications were successful, with grant agreements signed and funds transferred. Grants ranged from £1,500 to £15,000 and supported measures such as solar panels, LED lighting, infrared heating systems, replacement windows and insulation improvements across a range of community venues.</p> <p>This project has now concluded delivering eleven grants compared to the target of ten.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>3.2- Deliver a campaign to encourage motorists around schools to switch off their engines when stationary outside schools.</p> <p>In the fourth quarter the Council ran a one-page article in Contact magazine, drawing parents' and carers' attention to the campaign and directing them to the Council website.</p> <p>The Climate Change Project Manager has supported the anti-idling campaign by producing a lesson plan for the anti-idling campaign. The lesson plan has direct links back to the National Curriculum to support teachers with teaching about how to become an idling aware school and improve air quality.</p> <p>Over the course of the year, the campaign toolkit was developed and designed and is now finalised and available, and will continue to be promoted into the coming financial year. This project is now complete.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p></p>

Priority 4: Improve the way that we manage waste and encourage residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle more

<p>4.1 - Collaborate with other Essex Authorities to establish and adopt a new Waste Strategy for Essex.</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>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.</p> <p>The public consultation about proposed changes to BDC waste collection services, was held from 6 January to 2 March 2025. The consultation gathered direct feedback from residents and stakeholders. A total of 7,847 responses to the consultation were received.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p></p>

<p>A total of 830 people were engaged with at 19 face to face events. Events were held at different times of the day, and at different venues across the district, to maximise resident engagement. Response to the events was largely positive and staff were able to answer questions from the public. Later events in the schedule delivered a higher number of engagements with residents who had already completed the survey, or those who were less positive about the proposal. The focus for each event remained steering residents to the online survey.</p> <p>The analysis partner, Enventure, has now provided a draft report on the consultation, which is currently being reviewed.</p> <p>The options paper is due to be presented to Cabinet in May, for a decision on the proposed collection methodology.</p>	
<p>4.3 - Develop a waste Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>The waste supplementary planning document (SPD) is awaiting a final review from Development Management, before being passed to the Planning Policy team for consultation. Extra time has been taken in the development of the SPD to ensure that the proposed changes in waste collection methodology (due to be presented to Cabinet in May) are accounted for within the document, and that any changes to the proposal are able to be included.</p> <p>The target date for this project has been extended to December 2025 to account for the remaining work required before the SPD can be adopted.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 
<p>4.4 - Deliver a behaviour change campaign to increase recycling, reduce waste and encourage reuse.</p> <p>Promotion of the Garden Waste Subscription Service featured heavily in the fourth quarter, across numerous Council communications channels.</p> <p>Planning for the Love Essex – Bulky Waste campaign took place across the fourth quarter, aimed at promoting and raising awareness of reuse of items collected at kerbside. Campaign assets have been released and are due to start promotion in April.</p> <p>The Love Essex – SCRAP campaign also commenced in the fourth quarter, aimed at reducing fly tips. The campaign material is being promoted digitally and has been applied to panels on the sides of 8 refuse collection vehicles.</p> <p>Promotion also took place to support compost awareness week, and a campaign around reducing food waste was also seen across Council channels.</p> <p>This project has now concluded for the year. Further work will continue and be reported on in the upcoming financial year.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> 

Climate Change Action Plan



Introduction

Work continues to strategically review the delivery of the Climate Action Plan for the first three quarters of the year. Projects are being prepared for closure or amendment for the end of the year.

With a natural mid-way point of the Climate Strategy, the Climate Change Team are reviewing some of the foundation and early projects and measures to understand if they are still relevant, achievable and measurable. With developments in Central Government legislation since 2019 and the enhancement of climate change mitigation in the Corporate Strategy, many original projects have now been incorporated into “Business as Usual” and thus will be closed.

Members of the Climate Change Delivery Board are working to identify projects and actions to be included in the 2025-26 Climate Action Plan through their annual business plans. The Climate Change Project Manager has met with Heads of Service and Managers from across the organisation to discuss potential projects for the year ahead.

Resources

The Sustainability Team have recently supported the IT team at the Council to use a new service provider for the recycling of our defunct and out of date IT equipment. The company are based at Lakes Road in Braintree, so as well as celebrating the circularity and environmental ethics of the company, the scheme will also support the local green economy. Two loads of equipment have now been sent for recycling, with the precious metals, plastics and other materials being extracted and reused.

Energy Conservation

In January officers attended the Financing Net Zero Summit in London to understand the opportunities available to aggregate renewable energy generation projects to attract private sector investment opportunities. Speakers included the Head of Local Energy at Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Systems Integration Director for Net Zero from Innovate UK.

The Council continues to partner with Climate Change Officers from the North Essex Councils to develop opportunity mapping for a large scale, collaborative renewable energy project supported by nine Chief Executive Officers. A small working group met to discuss the proposed projects.

As Year 3 of the UK Levelling Up Fund has come to a closure, there has been substantial reporting and collating evidence for closure of the Community Infrastructure Grant. This has included much communication back and forth with applicants and support given to collate suitable evidence for the ongoing reporting of carbon emission reduction for up to five years.

Transport

Feasibility for the funding of an electric vehicle charging station at Manor Street in Braintree through the Year 4 UK Shared Prosperity Fund has continued. The EV charging station would serve both DigiGo and local taxi and private hire firms and the hope is it would both decarbonise transport and support economic development in the town and beyond.

The Climate Change Project Manager has supported the anti-idling campaign by producing a lesson plan for the anti-idling campaign. The lesson plan has direct links back to the National Curriculum to support teachers with teaching about how to become an idling aware school and improve air quality. A drop-in support session for teachers was scheduled for 1 April to talk through the lesson plan, resource pack etc but there was no interest despite this being promoted by the Housing and Communities team.

Beat the Streets was launched at the beginning of March - a six week program to support residents to choose walking and cycling in settlements as well as enjoy the natural environment of our open spaces. The fun, interactive game has been very successful.

A meeting was attended regarding the Essex County Council on-street charging workstream which is progressing well. On-street residential charging scheme (ORCS) funding has allocated a £400k grant to establish 66 charging points at 33 locations across Essex with Quello as the provider and this workstream is developing. ECC does not wish to enter into individual agreements for specific sites and plans to adopt a model similar to those used in Suffolk and Oxfordshire. They intend to lease to a charge point operator under a cluster or three-party agreement, giving ECC the authority to deal directly with the operator. A basic collaboration agreement is necessary between ECC and BDC, and a draft of this agreement will be available for review and governance sharing when drafted. Road safety assessments are currently underway for potential on-street charging sites across Essex.

The workstream for the delivery of on-street charging through LEVI funding will be developed throughout 2025, with priority sites identified by 2027. In December 2024, the Central Government published new guidance regarding cross-pavement charging solutions and the safe, effective use of these. ECC will support local authorities to develop policies regarding this.

Business & the Green Economy

The Climate Change Project Manager investigated soil carbon sequestration, farm diversification and biodiversity net gain opportunities for local farmers and landowners. This information was fed back to the Corporate Director responsible for the Year 4 UKSPF Rural Prosperity Fund and the recommendation was made that the fund could be spent on developing regenerative and sustainable farming practices within the district as well as supporting the local economy.

The climate change team were invited by local King's Award winner and green business owner Alex Holliman to a B Corp networking event to celebrate B Corp Month. At the event, there were many Essex based businesses excelling at sustainability and links were made with two Braintree businesses previously unknown to the climate change team. Both businesses were offered further support in the way of case studies on the Council's website and any other support which could be provided.

Natural Environment

As part of Essex County Council's Local Nature Recovery Strategy development, the Council has supported ECC to review the sites suggested for inclusion in the strategy from the public consultation. The Climate Change Project Manager sat on the panel alongside Planning Officers to support the review of two potential sites.

The Climate Change Project Manager attended a site visit to a local farm where the landowner is interested in diversifying into soil carbon capture and the sale of carbon credits to improve nature recovery as well as profits. The farmer is considering reduced ploughing as well as other regenerative farming practices and is considering the impact of the removal of the Sustainable Farming Incentives upon biodiversity.

The team reviewed the progress of Biodiversity Net Gain projects at Wildfell in Wethersfield, owned and managed by Ground Control. Since the visit with the Council's ecologist last year, the site has a visitor's barn and is hosting engagement days with organisations including the NHS Trust. The ponds are now well established.

Adapting to Climate Change

A working group session, hosted by Colchester City Council, was attended by the Climate Change Team. The session continued to develop the risk register and identified the need to extend the working group to include members of the Essex Resilience Forum.



Fit For The Future

Programme Update for the fourth quarter:

The recent announcement regarding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution necessitated a comprehensive reassessment of the approach to transformation, objectives, and outcomes. Options have been identified and a full review of options and opportunities to reset the transformation programme in line with the new parameters and deadlines is underway. This work has enabled the organisation to agree a revised approach to the internal transformation scope and undertake some preparatory work required for transition to a new local authority model.

Work has started to redefine the scope, timelines, and deliverables of the revised workstreams, identifying any potential gaps. Transformation remains critical to closing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) gap, ensuring sustainable service delivery over the next three years, and maintaining day to day operations during this period of significant change.

A realignment of transformation activities is essential to ensure the Council is truly Fit for the Future, delivering high-quality services while transitioning into the new successor organisation. This realignment will ensure the programme reflects updated priorities and that resources are appropriately allocated within the revised timeline.

Procurement activities for the Agile and Flex workstream were paused. The workstream is under review considering Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), with future requirements yet to be defined.

The Asset Management workstream remains on track and is transitioning into business as usual, supported by a newly developed strategy.

The Essex Procurement Partnership continues to deliver value. However, shared back office initiatives have been stood down due to likely changes in geographic collaboration opportunities with Epping District Council and Colchester City Council in the future.

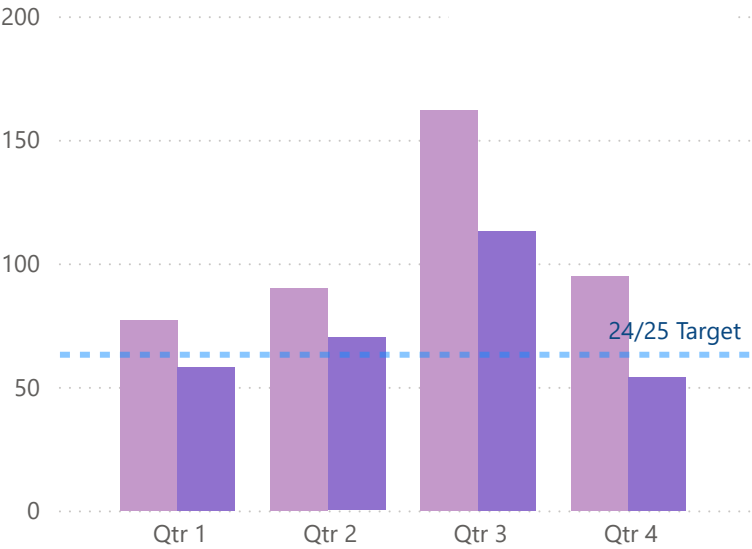
Service reviews are ongoing but require a reassessment of priorities, scope, timelines, and delivery methods.

The organisational design workstream is currently paused, with LGR and Devolution taking precedence. It is expected to resume as part of a revised programme focus.

Performance Indicators in detail

Number of affordable homes delivered

Financial year ● 23-24 ● 24-25 Desired trend: Higher



Q4 Status:

Year end position:

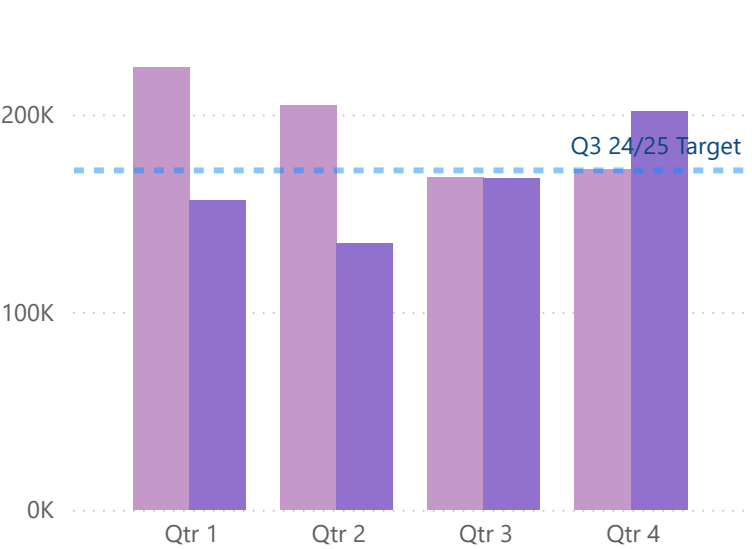
295

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
24-25	Qtr 4	54	63

Comments: The number of affordable homes delivered in the fourth quarter missed target by 9. It should be noted that this indicator is dependant on developers completing properties around the district. Despite this, good outturn in earlier quarters means this indicator has achieved target for the year, delivering 295 homes against a target of 252.

Number of visitors to our leisure centres

Financial year ● 23-24 ● 24-25 Desired trend: Higher



Q4 Status:

Year end position:

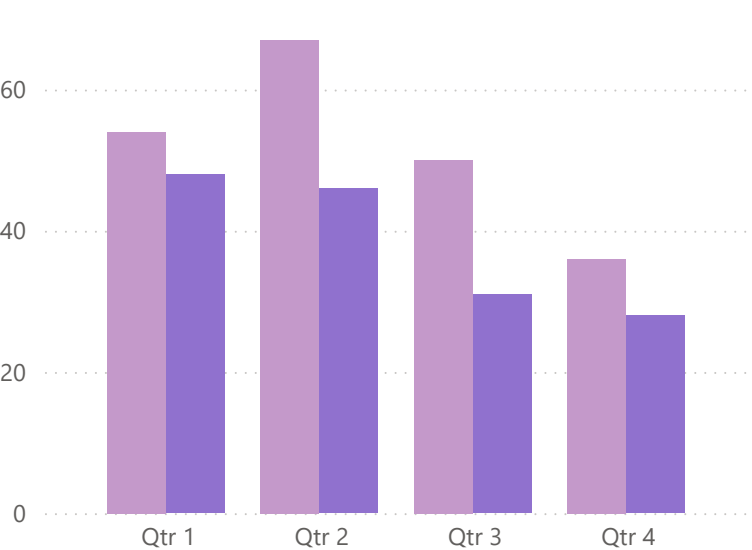
660,439

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
24-25	Qtr 4	201,461	175,513

Comments: The reported number of leisure centre visitors achieved target in the fourth quarter. However, due to Council's leisure partner reporting system issues, which are believed to be contributing to the lower outturn, this indicator has missed the target of 784,458 for the year.

Number of homelessness cases prevented

Financial year ● 23-24 ● 24-25



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year end position:

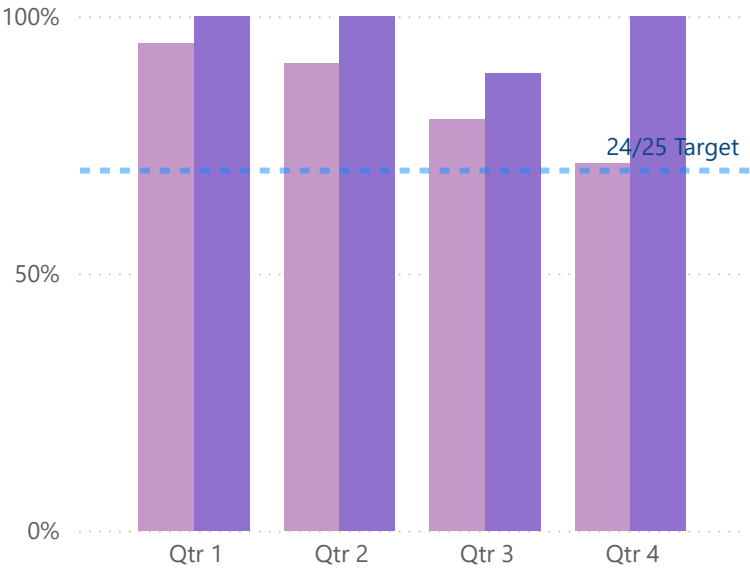
153

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
24-25	Qtr 4	28

Comments: The number of homelessness cases prevented in the fourth quarter was 28. Whilst this indicator has seen reduced out turn compared to the previous year, increased focus on early intervention and advice is resulting in homelessness cases closing before a formal prevention is necessary - which is reflected in this specific metric.

Major planning applications decided on time

Financial year 23-24 24-25 Desired trend: Higher



Q4 Status:

Year end position:

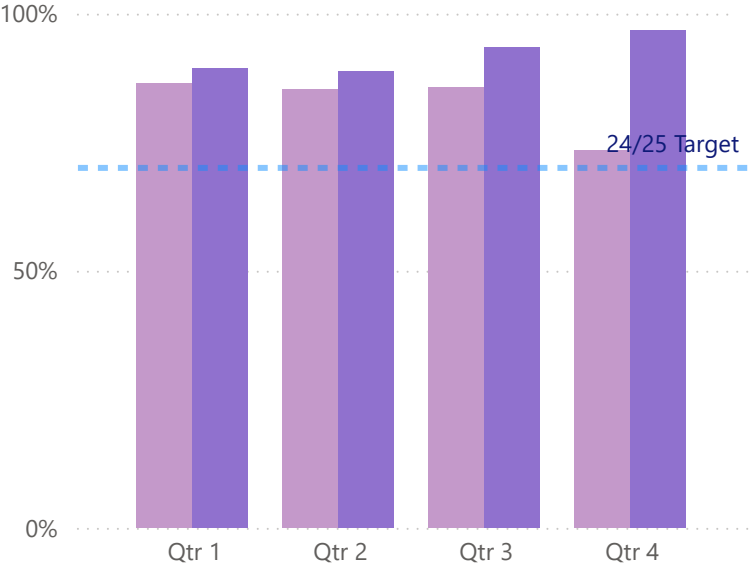
97.14%

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	100.00%	70%

Comments: All 11 major planning applications were decided on time in the fourth quarter. Overall performance for the year saw 34 out of 35 applications decided on time, 97.14%.

Minor planning applications decided on time

Financial year 23-24 24-25 Desired trend: Higher



Q4 Status:

Year end position:

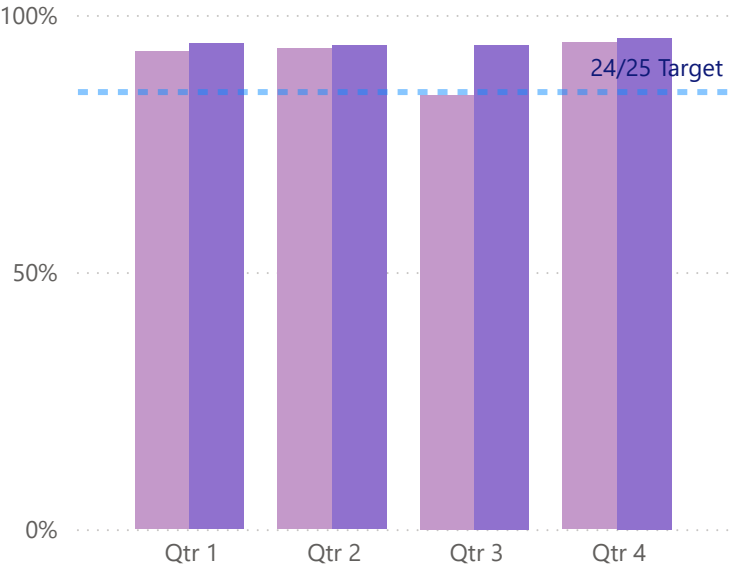
91.84%

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	96.67%	70%

Comments: 96.67% of minor planning applications were approved in time in the fourth quarter, meaning that the target has been exceeded for the eighth consecutive quarter. The year end position is 259 out of 282 applications decided on time, 91.84%.

Other planning applications decided on time

Financial year 23-24 24-25 Desired trend: Higher



Q4 Status:

Year end position:

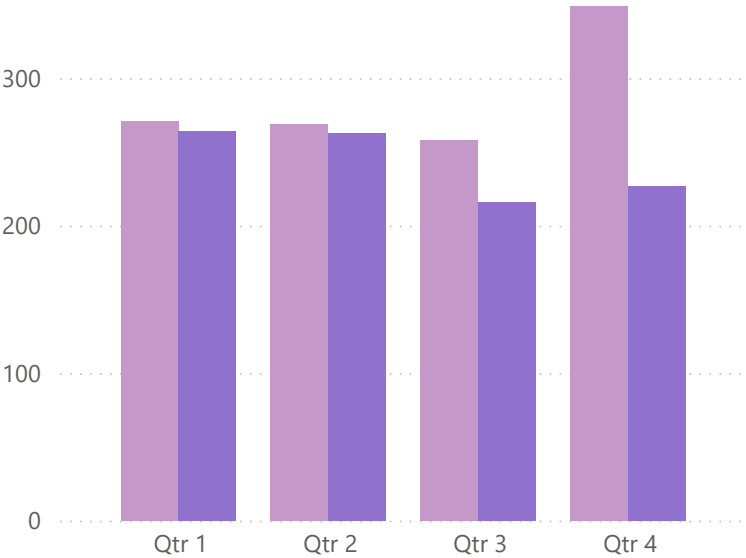
94.48%

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	95.52%	85%

Comments: The fourth quarter outturn for other planning applications decided on time was 95.52%, well in excess of the 85% target. The year end position is 94.48%, with 616 out of 652 applications decided on time.

Number of new start up businesses

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year end position:

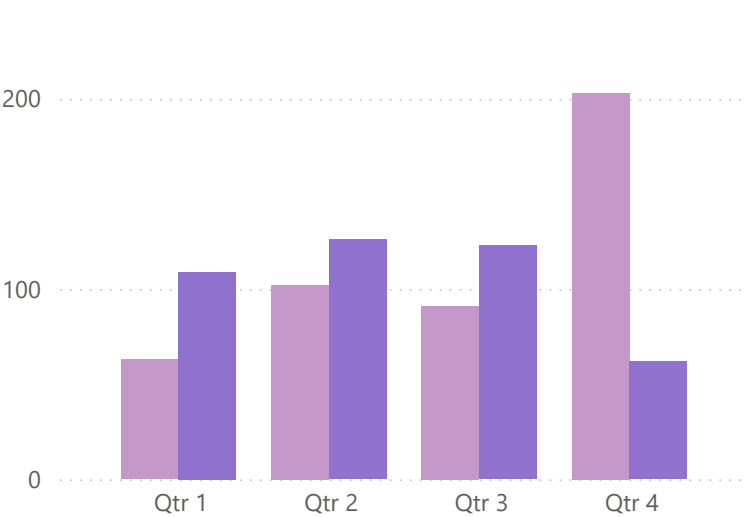
970

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
24-25	Qtr 4	227

Comments: 227 new businesses were registered in the fourth quarter, a reduction in comparison to the same quarter last year. This appears to be generally aligned to previous performance with the fourth quarter in the previous year returning unusually high results. The year end position is that there were 970 new start up businesses.

Number of businesses accessing business support

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year end position:

420

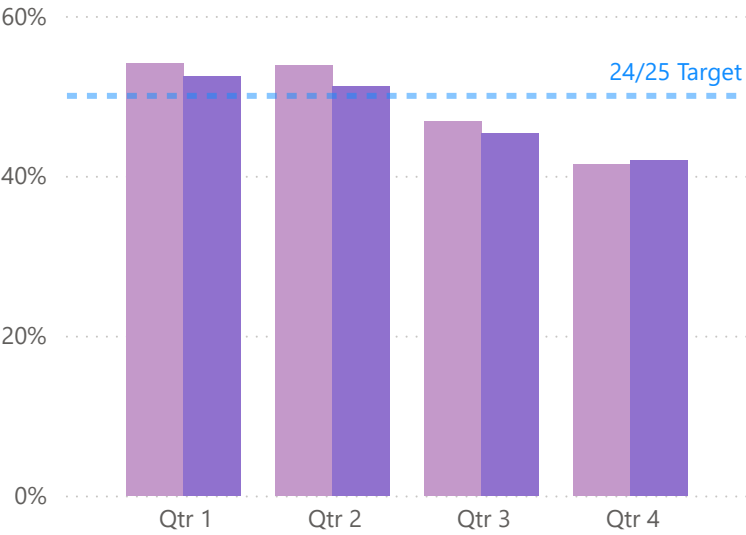
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
23-24	Qtr 1	63
23-24	Qtr 2	102
23-24	Qtr 3	91
23-24	Qtr 4	203
24-25	Qtr 1	109
24-25	Qtr 2	126
24-25	Qtr 3	123
24-25	Qtr 4	62

Comments: 62 businesses access business support in the fourth quarter, a marked reduction compared to both the previous quarter and the previous year. This outturn is an outlier compared to previous trends, and will be monitored moving into the next financial year. Year end position is 420 businesses accessing support compared to 459 last year.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting

Financial year 23-24 24-25

Desired trend: Higher



Q4 Status:



Year end position:

48.06%

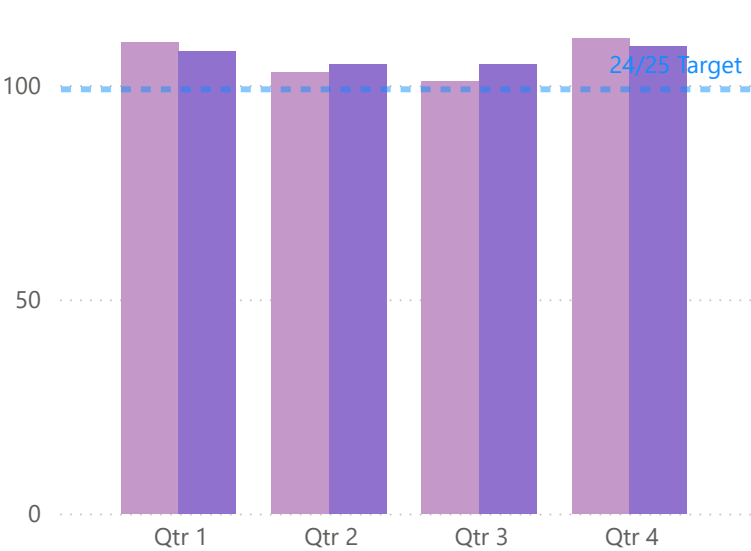


Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	54.14%	60%
23-24	Qtr 2	53.88%	60%
23-24	Qtr 3	46.87%	60%
23-24	Qtr 4	41.44%	60%
24-25	Qtr 1	52.54%	50%
24-25	Qtr 2	51.29%	50%
24-25	Qtr 3	45.35%	50%
24-25	Qtr 4	42.01%	50%

Comments: Fourth quarter outturn for recycling rate has missed target. This lower result is expected due to the lower tonnages of garden wasted collected in winter months. The year end position is that overall recycling rate is just short of 2% below the 50% target. Note: some 24/25 waste figures have been validated and may differ from previously published reports.

Kilograms of residual waste per household

Financial year 23-24 24-25 Desired trend: Lower



Q4 Status:

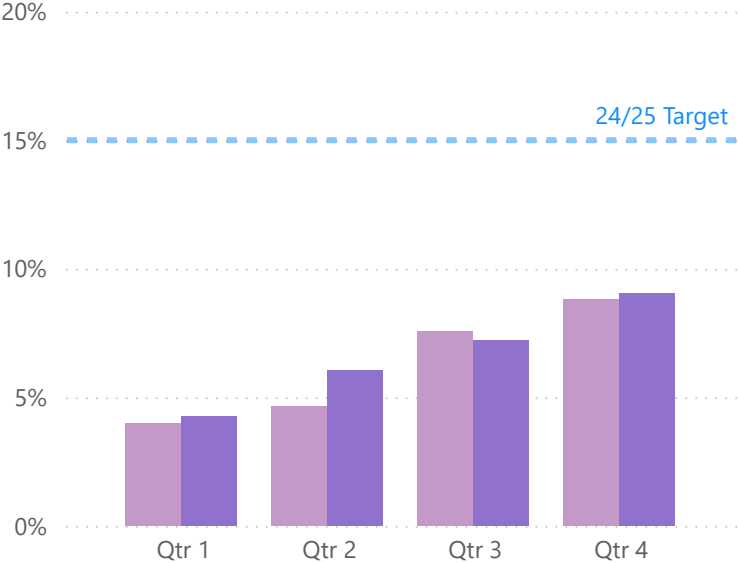
Year end position: 427

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	100
24-25	Qtr 2	105	100
24-25	Qtr 3	105	100
24-25	Qtr 4	109	100

Comments: The fourth quarter return for residual waste did not achieve the target of 100kgs per household, returning 109kgs across the period. The year end position is that this indicator missed target, returning 427 against a target of 400kgs. The 24/25 target is significantly lower than previous years, and this represents an ambitious goal.
Note: some 24/25 waste figures have been validated and may differ from previously published reports.

Recycling contamination rate

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Q4 Status:

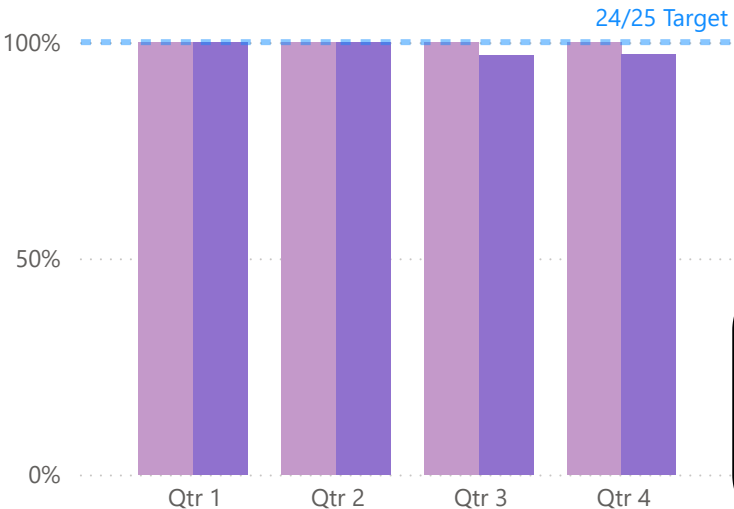
Year end position: 6.64%

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	9.03%	15%

Comments: Recycling contamination rate was below target for the fourth quarter returning a rate of 9.03%. The overall year end position is 6.64%, which is comfortably below the 15% target.

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

Financial year 23-24 24-25 Desired trend: Higher



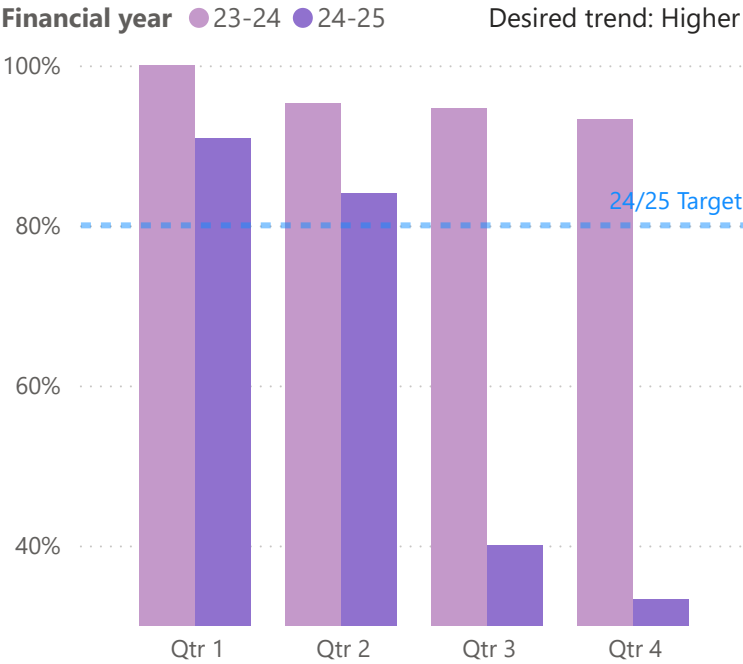
Q4 Status:

Year end position: 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%
24-25	Qtr 4	220	97%	100%

Comments: In the fourth quarter, 97% of fly tips were cleared within 24 hours (214 out of 220). Safety concerns, vehicle maintenance and delayed allocations resulted in the 6 missed targets. The year end position is 99% compared to a target of 100%, with 12 out of 807 timescales missed.

Percentage of DFGs approved on time



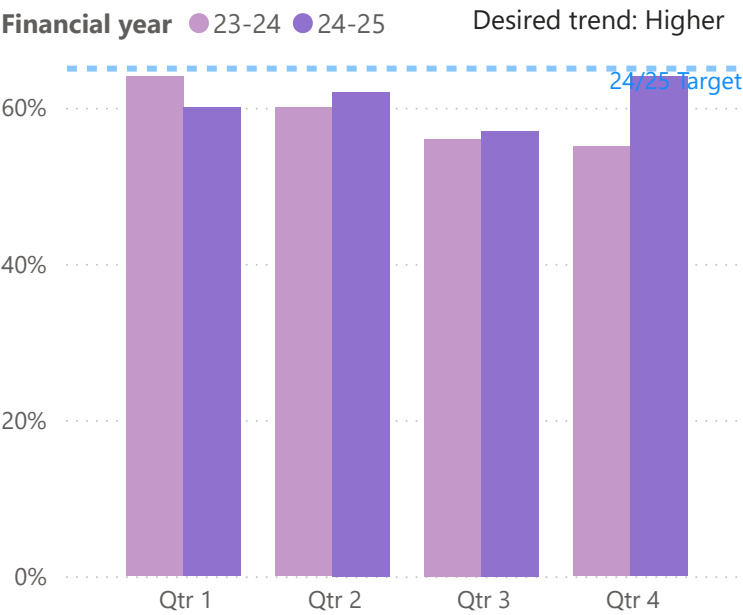
Q4 Status:

Year end position: **74.68%**

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	33.3%	80%

Comments: The percentage of DFGs approved on time missed target in the fourth quarter, returning 33.3% (2/6). This is the result of continued challenges relating to funding, the impacts of which will continue to manifest for the lifespan of the affected applications - further explanation can be seen in the third quarter report. The year end position is 74.68% against a target of 80%, owing to a high number of on-time applications in the first half of the year.

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



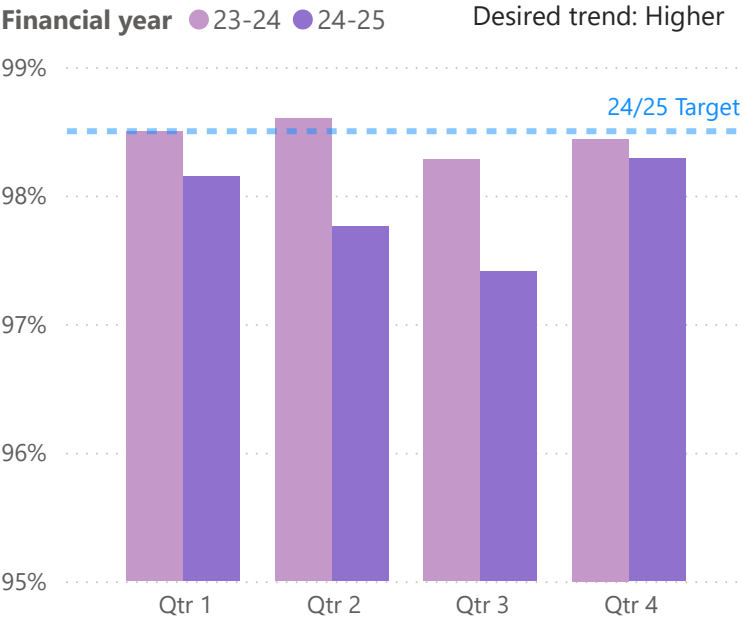
Q4 Status:

Year end position: **61%**

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	64%	65%

Comments: The fourth quarter outturn figure is the highest since Q1 23/24, but continues to highlight 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, and Planning. The year end position for this indicator is 61% vs. a target of 65%.

Percentage of invoices paid on time



Q4 Status:

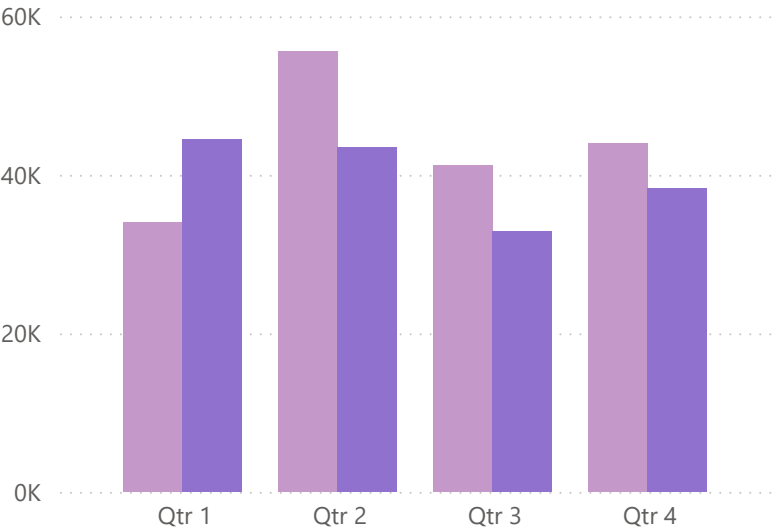
Year end position: **97.9%**

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	98.3%	98.5%

Comments: Performance has recovered in the fourth quarter, only missing target by 0.2%. Finance continues to work with services to ensure processes and procedures are adhered to, and technological solutions are being investigated. The year end position for this indicator is 97.9% compared to a target of 98.5%.

Number of people transacting with the Council online

Financial year 23-24 24-25



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year end position:

159,129

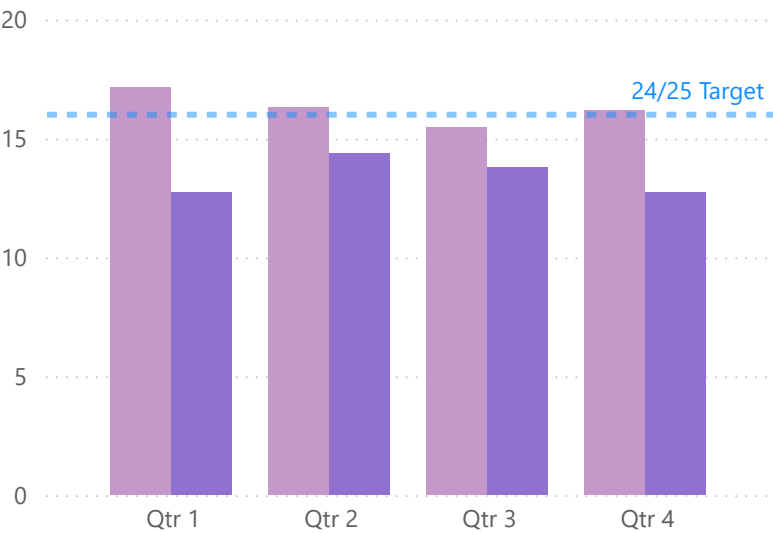
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
23-24	Qtr 1	33,995
23-24	Qtr 2	55,634
23-24	Qtr 3	41,222
23-24	Qtr 4	43,982
24-25	Qtr 1	44,532
24-25	Qtr 2	43,440
24-25	Qtr 3	32,904
24-25	Qtr 4	38,253

Comments: The number of online transactions in the fourth quarter showed a reduction compared to the previous year. This metric includes online-forms and housing bids, which can vary significantly month to month and drive fluctuation in the metric.

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

Financial year 23-24 24-25

Desired trend: Lower



Q4 Status:



Year end position:

13.40



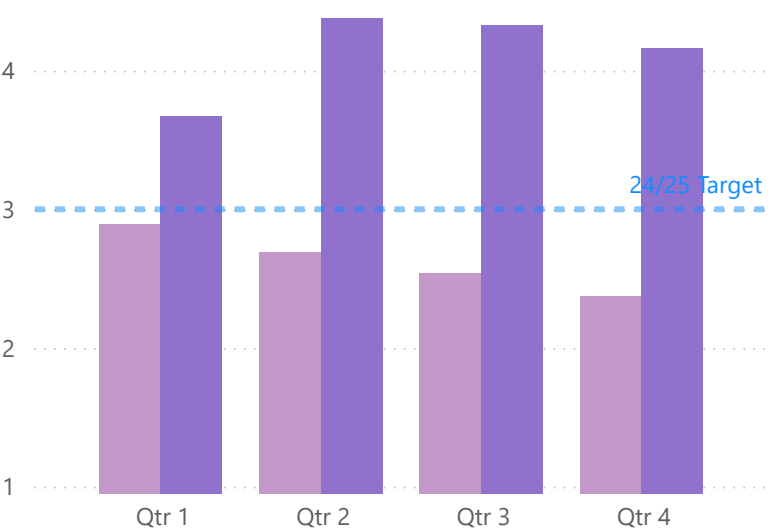
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
23-24	Qtr 1	17.13	18
23-24	Qtr 2	16.31	18
23-24	Qtr 3	15.47	18
23-24	Qtr 4	16.18	18
24-25	Qtr 1	12.73	16
24-25	Qtr 2	14.37	16
24-25	Qtr 3	13.77	16
24-25	Qtr 4	12.74	16

Comments: The time taken to process new benefit claims has remained below the lower target for 24/25 in the fourth quarter with an outturn of 12.74 days. This metric has achieved target every quarter, and returns a year end position of 13.4 days compared to the target of 16.

Days taken to process housing benefit claim changes

Financial year 23-24 24-25

Desired trend: Lower



Q4 Status:



Year end position:

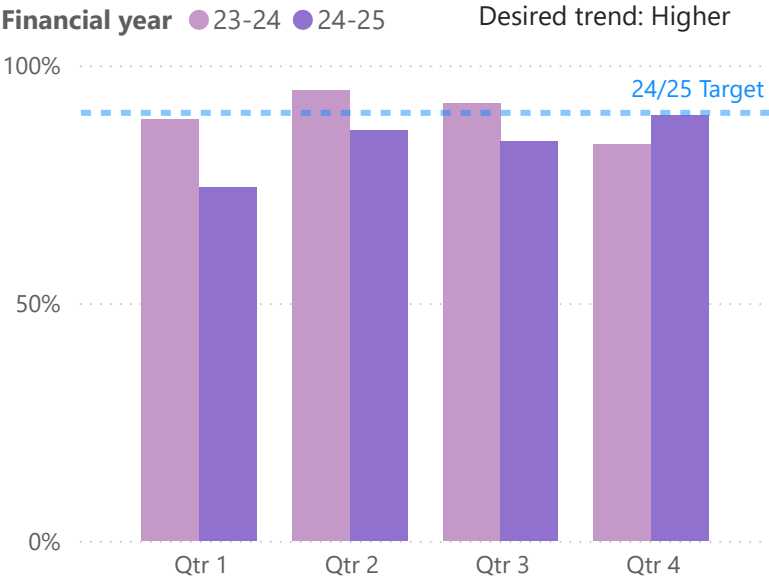
4.14



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
24-25	Qtr 4	4.16	3

Comments: The 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 as the service prepares for migration of Housing Benefit cases to Universal Credit.

Percentage of stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescale



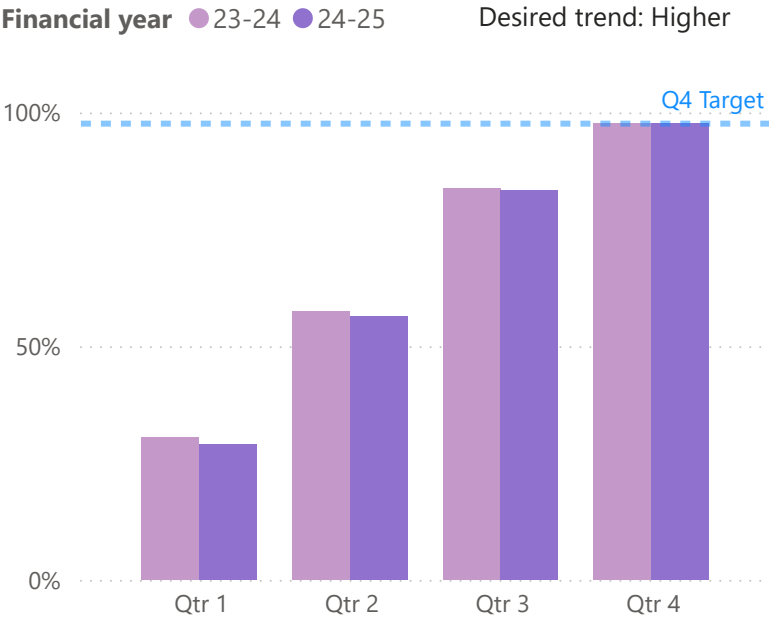
Q4 Status:

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	89.47%	90%

Year end position: **82.02%**

Comments: Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale missed target by just over 0.5% in the fourth quarter. This represents a recovery in the performance of this metric, as new complaints processes have improved response times. The year end position is 82.02% compared to a target of 90%, as a result of lower outturn particularly in the first quarter where there was an increased volume of complaints.

Collection rate for Council Tax



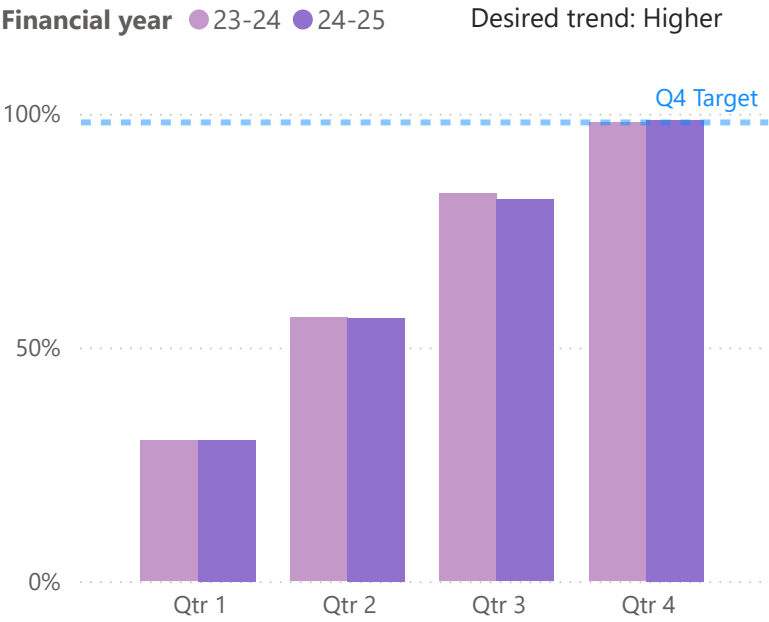
Q4 Status:

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	97.55%	97.59%

Year end position: **97.55%**

Comments: Council tax collection rate missed target in the fourth quarter by 0.04%. This represents a very minor deviation from the target of last year's performance, and minor fluctuations are anticipated year to year.

Collection rate for Business Rates



Q4 Status:

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%
24-25	Qtr 4	98.68%	98.13%

Year end position: **98.68%**

Comments: Business rates collection achieved target by 0.55% for the year, recovering in the fourth quarter from a lower than anticipated third quarter outturn.

Complaints

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

Complaint Category	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
Justified	43	95	56	64	115	102	56	74
Not Justified	23	40	35	41	62	33	25	26
Partially Justified	13	17	20	20	14	23	11	12
Not known	0	0	1	4	5	1	2	2
Total	79	152	112	129	196	159	94	114

Comments:

The fourth quarter saw an increase of complaints compared to the previous period, driven by an lower number of operations complaints in the third quarter, with levels increasing again in the fourth quarter.

There was one stage 2 complaint, and three stage 3 complaints in the fourth quarter which is the lowest number of escalated complaints in any quarter of the year. This is a small sample size, but may be indicative of more effective stage 1 resolutions.

Overall, 2024/25 saw an increased volume of complaints compared to 2023/24 (542 vs 469 (+73)). This is entirely accounted for by the high outturn of complaints in the first quarter of 2024/25, which resulted from the introduction of the chargeable garden waste collection service and the associated changes in collection routes causing an increased number of missed collections whilst the new routes embedded with collection crews.

The response times for complaints has also improved across the year, from a challenging outturn in the first quarter of 74.3% responded to on time, to 89.47% in the fourth quarter, new processes in the operations team have been successful in improving performance in the turn-around time for complaints.

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

January 2025

One initial enquiry from the LGO as to the handling of a complaint. This complaint relates to the posting of site notices for a planning permission in relation a development next to the complainant.

One confirmation that the LGO will be investigating a complaint in relation to a housing banding with a request for information with initial enquiries.

February 2025

No LGO cases were received or progressed.

March 2025

One initial enquiry from the LGO in relation to enforcement of provisions of S106 agreement to provide a free shuttle bus service from Braintree Village retail centre to Braintree Town. The LGO subsequently declined to investigate the complaint as the complaint had been received outside the normal 12-month period for investigating complaints and there is no evidence to suggest that the complainant could not have complained to the LGO sooner.

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	Q4 24/25	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	482	489	502	501	499	509	505	506	+1	-
Headcount – Permanent employees					463	467	464	467	+3	
Headcount – Fixed term contract					36	42	41	39	-2	
Total staff FTE	435.98	444.29	457.18	458.54	458.52	467.96	465.91	467.21	+1.3	-
Level of employee turnover	3.9%	1.8%	2.0%	3.4%	2.4%	3.1%	1.98%	2.17%	+0.19%	-
Number of leavers	19	9	10	17	12	16	10	11	+1	-
Number of starters	15	16	23	16	10	26	6	12	+6	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee*	1.34*	1.73*	5.87	5.9	6.22	5.65	6.01	6.85	+0.84	8.0
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	84.6%	68.3%	55.2%	48.7%	80.8%	67.4%	51.5%	45.3%	Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	1078	617	751	833	688	842	1068	895	-173	-
Number of delegates	200	235	347	379	345	314	363	377	+14	-
Number of apprentices**	19	20	20	21	21	20	23	23	-	-

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 level 7.

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.

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

Comments:

In the fourth quarter 10 accidents/incidents were reported concerning employees. One related to a low-speed car collision, two related to injuries incurred whilst moving bins. Four incidents related to aggressive behaviour experienced by staff. One incident occurred when a member of staff fell over moving out of the way of a member of the public, and a further incident related to lifting of refuse sacks. One incident was recorded where a member of staff suffered written aggression from a customer.

No RIDDOR (Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents were recorded in the fourth quarter, one insurance claim was made and none were settled.

2024/25 saw a total of 47 incidents reported, a 9.6% decrease compared to 2023/24, and 35 days lost due to incidents, a 59.8% reduction. The same number of verbal/physical incidents were reported in both years, and the number of near misses reduced by 1.

Financial Summary

Summary

The revenue outturn position shows an overall positive variance of £2.6 million, after allowing for carry forwards proposed by services.

Treasury management income significantly exceeded budget due to a combination of higher-for-longer interest rates and larger cash balances being managed. The garden waste subscription service also exceeded expectations. This was the first subscription year and therefore a prudent approach had been adopted based on the experience of other local authorities. As improved positions were being reported in the in-year budget monitoring, income targets for both areas were increased in the 2025-26 Budget.

Income from the Council Tax Sharing Agreement with the major preceptors was also higher reflecting an increased tax yield and sustained collection performance in the year.

Asset Management and Environment have an adverse outturn position that is greater than 5% of their budget. Strategic Investment and Sustainable Development have adverse positions, which are both less than £50k, and therefore rated as amber.

Asset Management is reporting an adverse position primarily due to unresolved issues relating to services charges where provisions for increased cost and/ or lower income have been made. These provisions will be kept under review in 2025/26.

Environment incurred increased staffing costs in Building Control, where a difficult labour market exists at the time of new regulatory requirements; and a there is shortfall in income.

The overall position for Sustainable Development has continued to improve quarter-on-quarter but still reflects a significant underachievement of income, mainly on planning applications, but this is largely offset by underspends on staffing and the receipt of one-off government funding.

Capital expenditure for the year was £5.7 million with the main areas of spend being on community facilities, sports and leisure facilities, Climate Change actions, Shared Prosperity projects, operational vehicles and equipment, and grants for residential disability adaptations. There is an underspend across several projects totalling £517k, and £4.5 million of budgets being reprofiled into 2025/26 for continuing projects.

The outturn position is subject to finalisation and audit of the Statement of Accounts. Significant variances contained in the reported position have already been reflected in the 2025/26 budget; however, further work will be undertaken to assess whether further adjustments are necessary as planning commences for next year's budget cycle.

Background

The Council agreed a net budget of £19.6m for 2024/25. During the year budgets were updated for the final staff pay award backdated to 1 April 2024. The budget for Operations was also adjusted to reflect an in-year approval for £360k of the projected overachieved income being ringfenced for project funding of the Waste Service review.

General Fund Revenue Spending

The tables below show the outturn by service:

Business Plan Service	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Variance £'000	Carry Forwards £'000	Net General Fund £'000	RAG Status
Asset Management	(2,860)	(2,482)	378	0	378	R
Community & Leisure	946	946	0	24	24	G
Corporate Management Plan	1,657	1,626	(31)	0	(31)	G
Economic Development	157	23	(134)	0	(134)	G
Environment	942	1,097	155	0	155	R
Finance (incl. Treasury Management)	667	(1,001)	(1,668)	0	(1,668)	G
Governance	1,485	1,301	(184)	58	(126)	G
Housing Services	1,002	1,000	(2)	0	(2)	G
ICT & Facilities	2,113	1,907	(206)	38	(168)	G
Marketing & Communications	700	676	(24)	0	(24)	G
People & Performance	1,149	1,032	(117)	78	(39)	G
Operations	7,205	6,335	(870)	30	(840)	G
Strategic Investment	162	201	39	0	39	A
Sustainable Development	1,611	1,659	48	0	48	A
Service Plan Total	16,936	14,320	(2,616)	228	(2,388)	G
Corporate Financing	2,965	2,405	(560)	0	(560)	G
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	300	0	300	
Net Total	19,601	16,725	(2,876)	228	(2,648)	G

Business Plan Service	Staffing Expenditure			Other Expenditure			Gross Income		
	Updated Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Updated Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Updated Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Asset Management	518	550	32	1,311	1,507	196	(4,689)	(4,539)	150
Community & Leisure	1,124	1,129	5	1,392	1,386	(6)	(1,570)	(1,545)	25
Corporate Management Plan	2,028	1,982	(46)	64	79	15	(435)	(435)	0
Economic Development	284	194	(90)	317	273	(44)	(444)	(444)	0
Environment	1,922	1,996	74	479	471	(8)	(1,459)	(1,370)	89
Finance	2,782	2,579	(203)	25,822	25,836	14	(27,937)	(29,416)	(1,479)
Governance	950	824	(126)	832	829	(3)	(297)	(294)	3
Housing Services	1,819	1,821	2	175	170	(5)	(992)	(991)	1
ICT & Facilities	1,076	1,047	(29)	1,037	932	(105)	0	(34)	(34)
Marketing & Communications	552	517	(35)	335	341	6	(187)	(182)	5
People & Performance	1,053	1,009	(44)	192	197	5	(96)	(96)	0
Operations	7,861	7,822	(39)	6,870	6,972	102	(7,526)	(8,429)	(903)
Strategic Investment	359	370	11	(136)	(137)	(1)	(61)	(32)	29
Sustainable Development	2,911	2,654	(257)	611	734	123	(1,911)	(1,729)	182
Service Plan Total	25,239	24,494	(745)	39,301	39,590	289	(47,604)	(49,536)	(1,932)
Corporate Financing	906	824	(82)	5,862	5,669	(193)	(3,803)	(4,088)	(285)
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	300	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total	25,845	25,318	(527)	45,163	45,259	96	(51,407)	(53,624)	(2,217)
As percentage			(2.04%)			0.21%			(4.31%)

Main Changes (+adverse/ -positive) to Third Quarter

The overall position has improved since the projection at the Third Quarter, the main reasons for this being:

- **Treasury Management Income (-£305k)** - Cash balances continued to remain higher than budgeted, in part due to slippage in capital spending, an increase in capital resources, including a significant capital receipt early in fourth quarter, and a reduced drawdown on reserves. Interest rates continued to remain higher than previously expected as inflation remained above the Bank of England's target and a cautious approach to monetary policy was maintained.
- **All Other Services (-£68k Net)** – including a net positive variance on staffing, and the unwinding of provisions for prior-year fees following completion of external audits under the Government's backstop arrangements.

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

Asset Management

- Reduction in capitalised staffing costs due to the need to divert resources to work in support of the leisure management procurement (+£37k)
- Reduced income at the Plaza from the Makerspace partially offset by funding allocated for Shared Prosperity Fund initiatives and lower operating costs (Net +£64k)
- Lower income at Victoria Square due to vacant units and increased cost in relation to service charge arrangements (+£85k)
- Net increase in overall rental income from industrial units following rent reviews partially offset by vacant units and some directly related costs (-£33k).
- Unrecoverable service charges for unsold plots at H120 (+£40k) and provision for prior year service charges pending reconciliations and settlements with the managing agent (+£100k).
- Reduced income due to vacant space at Causeway House (+£31k)
- Other property related variances including maintenance, stock condition surveys and legal fees income (+£54k).

Economic Development

- Economic Development underspend due mainly to vacancies (-£134k) but as the service is part funded from reserves; a significant portion of 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 (+£135k)
- Other service variances (net +£20k)

Finance

- Additional treasury management income due to higher-for-longer interest rates and higher cash balances (-£1.5m)
- Net underspend on staffing due to vacancies, and reductions in contracted hours or staff appointments at lower scale points. Several vacancies have been held while the service had been exploring potential opportunities through the shared services workstream and also in anticipation of a future reduction in workloads as a result of the migration of Housing Benefit caseload to Universal Credit (Nb this will also result in reduction to Housing Benefit Administration subsidy) (-£204k)
- The revenues system costs are higher which is in part due to the investment made in the Council Tax Support Banding Scheme which has also led to efficiencies reflected in staffing underspends (+£45k)

- External audits fees being claimed in relation to prior year audits are lower than originally provided due to the backstop arrangements. This is still pending confirmation from the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (-£60k)
- Other variances relate to banking charges, benefit subsidy, postages, which are partially offset by lower insurance premiums (+£18k)

Governance

- Recruitment and retention difficulties have meant that posts have continued to remain vacant (-£142k)
- Increased income from residential and commercial land charge searches net of other minor expenditure (-£42k).

ICT & Facilities

- Staffing underspends within the service from vacant posts. (-£67k)
- Underspend on corporate ICT systems (-£77k)
- Net underspend (-£26k) mainly on the operating costs for Causeway House (-£26k)
- Additional income in relation to room hire related to the licensing function where a full cost recovery review of related fees and charges has been undertaken (-£36k)

People & Performance

- Staffing underspends from reduced hours, staff appointments at lower spinal points, and underspend on the central apprenticeship budget as costs are currently being met by services directly (-£117k)

Operations

- Net saving (-£69k) 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 card merchant financing charges (-£146k).
- Higher income and lower costs in Cemeteries related to the profile of requests for burials and interments (-£46k)
- The subscription-based garden waste collection service generated additional net income (-£688k) bringing forward achievement of the original MTFs target and towards full cost recovery. An in-year approval by Cabinet was made to ringfence £360k to support the resourcing required for the Waste Service Review
- Income from the sale of recyclate material, composting credits and tipping away payments higher due to market prices and tonnages as well as diversion of waste from Cordons Farm (-£110k)
- Income from the sale of glass was higher due to market price (-£125k)
- Increased demand for commercial waste and bulky waste services resulted in net additional income (-£98k)
- Higher vehicle running costs (+£58k)
- Other expenditure is lower (net -£6k) across operations

Sustainable Development

- Net staffing variance due mainly to vacancies in Development Management and Landscape Services, partially offset by agency cover (-£257k)
- Landscape services spend with ECC, and tree maintenance contractor costs are higher than budgets (+£89k). Additional funding for the service and tree management has been included in the 2025/26 budget
- One-off new burdens funding from the Planning Skills Delivery Fund (-£65k)
- Shortfalls in Planning Application and Pre-Application income partially offset by additional income from Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) (Net +£231k)
- Other variances (+£50k) including a shortfall in income from charges for the Self-Build, planning appeals and Custom Build Register

Corporate Financing

- Council Tax Sharing Agreement – Council Tax yield and collection performance for the Council and other Essex authorities was better than the baseline set in the agreement leading to maximum share-back from preceptors being achieved (-£298k)
- Capitalised staffing costs were lower than budgeted reflecting the slippage within the capital programme (+£53k)
- External interest costs were lower due to internal borrowing defraying the requirement to increase external debt (-£229k)
- Reduction in use of reserves as a contra to underspends in Economic Development and Strategic Investment (+£93k)
- Central provision for increased staff costs and retention which have been able to be contained within existing budget in 2024/25. Allocation of this funding is subject to business cases, and some drawdown has been agreed in 2025/26 (-£150k)
- Net other variances: higher cost of the apprenticeship levy, which is charged as percentage of payroll, offset by savings from staff annual leave purchase scheme, business rates transitional provision and transparency code grant funding (Net -£29k)

Capital Programme

The current capital programme is £17m, including £0.6m in respect of projects to be delivered by third parties and paid for by Section 106 Funds. The table below shows the budget amount profiled to be spent in 2024/25; actual spend for the year and, where applicable, slippage and project variance.

	Budget Profiled 24/25 £000	Actual Spend 24/25 £000	In-year Variance 24/25 £000	Slippage (-or deduction from future budget) £000	Remaining Project Variance 24/25 £000
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	238	68	171	-171	0
Horizon 120 - The Plaza	253	16	237	-75	162
Manor Street regeneration	107	0	107	0	107
Witham Community Centre	1,400	104	1,296	-1,296	0
Town Centre improvements	713	33	680	-680	0
Industrial estate improvements	30	30	0	0	0
Property planned maintenance	840	166	674	-668	6
Information technology systems & equipment	380	217	162	-100	62
Community facilities, play areas, parks & open spaces	1,250	1,085	165	-152	13
Cemetery improvements	11	0	11	-11	0
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	73	69	4	-4	0
Operational equipment / vehicles	1,107	873	234	-146	88
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	1,243	427	816	-816	0
Climate change initiatives	852	790	62	-61	1
Shared / Rural Prosperity Fund	603	603	0	0	0
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	1,344	1,016	328	-328	0
Capital salaries	276	199	77	0	77
Total	10,719	5,695	5,025	-4,507	517

Programme Summary

- Actual spend for the year was £5.7m against a profiled budget of £10.7m. Budgets reprofiled into 2025/26 amounted to £4.5m, leaving a net variance £0.5m.
- The programme increased in the final quarter by a total of £1.2m mainly to reflect additional ringfenced funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (£256k); and light commercial vehicles purchased as part of the normal vehicle replacement programme for which the longer-term financing has yet to be determined (£721k).

Capital receipts & other resources

- Total receipts generated for the year was £6.99m. This consisted of the following:
 - Access rights across Council owned land generating a net £4.49m
 - Sales of residential land £711k.
 - Right-to-buy receipts of £533k, generated from 4 sales completed in the year.
 - Share of VAT savings from Eastlight of £407k
 - Sale and leaseback of operational vehicles £645k
 - Other capital receipts totalling £204k
- Capital grants and contributions received in the year total £2.4m consisting of:
 - Funding through Better Care and Eastlight totalling £1.61m for the DFG programme.
 - Capital grants of £132k and £320k received from the Shared Prosperity Fund and DEFRA (food waste collections for flats) respectively. A retrospective claim for a further £425k from Rural Prosperity Fund has been made for expenditure incurred in the year.
 - Sport England grants for climate change related projects at Witham Leisure Centre (£375k awarded and received); and for a new Artificial Grass Pitch at Witham Sports Ground (£290k

awarded of which £5k received and a further £96k has been claimed against expenditure incurred to date).

Treasury Management

Investments at the start of the year totalled £56.3m which increased over the year with an average amount under management of £77.8m and a peak level of £91.5m. New investments of £162m were made and £145.2m matured, resulting in a closing balance of £73.1m at the end of the year.

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

Dividend income earned for the year was just over £1m and interest on short-term investments totalled £2.9m, a combined total of £3.9m; representing an overall annualised return of 5.1%.

The closing market value of shares and units in long-term pooled funds was £22.2m, giving an unrealised gain of £3.2 million.

General Fund Balances

The provisional closing balance on General Fund balances is £11.3m.

The agreed Budget for 2025/26 allocates a total of £644k of general balances for planning appeals provision, climate change projects, and community engagement; and a further £484k used to balance the budget.