



Second Quarter Performance Management Report

1st July to
30th September 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 quarter in relation to the Annual Plan 2025/26. 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, 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	2	14	-	-	-
Prosperity	2	9	2	1	-
Environment	4	6	2	-	-
TOTAL	8	29	4	1	-




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
7	5	4	5

KEY:

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

Summary Position

The performance in the second quarter is broadly in line with expectations with most projects underway and progressing well. 29 projects are on track at the end of the second quarter.

Five projects completed in the second quarter, where:

- The Safer Streets Programme concluded in Halstead.
- A sale was agreed for plots 5 -8 at Horizon 120.
- Arrangements were made to sell the soil with the plots at Horizon 120.
- The North Essex Councils Climate Partnership published its risk register, and
- The Essex Flood Guide was published and promoted by the Council.

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

- The development of a renewable energy supplementary planning document, where resources are focused on delivering the local plan, and there is uncertainty around future renewable energy policies.
- The development of a waste supplementary planning document, where additional time to make all required considerations will likely result in an extension of the target date.
- The delivery of the Green Skills programme, where a lower-than-expected uptake by learners has resulted in a reduced capacity for the programme, and
- The support of school access to university open days, where university capacity to facilitate the open day has been more limited and conditional than expected.

One project has a red status, where the regeneration works to Witham and Halstead town centres are still under discussion with Essex Highways to agree all aspects of adoptable works before a programme of works can be agreed.

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

Seven performance indicators have met or exceeded target and nine have not met target. For the performance indicators that have not met target, five have missed target by less than 5% and four have missed target by more than 5%.

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

- Percentage of household waste sent for recycling, where a reduced tonnage of garden waste has resulted in a lower outturn.
- Kilograms of residual waste per household, where despite an improvement against last year a new, lower target was not achieved.
- Percentage of fly tips cleared within 24 hours, where increased time to gather evidence prior to clearing caused a number of breaches of timescales.
- Council tax collection rate, where minor variations against last year have resulted in a reduced outturn, and
- Business rates collection rate had a reduction against target. It is expected that this will be on target by the end of the year as minor variation year to year is expected.

The following indicators missed target by more than 5%:

- Number of affordable homes delivered, where delays in completions resulted in a low outturn this quarter.
- Percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved within timescale, where applications effected by funding challenges last year are being approved during this reporting period.

- Percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact in the customer service centre where there is a continued need to transfer complex calls through to specific departments where the customer needs a more detailed response, and;
- 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.



Further details of all performance indicator out turn 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 - Support residents and communities impacted by the cost-of-living crisis through initiatives raised by the £1m new homes bonus.</p> <p>A cost-of-living residents survey has been created to gain insight into the current challenges faced by residents. The survey was released on 11 September and has already had over 350 responses. This work will be used to inform future cost-of-living support.</p> <p>Further data analysis work is taking place to overlay data on social rent arrears, council tax debt, food bank use, poor property energy efficiency rating and other indicators of poverty and hardship to help develop a model to assist in proactive support to residents.</p> <p>The Agewell support offered across the district from July through to the end of September supported 23 new clients, and addressed a total of 26 individual cases.</p> <p>Work continues to support residents in accessing unclaimed benefits, and in the second quarter has helped residents to access nearly £87,000 of benefits for which they were eligible but not claiming.</p> <p>Nearly 2,500 'boost your budget' books have been distributed, receiving exceptionally positive feedback. Particularly, staff at Job Centre have praised the resource, and find it a valuable tool to help support clients.</p> <p>Research has been undertaken to survey homeless individuals, particularly those rough sleeping or sofa-surfing, to better understand what specific support people in these situations need. The lived experience of residents has been invaluable in identifying practical support such as internet access, places to charge mobile phones, support directories, amongst other suggestions. This feedback is being formalised and will be published to employees working with those at risk of homelessness to enhance understanding and ensure these needs can be addressed readily.</p>	<p>August 2026</p> <p></p>
<p>1.2 - Deliver activities to support the priorities of the LiveWell Strategy.</p> <p>The Council is working in partnership with Essex County Council and St Helena Hospice to deliver a 'Compassionate Communities' approach in the district, focusing on the Livewell and Diowell domains. A stakeholder workshop is scheduled on 21 October, facilitated by St Helena Hospice.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p></p>




<p>Planning for the Braintree District Sports and Volunteer Awards is underway. Public Health Practitioners are supporting Active Braintree and Active Essex to organise the event, taking place on 29 October.</p> <p>The Council is supporting the Essex County Council Children's Commissioner's planned autumn events in the shape of 'School Transition Roadshows', the dates for which are to be confirmed but anticipated to fall throughout October in mid-Essex.</p>	
<p>1.3 - Administer the Health and Wellbeing Panel Grants.</p> <p>Eight small grants have been successful in 2025/26 to date, for values up to £1,000. These are Fusion Lifestyle, CARA Essex, Carers Connect, Braintree Mencap, Crossroads Braintree and Chelmsford, Healthwatch Essex, Chapel Community Care, and Rayne Boxing Club, for various projects. A further two grant applications are being considered.</p> <p>The remaining allocation of the grant fund will be available for large grants up to £10,000. The process for this is currently being confirmed.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>1.4 - Procure and implement a 3-year contract for leisure services in the Braintree District.</p> <p>The new contract with Freedom Leisure commenced on 1 September. Daily updates have moved to weekly meetings with officers from the Council to support mobilisation and transition. From October these will move into monthly operational meetings and be incorporated into business-as-usual activities.</p> <p>Throughout September both Freedom and Council officers attended Leisure Centre member engagement sessions to hear feedback and for Freedom to answer any queries.</p> <p>The annual service plan meeting with Freedom is due to take place in November. The Quarterly Strategic Partnership board meetings have been set up throughout the year, with the first taking place in November also. Monthly contract meetings have been established covering operations, Property and Assets, and site visits.</p>	<p>October 2025</p> 

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

<p>2.1 - Revise the Local Plan in line with recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>Work continues to identify sites which meet National Government Housing Targets. Site selection work and highways evidence work is due to complete by the end of December. It is anticipated that a statutory Regulation 18 consultation will begin in February 2026.</p>	<p>June 2026</p> 
<p>2.2 - Work with Essex County Council on the outcomes of the research from the Housing Learning and Improvement Network to develop a Supported Housing Strategy.</p> <p>The County Wide Advisory Group for Supported Housing met in September to continue collaborative work in response to the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. The meeting reaffirmed the importance of proactive, cross-district coordination, particularly in light of ongoing delays to national guidance. While a full government response to the initial consultation was expected following Parliament's Summer Recess which ended on 1 September, no further update has been published to date. A second consultation on draft regulations remains scheduled for early 2026, with implementation to follow as soon as is practicably possible.</p> <p>Locally, Essex County Council (ECC) is leading the development of a draft Supported Housing Strategy for Essex, supported by an external advisor. The strategy will align with anticipated national standards while addressing local needs across vulnerable groups, including those affected by domestic abuse, mental health challenges, and disabilities. ECC met with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in August, and MHCLG have indicated a desire to meet with the County Wide Advisory Group.</p> <p>The advisory group is looking to address a number of strategic and operational issues, including: how to effectively map void units and understand current capacity, how best to engage with health colleagues to integrate with health services, resource planning in respect of the cross over with the implementation of the Renters Rights Bill, data gathering, and what lessons can be learned from similar pilots in other authorities.</p>	<p>December 2026</p> 
<p>2.3 - Establish a Landlord Register as part of the regulations introduced by the Renters Rights Bill.</p> <p>The Renters Rights Bill is currently undergoing the required parliamentary process and is anticipated to gain Royal Assent in the third quarter. A cross-departmental internal working group has been established to prepare for this.</p> <p>In September, a local authority checklist was published detailing necessary preparations for when the act is enacted. The working group is evaluating the checklist requirements and the associated cost implications of responding to the new duties in the Bill.</p>	<p>March 2027</p> 

<p>A business plan is in development to plan for three levels of response to the bill. A basic, intermediate, and advanced option are anticipated to be proposed, though the adopted response will be determined by the level of 'new burden' funding provided by central government, which is unknown presently.</p>	
<p>2.4 - Through the Homelessness Prevention Partnership distribute the rough sleeping Winter Pressure Fund.</p> <p>During the second quarter, the Council awarded a total of £8,137.73 through the Winter Pressures Fund, supporting tenancy sustainment and preventing rough sleeping. Peabody awarded £490.95 during the same period. The Council's allocations included rent arrears clearance and support for accommodation essentials, while Peabody's award focused on rent payment assistance. The fund continues to be used flexibly to respond to emerging needs, with a combined remaining balance of £41,495.81 across both allocations. Compared to the first quarter, where the Council awarded £5,095.51 and Peabody made no allocations, the second quarter reflects a significant increase in activity and fund utilisation.</p> <p>The fund continues to support a range of interventions, including rent in advance, arrears clearance, and essential accommodation items. It has also enabled partnership working with organisations such as CHESS and First Stop to provide accommodation essentials and weather-appropriate supplies for those sleeping rough.</p> <p>The Homelessness Prevention Partnership remains the key forum for identifying and responding to cases where targeted financial support can prevent rough sleeping or sustain tenancies for those at risk.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>2.5 - Develop options and feasibility to provide Temporary Accommodation that is fit for the future needs of the district.</p> <p>The strategic recommendation is that a 6-bed unit is required to meet current and projected temporary accommodation needs in Braintree. A secondary workstream is underway to explore the feasibility of a larger unit that could be reconfigured to consolidate smaller units or existing contracts. The Council is liaising with Eastlight Community Homes regarding the potential availability of a sheltered scheme, following their recent board paper on asset disposal.</p> <p>Bi-weekly meetings have been established with Asset Management and Housing to ensure regular updates and maintain momentum. These meetings will also support the development of a realistic timescale for delivery.</p> <p>The Housing Research and Development team have engaged a Data Science Fellow and Intelligence Manager at Essex County Council to peer review the data to ensure accuracy and identify any miscalculations. The Council also continues to contact neighbouring local authorities to compare challenges and identify potential resolutions.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 

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

<p>3.1 - Build Witham Sports Ground 3G Pitch.</p> <p>Practical completion was achieved on 30 May, marking the project as complete. The pitch is now in use.</p>	<p>June 2025</p> 
<p>3.2 - Continue to work with partners to deliver various activities and initiatives supporting people experiencing loneliness or social isolation.</p> <p>In July the Council attended the Active Essex Voluntary and Community Service meeting. The group discussed the challenges presented to the sector including recruitment of volunteers, networking opportunities and the availability of funding. The group is awaiting an announcement from Active Essex regarding the appointment of partners to support the group. During the session, many partners expressed that the Council's involvement was highly valued and requested more meetings facilitated by the Council.</p> <p>The Council has also identified an area of need in the Armed Forces community, with the latest needs assessment highlighting that nearly 70% of respondents agreed loneliness and social isolation were significant issues. Work is ongoing with the Royal British Legion to evaluate the new veterans ID card to enable public and charity sector services to better identify veterans.</p> <p>In August the first Food Network focus group was held. This is a joint session between the Cost-of-Living and Social Isolation and Loneliness groups, aimed at bringing together organisations delivering food initiatives across both areas. The goal is to create a shared toolkit of local projects, enabling cross-referral and raising awareness of available support, whilst expanding the offering to local residents.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>3.3 - Award contract and start to build Witham Community Centre.</p> <p>Work on the Community Centre is progressing well. Due to the good weather over the summer, the construction team have bought forward the building of the car park which has progressed quickly. Blockwork and brickwork continues, and utility services have been ordered. Planned completion of 15 May 2026 is still on target. Before a final decision can be made on the boundary treatment, a site visit has been planned with the developer and the land agent for the neighbouring site.</p>	<p>July 2026</p> 

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

4.1 - Through the safer streets funding, prevent violence against women and girls in public, neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour in Halstead.

The safer streets programme in Halstead has now concluded, delivering a positive impact on the residents of Halstead. Halstead Town Council noted that there has been a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour and shoplifting in the bid areas, particularly due to employing the Street Warden who regularly patrols the bid areas and wider areas of the town.

The programme has delivered numerous positive outcomes, including:

- 29 CCTV cameras were installed to help deter crime and record any crimes which may take place.
- The Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse delivered 811 specialist counselling sessions for women and girls.
- Essex Police completed monthly ASB & Crime Prevention patrols and dedicated over 500 policing hours to the programme which exceeded the original planned amount.
- The Outreach Sports Programme by Fusion delivered over 500 free activities to more than 2,800 young people in Halstead.
- The number of Neighbourhood Watch members in Halstead increased over the course of the Safer Streets programme by a minimum of 5%.

Partners provided positive feedback regarding the delivery of the programme and would all recommend other local partners to take part in future Safer Streets programmes. It was highlighted by multiple partners that the programme has strengthened local partnerships, and they would like this collaboration to continue

To continue the work of Safer Streets in Halstead, Halstead Town Council applied to the Police Fire and Crime Commissioners's Community Safety Development fund in order to fund the Essex Youth Service to deliver an additional evening at the Halstead Youth Centre, which will increase the provisions for young people in the town.

September
2025



4.2 - Continue to administer the Councillor Community Grant Scheme.



To date the Councillor Community Grant Scheme has awarded £32,545 in grants to local community groups for various projects and initiatives.

In the second quarter grant awards included:

- CARA – specialist counselling for young people in Halstead who have experienced sexual violence or abuse.
- Great Yeldham Youth Festival.
- Witham Badminton Club – Court hire and shuttle costs for inclusive sessions.
- Lamarsh Village Hall – Contribution towards replacing the front door.

March 2026



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halstead Dementia Friendly Project – Activities including an inclusive cinema and dementia choir. • Essex Gliding Club – installation of a defibrillator. • Terling Swimming Pool – purchase of an ultraviolet water filtration system. • Royal British Legion – First aid training • The Third Space Youth Group – Funding for a youth worker. 	
<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>Joint patrols as part of ‘Op Guardian’ were carried out in August and September whereby Officers of Essex Police jointly patrolled with Braintree District Council’s Children and Young Person Safeguarding Officer to educate and engage with members of the Community on crime prevention issues and to enforce the active Public Spaces Protection Order. 19 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued to persons witnessed breaching the PSPO since its implementation in October 2024.</p> <p>During the second quarter Essex Police facilitated 8 fraud prevention/awareness events, with a total attendance across the events of 342. These took place across Braintree, the Colnes and the Bardfields.</p> <p>The Council’s Children and Young Person Safeguarding officer attended various meetings relating to Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE), which monitor and review multi-agency activity to known and potential child exploitation and trafficking across Essex.</p> <p>There were 5 drop-in sessions for Council employees to raise awareness of and discuss safeguarding concerns, including advice around preventative measures.</p> <p>The Community Safety Officer from Braintree District Council continues to attend the monthly ‘Parish Council Forum’ facilitated by Essex Police. This forum provides an opportunity to discuss community safety concerns and explore preventative measures collaboratively with Parish Councils, Essex Police, Braintree District Council and other members of the Community Safety Partnership. All parish councils are invited to attend these meetings monthly.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>4.4 - Continue to support local investment in communities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year 4).</p> <p>Following first quarter confirmation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund continuing to fund projects into year 4 (2025/26), work has been ongoing to initialise new projects for delivery whilst continuing to deliver existing initiatives.</p> <p>All new projects are either in contract development or are ready to start delivery. These include, creative career sessions, crucial crew sessions, an anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 







<p>workshop for partner organisations, enhanced CCTV, and additional business support sessions delivered through the North Essex Economic Board.</p> <p>Existing projects continuing this year thanks to the extension of the UKSPF include extending the Community Engagement Officer post, mental health training workshops, the holiday club programme, key safe and handyman services, play park development, and employability training.</p>	
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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>Work on the Council's land and all phase 1 work has been completed, including bins, benches, way-finding monoliths, painting works and noticeboards. Project closure for phase 1 is underway, including work with Essex Highways to ensure adoption of street furniture on Highways land.</p> <p>Discussions with Highways continue around phase 2 works, with lighting columns and paving materials the focus, to ensure all works are adoptable upon completion.</p> <p>A programme of works is being produced by the developers, where agreed works will commence at the start of the programme to allow continued discussion around more complex works concurrently. However, until the schedule is agreed by all parties, the target date is unknown. As such, this project has a red status.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>1.2 - Support the development and adoption of Neighbourhood Plans in Earls Colne, Wethersfield and Finchingfield and Bures/Bures St Mary's.</p> <p>The Earl's Colne Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in July.</p> <p>The Bures/Bures St Mary's Neighbourhood Plan is presently out for consultation, which is due to conclude in mid-November. The Stisted Plan is also out for consultation until early-December.</p> <p>The Great Bardfield plan screening opinion has been conducted. This is next due to be considered by the Local Plan Sub-Committee in November, and if agreed will go out to consultation thereafter.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p></p>
<p>1.3 - Develop a design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>After a pause in the first quarter to facilitate recruitment and other critical pieces of work, delivery of the design code is due commence at pace in the third quarter.</p>	<p>December 2026</p> <p></p>

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


<p>2.1 - Build on inward investment activity through the North Essex Economic Board to create an action plan for Braintree.</p> <p>A third video has now been published via all Council social media channels and on the Locate website – The Braintree District Inward Investment Website. Drone footage of all the high priority industrial estates together with stills has been commissioned and produced. The Council is now selecting suitable images and video to upload to the Locate website to promote significant land and property in the area to investors.</p> <p>The Council has prepared a 2-year Inward Investment Action Plan for the period 2026-2028, which is currently being considered for adoption. Interest has been secured from an engineering firm in Halstead to provide one of the video case studies for the Locate website and other Social Media channels, awaiting confirmation of their availability for filming. Meanwhile a construction firm in Earls Colne have agreed a shoot for a video case study in October.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>2.2 - Complete the final infrastructure delivery elements of Horizon 120 by removing excess soil.</p> <p>Contracts to sell the remaining plots with the soil in situ have been agreed with the developer. As part of the contract, the developer will be responsible for the onward re-location of the soil in line with Environment Agency waste handling requirements. This represents the most cost-effective and lowest-risk approach for the Council. This project is now complete.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> 
<p>2.3 - Finalise an approach to zone A at Horizon 120.</p> <p>The developer is currently progressing with a proposal for the site.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 
<p>2.4 - Sell plots 5 – 8 at Horizon 120.</p> <p>Contracts to sell plots 5 – 8 have been agreed with the developer completing this project.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> 
<p>2.5 - Take forward the recommended option from the viability study for the Witham Enterprise site.</p> <p>The land valuation exercise has concluded, providing further information to support decisions on how to market the land. The Council continues to work with a land agent to identify available options to develop the site and the best route to market.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>2.6 - Support the work on developing a North Essex Growth Plan that will inform and promote positive engagement with the emerging plans for Devolution in Greater Essex.</p> <p>The North Essex Growth Plan continues to be one of the main areas of activity for North Essex Councils (NEC) which will feed into Devolution work as this continues to</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 



<p>develop. Work progressed over the summer to reach a final list of priority projects that NEC will be asked to advocate for, with a final draft of the various chapters also being completed and considered by the North Essex Economic Board on 17 September.</p> <p>A workshop was held on 24 September to finalise the draft before being taken to Chief Executive Officers for sign off.</p>	
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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 focussed on enhancing financial management and business growth.</p> <p>The tender process for the programme concluded in the second quarter with a contract successfully awarded. The first two of ten events were held in September, one took place at the Bardfield Vineyard, with the Chairman in attendance. The other event took place in Epping. Both events were well attended, and the feedback received has been extremely positively.</p> <p>The eight remaining events are scheduled to take place at regular intervals until March 2026, with the next Braintree district event taking place in November at Cressing Temple.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>3.2 - Support businesses and residents across the district through delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year 4) projects.</p> <p>The Sole Trader Business Incubation Scheme is a fully funded membership to The Hatchery, a co-working space with dedicated desks or hot desks within an open plan shared workspace at The Plaza. Aimed at Sole Traders, each membership is worth up to £1170 and will be valid up to 31 March 2026. The membership also includes free parking and access to the on-site café.</p> <p>During the second quarter, the scheme has seen 12 members join and start, with a further 6 due to receive induction in the third quarter. This represents full capacity for the scheme with all 18 places currently allocated.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 

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




<p>4.1 - Support school engagement to access University of Essex open days.</p> <p>The Council continues to engage with both schools and the University of Essex to support secondary school pupils to attend open days. The capacity of the University of Essex to deliver open days this academic year has been lower than anticipated, and where open days are scheduled, pupils must meet certain criteria to attend.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
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<p>The Council is exploring how open days can be accessed by schools, and whether it may be more viable for year 10s to attend the open day rather than the planned visits by year 9s. The Council continues to encourage schools to work directly with the University to organise visits.</p> <p>The Council is also exploring what opportunities may exist for students to visit the Anglia Ruskin University Campus in Chelmsford.</p> <p>Due to the uncertainty around capacity and criteria for open days, and that no schools have yet organised open days for this academic year, this project is currently at amber status.</p>	
<p>4.2 - Organise and deliver jobs fairs in the district.</p> <p>The Autumn Job Fair is taking place on 14 October between 9.30am and 12.30pm at Witham Public Hall, with 28 exhibitors registered. It has been promoted to DWP claimants via their work coaches and the DWP social media accounts, as well as the general public via flyers, posters and Council sponsored social media posts.</p> <p>30 exhibitors are signed up to the Midlife Employment, Skills and Health Fair taking place on 13 November at Causeway House. Promotion for this event will commence after the Job Fair. It is anticipated that the Council will see maximum capacity for the venue reached for this event.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>4.3 - Through the Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver year 2 of the Green Skills Programme.</p> <p>An updated proposal to deliver the Green Skills Programme has been received from the training provider, considering the lower-than-anticipated uptake from learners. The proposal outlines how the Green Skills Programme will continue to deliver, but with a reduced capacity, reflecting the lower number of learners. As a result of this, only half of the planned funding will be used, and as such, surplus funding will be returned to the Shared Prosperity Fund for re-investment.</p> <p>Due to the reduced scope of this project, it is marked as amber but is anticipated to be on track in the third quarter to deliver against the revised scope.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 






Environment

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

Project title & progress	Target date & status
1.1 - Enhance the play areas at Beckers Green, Braintree, Kings Rd, Halstead, Spa Rd, Witham and Rickstones Rd, Witham <p>The tender documentation for the play areas was released in September, with evaluation and moderation anticipated to take place in early November, with a view to award in early 2026.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
1.2 - Develop a renewable energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). <p>The Local Plan review is the highest priority project within the Local Plan team which is taking up the majority of staffing resource. The review of the Local Plan includes reviewing policies relating to renewable energy, both in terms of requirements for new developments as well as potential renewable energy proposals. Additionally, the team are monitoring how other Essex Authorities (Uttlesford and Chelmsford) are progressing with their renewable energy policies in their Local Plans which are more advanced. The outcomes of neighbouring authority examinations will inform the approach taken by the Council. Given the current uncertainty around future renewable energy policies, officers are reviewing the requirement for an SPD.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 
1.3 - Work with partners on the requirements to deliver a Local Nature Recovery Strategy across Essex. <p>The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been adopted by Essex County Council and was published on the Essex County Council website on 10 July.</p> <p>The primary purpose of the LNRS is to identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. The Essex LNRS describes the problems faced with biodiversity loss and how they can be addressed. This includes information about some of the mechanisms available to help support developers, landowners, farmers and others to improve biodiversity. The maps indicate where actions could be carried out that will create, expand and connect existing spaces for nature. In accordance with a key principle of nature recovery known as the Lawton Principles, these actions come under three main headings, designed to make habitats: Bigger, better, and more connected. The LNRS is now adopted, marking this project as complete.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 



<p>1.4 - Revise The Council's Tree Strategy.</p> <p>Recruitment was successful in appointing a Landscape Services Manager, who will join the Council in December. Once onboarded revision of the Tree Strategy will commence, using the work which has already been done to update the tree management protocol.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
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Priority 2: Continue to deliver a cohesive and integrated response to climate change adaptation and mitigation


<p>2.1 - Work with Essex Air Consortium to finalise and adopt a joint Essex Air Quality Strategy.</p> <p>The drafted Air Quality Strategy was adopted at Essex County Council (ECC) through its Cabinet in September. The Strategy now adopted by ECC will be adopted by the Council at the following Cabinet meeting in November.</p> <p>The Air Quality Strategy has been published by EssexAir on behalf of the Essex Air Consortium. The strategy can be viewed here: https://www.essexair.org.uk/strategy.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 
<p>2.2 - Through the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership, develop a shared risk register and best practice for adapting to climate change events.</p> <p>The North Essex Councils Climate Partnership (NECCP) working group has completed the local climate risk register, based on identified risks in the national climate risk register. The work has now been presented to the North Essex Council Chief Executives who approved the risk register. The risk register will now be reviewed on a regular basis by the NECCP. This project is now complete.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>2.3 - Work with partners to address the complex challenge of fuel poverty.</p> <p>BDC continues to support residents through multiple routes to limit the impact of fuel poverty. The Council is working with Essex County Council on the Warms Homes Local Grant Scheme which is due to go live in November. The Handyman Scheme assists with installing energy efficiency measures into the homes of the most vulnerable. Promotion of the Green Doctor Service continues with increasing in demand as winter approaches, 19 interventions in residents' homes were installed in September.</p> <p>Continued promotion of residents to the ECO4/Flex and Great British Insulation schemes takes place on a rolling basis. Cross departmental work with the Cost-of-Living Partnership is ongoing to promote these schemes and to highlight risks such as the energy price caps.</p> <p>The Autumn Energy Switch Auction took place on 30 September and a total of 531 residents have registered for this auction.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 



In the second quarter the Sustainability Team updated the Winter Warmth Booklet which will be presented to the Cost-of-Living Group on 17 October.	
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Priority 3: Support residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and be more resilient to climate related impacts

3.1 - Work with Essex County Council and our partners in Essex to promote the Essex Flood guide. The Essex Flood Guide was published in July 2025. The Council has shared the guide on social media and had a promotion of the guide included in the Summer Contact Magazine. The Council is in the process of updating its webpage on flooding to include a link to the guide.	September 2025 
3.2 - In partnership with Groundworks, deliver the extended Green Doctor Service, advising residents on energy efficiency. The Green Doctor Service offers residents who are in fuel poverty or struggling to keep their homes warm support in controlling energy usage. The service, which is in pilot, has secured additional funding to extend the provision until March 2026. Officers in the sustainability team continue to direct residents to the service, and assisted 39 residents in accessing the service in the second quarter.	March 2026 

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

4.1 - Implement new waste collection arrangements following the conclusion of the waste service public consultation and Cabinet decision The property assessment continued into the second quarter to prepare for communication to households in the third quarter, regarding whether their property will receive standard or non-standard collection receptacles. In line with this, a policy is being developed to allow households to request a review if they believe they have been mis-categorised. Procurement has been successful in sourcing a provider for additional bins, and a procurement exercise to identify a provider for recycling boxes for non-standard households has commenced. Additionally, a site to store additional bins has been identified and procurement to prepare the site has also been successful.	April 2026 
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<p>The second quarter also saw a trial for collection food waste from flats conclude with positive results, ahead of extension to this service as a part of the wider waste reforms. A new trial is being planned to introduce paper and card receptacles to the same trial blocks.</p> <p>Work has continued on the communication strategy for the upcoming changes, including a publication in the Council's Contact magazine.</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 the Waste Reforms and Essex Waste Strategy</p> <p>Communications continued in the second quarter to support the Waste Service Review, explaining the reasons for the changes and trying to encourage increased take up of recycling in the meantime. In this quarter, the Council published several animated social media explainers, including a timeline of key events for residents, how to reduce odours in the grey bin, why things are changing, standard vs non-standard collections, the new Absorbent Hygiene Product service, and how to maximise space in bins.</p> <p>Alongside the social media posts and reels, a four-page spread was published in Contact magazine, explaining the new service and the reasons for it. This has received positive feedback.</p> <p>As well as covering the Waste Service Review, the Council also published several posts on recycling and refuse collections, covering arrangements for collections during the heat waves, driver behaviour around vehicles and the annual clear sack deliveries. There is good feeling towards the waste collection crews and residents respond positively to posts of this nature, making them a good way to increase engagement with the service.</p> <p>Supplementing comms on the Waste Service Review, there has been a push on food recycling, aiming to increase take up of the service in advance of the changes. The magnetic display in Causeway House was replaced with one showing the food recycling journey, emphasising its circular nature. For Zero Waste Week in September, focus was on food recycling with waste minimisation tips, and there were two reels on social media, one looking at storage of commonly wasted foods, the other at how to use them up.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>4.3 - Develop a waste Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>The development management team are finalising the waste SPD having considered how kerbside collections can be best managed in new estates where roads may remain under the care of management companies, rather than being adopted by highways. It is anticipated that the consultation on this will take place in the third quarter. As a result, this project is marked at amber status as it is likely a change management process will need to be completed to amend the target date.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 

Climate Change Action Plan



Introduction

In July the Climate Change Annual Report detailing progress during 2024-25 was prepared and was presented to Cabinet in September. Progress highlights include:

- A reduction in the organisational carbon emissions by 509 metric tonnes (8.5%) against the strategy's baseline year 2019-25
- 6% of the Council's energy use is now derived from renewable/green sources
- In 2024/25 14.4% of the Council's electricity usage is from our own solar pv on estate buildings
- The installation of Witham Leisure Centre 407kW Solar arrays and LED lighting was completed in March 2025 saving 60 tonnes carbon/pa
- £767K of electricity offset from solar feed since the Council's climate emergency was declared in 2019
- 89% of the Council managed lighting is now LED
- Procurement of 14 electric light vehicles for the Council's fleet of operational vehicles delivered in Spring 2025

The Climate Change Action Plan (CAP) for 2025-26 contains 44 actions for reporting.

The post of Climate Change Project Manager has been vacant since May 2025. After securing approval for funding from the Climate Change Reserve the post was advertised and successfully recruited, and the post will be filled by December 2025.

Resources

In July Planning approval was given to the 13.8MW Sheepcote Solar Farm scheme, between Bradwell and Silver End, which will power over 6,000 homes annually and deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of over 400% through wildflower meadows and new hedgerow planting. The plant is expected to break ground in late 2026.

The Council e-newsletter covered Plastic Free July, Bee's Needs Week, the Green Skills Programme, Great Notley Country Park winning Green Flag status, and saw an increase to a total of 8,556 subscribers.

In this quarter the Council continued to promote the June 2026 waste collection changes and published further information on the waste review. The Council has also promoted an animation on what can be recycled that is currently going into the grey bins.

In August water saving advice was published in the environment newsletter. The Council posted the bank holiday bin collection changes on social media and published a post on Facebook asking people not to litter over the bank holiday weekend. The Council also published tips on food recycling in the hot weather in the environment newsletter.

Energy Conservation

Work continued between the Sustainability Team and Assets Team shortlisting suitable sites for rooftop and carpark canopy solar for consideration. In September the sites identified had Expressions Of Interest prepared and were submitted to Finance for consideration of developing business cases for 2026-27 Capital Projects.

The Council continues to wait for approval on its application to UK Power Networks to install an export meter to take advantage of payments for energy export up to 200kVA.

The Council published a reminder to register for the Essex Energy Switch on Facebook with over 500 households already registered by mid-September. A page on support available for home heating this winter was published in Contact magazine, as well as some home energy saving tips to coincide with the news that the Energy Price Cap was to be increased.

Transport

The Council progressed an opportunity with Essex County Council (ECC) of fully funded installation of electric vehicle chargers in Easton Road car park in Witham.

ECC published their public transport total passenger journey figures for 2024-2025. Across Essex there has been an increase in the uptake of public transport with over 37.5 million journeys recorded in 2024/5, up on the previous year of 2023-24 which showed just over 35 million.

ECC launched the Essex Transport Strategy and the Council have promoted the Essex Public Consultation in the e-newsletter and on social media.

The Council promoted Cycle-to-Work day on social media and in the e-newsletter, linking to the regular free bike fix-it events that aim to keep bikes out of landfill.

Built Environment

The Council promoted the Green Skills Programme of retrofit training.

Business & the Green Economy

The Council continued to support local food producers by encouraging buy local habits, promoting our monthly markets and local food suppliers on social media, also shopping locally in the environment e-newsletter as a way of cutting plastic waste, linking to our local food suppliers directory.

Natural Environment

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy was published by Essex County Council (ECC), which can be accessed on the ECC website.

The Council promoted on social media Great Notley Country Park once again receiving Green Flag status; it ran a story in the newsletter on Bees' Needs Week and published a social media post on the Big Butterfly Count.

Adapting to Climate Change

The Council continues to promote seasonal-weather-related health warnings through social media and communications channels as part of its statutory Warning and Informing role. Information is received from MET Office, UK Health Security Agency and Environment Agency. In July there were two extreme weather warnings following the heat health alert and during the heatwave the Council published a social media post advice on where and how to keep cool in the heatwave. Advice was also published on social media regarding avoiding wildfires in the heatwave.

Emergency Planning Officers took part in an Essex Resilience Forum flood teleconference led by Essex Police in preparation of possible flooding during a July storm.

A North Essex Council's Climate Partnership Climate Risk Register for the north of Essex (based on local risks identified in the National Risk Register) has been developed which will support future policy decisions and strategies by highlighted key climate related risk in North Essex.

Emergency Planning Officers facilitated a workshop session with members of the Essex Resilience Forum on engaging with community groups on protecting themselves from events like flooding and storms.

The Sustainability team have produced a first draft replacement of the Be Ready for Winter booklet for residents, which will include seasonal advice on staying warm at home during the winter months. The leaflet will be re-named and will incorporate all-year round advice.

The new Braintree District Council Flood Plan was completed and has been approved for sign off.

The Emergency Planning team attended cold weather planning updates on the UKHSA Adverse Weather Plan and Met Office Winter Hazards course. Both are fundamental to the Council's severe weather planning and winter warning and informing.

The Environment Agency's (EA) new flood warning system is due to go live in October. The EA will lead on communications to the public detailing sign-up options and any actions needed for those already signed up to the system. The Council and other partners will amplify the EA messaging as requested.



Fit For The Future

The Fit for the Future Transformation Programme is making strong progress, with a focus in the second quarter on achieving measurable results, involving employees, and encouraging new ideas - especially in digital services.

Employees have taken part in multiple workshops and feedback sessions, which have helped understanding and support of the changes. Events like the 'Your Voice' employee forum have given employees a chance to share their views and help shape new ways of working and transformation initiatives to support the Council's ambition to innovate and drive productivity.

Following the reassessment of the Transformation Programme following the confirmation of Greater Essex's future on the priority devolution timeline, the programme has developed a high-level plan that supports the three key workstreams: People and Process, Service Reviews and Digital. This has enabled a clear plan for quick improvements, prioritisation and better resource alignment to delivery.

Workstream Highlights

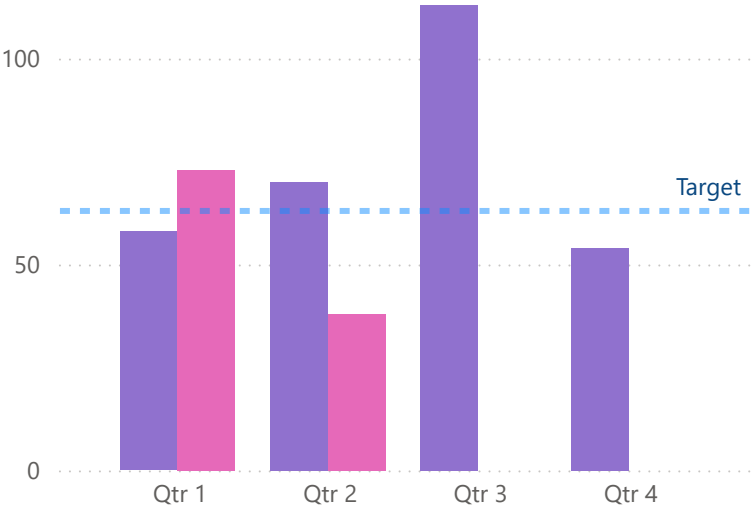
- **People and Processes:** Planning is underway to deliver reviews and improvements in key areas including spans and layers of management structures, organisational culture and resilience, core processes, and skills development.
- **Digital:** The Digital Customer proposal is progressing, aiming to improve how residents use council services. New features under consideration include AI-supported chatbots, Single Sign On functionality, secure payments, and a unified consultation platform. Cyber security remains a priority, with ongoing events and policy reviews. Infrastructure upgrades at Causeway House are also underway with investment in collaboration and meeting spaces for employees to improve working and use of technology.
- **Service Reviews:** Reviews of Fleet Management are complete, with Financial Services, Sustainability, Climate Change, Graphics and ICT questionnaires nearly complete. The Food, Health and Safety review is close to completion, and Community Development has recruited to support delivery of its next phase. Progress continues across many services, whilst consolidation of lessons learned and realised benefits has started for completed reviews such as Anti-Social Behaviour, Leisure and Waste.
- **Asset Management:** A new approach to managing council assets has been proposed, with extra risk controls being considered. Work is ongoing to put these changes in place.
- **Shared Services:** The Braintree-backed business case for local government reform was submitted to Central Government in September. Collaboration with other Essex councils is helping to share best practice and support transformation.

In summary, the programme is gaining ground, with tangible progress in all areas. Employee engagement, digital innovation, and strong governance are keeping the programme on track to deliver meaningful change for employees and residents. The programme remains closely monitored, responsive to challenges, and committed to ongoing improvement.

Performance Indicators in detail

Number of affordable homes delivered

Financial year 24-25 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status: ●

Year to date position:

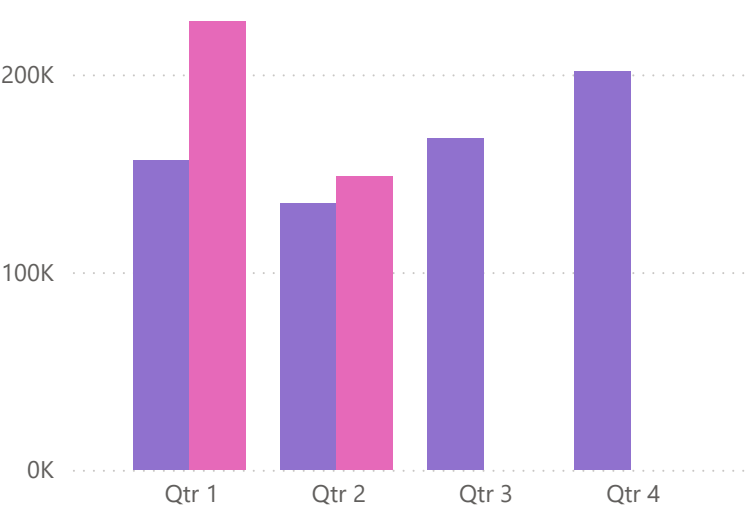
111

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	58	63
24-25	Qtr 2	70	62
24-25	Qtr 3	113	62
24-25	Qtr 4	54	63
25-26	Qtr 1	73	63
25-26	Qtr 2	38	62

Comments: The number of affordable homes delivered in the second quarter missed target, due to delays in completions. It is anticipated, considering planned completions, that this indicator is still on track to achieve target by the end of the year.

Number of visitors to our leisure centres

Financial year 24-25 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

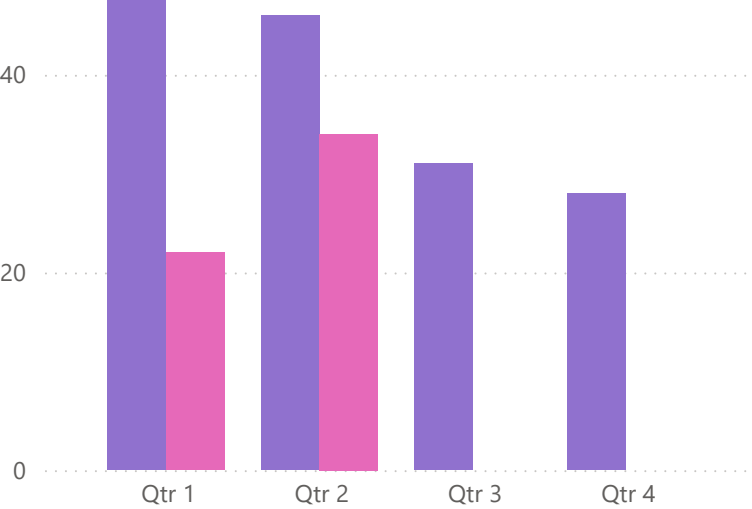
375,304

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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
25-26	Qtr 1	226,836	
25-26	Qtr 2	148,468	

Comments: The target for this metric has been paused for the 25/26 financial year whilst the leisure services contract changes provider. The second quarter outturn shows an improvement on the same quarter last year, though it should be noted the leisure services provider experienced system issues in 24/25, and the second quarter of 25/26 includes the transition period between providers.

Number of homelessness cases prevented

Financial year 24-25 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

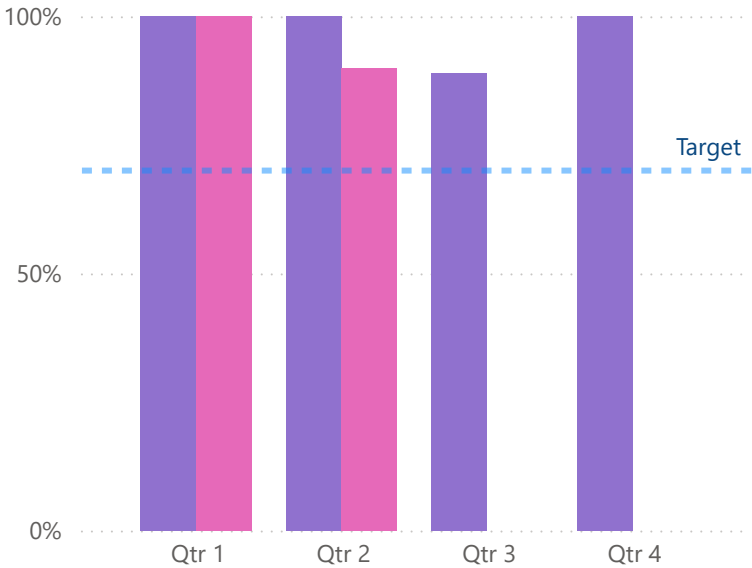
56

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
24-25	Qtr 1	48
24-25	Qtr 2	46
24-25	Qtr 3	31
24-25	Qtr 4	28
25-26	Qtr 1	22
25-26	Qtr 2	34

Comments: The number of homelessness cases prevented increased in the second quarter compared to the first quarter. Whilst this can be an indicator of demand, the metric only captures where a formal duty of homelessness was owed and prevented. Housing continue to focus on early intervention, where working with households to achieve positive outcomes earlier in the process resolves cases before they are owed a statutory duty of prevention.

Major planning applications decided on time

Financial year 24-25 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

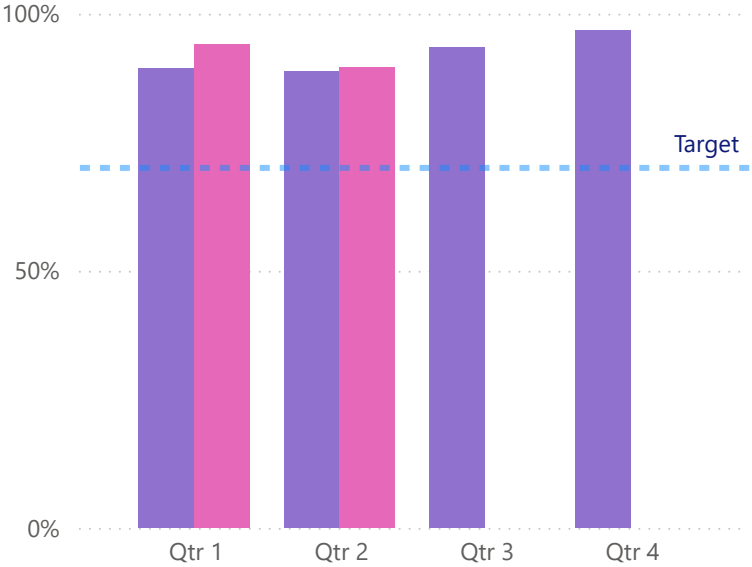
Year to date position:
94.12%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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%
25-26	Qtr 1	100.00%	70%
25-26	Qtr 2	90.00%	70%

Comments: 9 out of 10 major planning applications were decided on time in the second quarter. This continues a positive trend where the target has been achieved every quarter since 2019.

Minor planning applications decided on time

Financial year 24-25 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

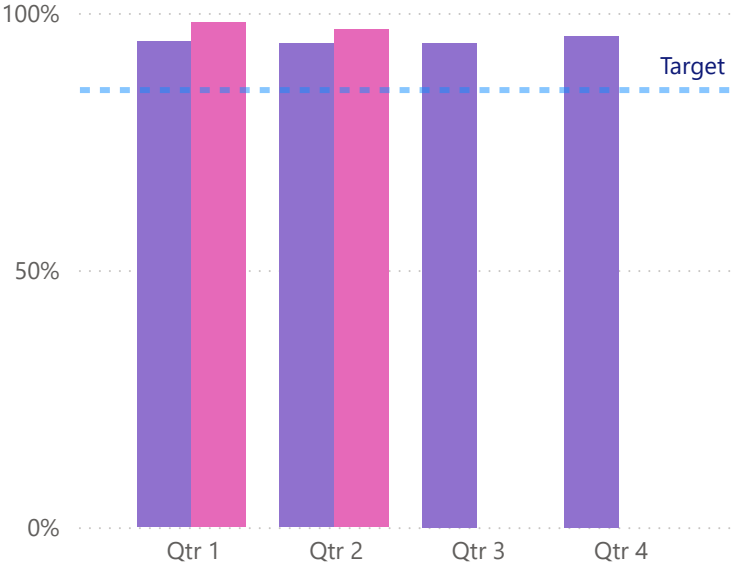
Year to date position:
91.82%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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%
25-26	Qtr 1	93.98%	70%
25-26	Qtr 2	89.47%	70%

Comments: 93.98%, 68 out of 76 minor planning applications were approved in time in the second quarter, continuing a strong history of achieving this target.

Other planning applications decided on time

Financial year 24-25 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

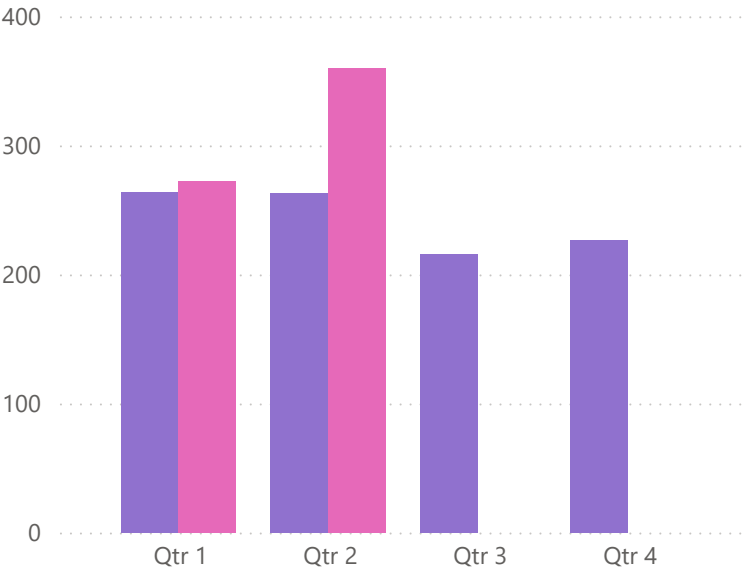
Year to date position:
97.51%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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%
25-26	Qtr 1	98.17%	85%
25-26	Qtr 2	96.82%	85%

Comments: The second quarter outturn for other planning applications decided on time was 96.82%, representing 152 out of 157 applications. This is well in excess of the 85% target, and continues a trend of comfortably achieving this target.

Number of new start up businesses

Financial year 24-25 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

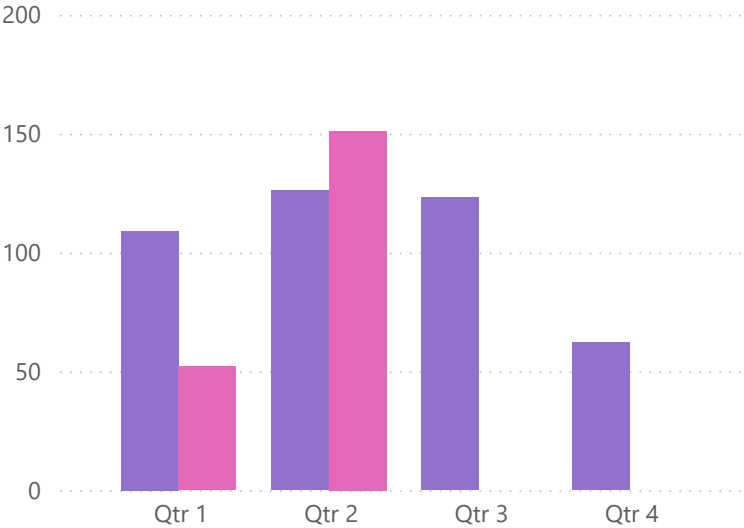
632

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
24-25	Qtr 1	264
24-25	Qtr 2	263
24-25	Qtr 3	216
24-25	Qtr 4	227
25-26	Qtr 1	272
25-26	Qtr 2	360

Comments: 360 new businesses were registered in the second quarter, which is a greater outturn than any quarter in the current or previous year. A 23% increase in business registrations has been observed across Essex in the second quarter, and so is not unique to Braintree, but may be an indication of increased summer trade and confidence in the local economy.

Number of businesses accessing business support

Financial year 24-25 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

203

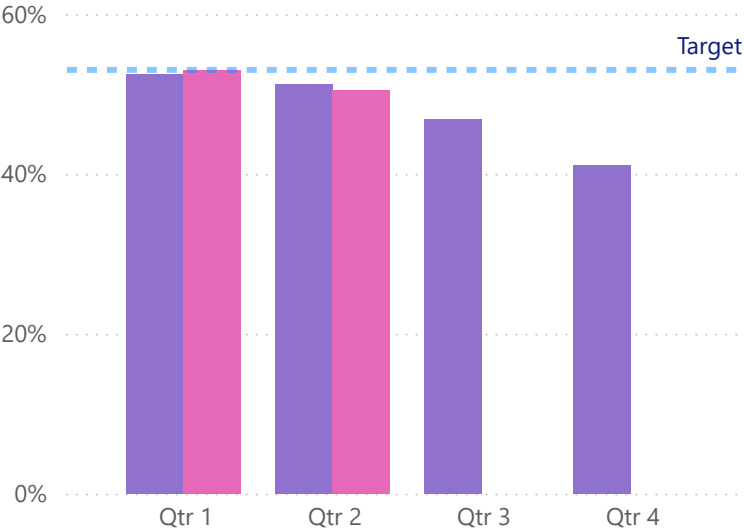
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
24-25	Qtr 1	109
24-25	Qtr 2	126
24-25	Qtr 3	123
24-25	Qtr 4	62
25-26	Qtr 1	52
25-26	Qtr 2	151

Comments: The number of businesses accessing business support recovered in the second quarter, following a low outturn in the first quarter. This is a result of funding made available in the first quarter funding activity in the second quarter.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting

Financial year 24-25 25-26

Desired trend: Higher



Status:



Year to date position:

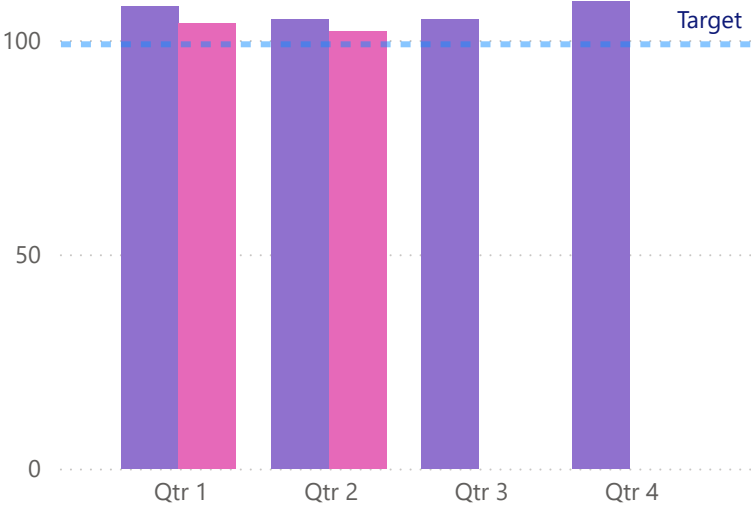
51.77%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	52.5%	50%
24-25	Qtr 2	51.3%	50%
24-25	Qtr 3	46.8%	50%
24-25	Qtr 4	41.1%	50%
25-26	Qtr 1	53.0%	53%
25-26	Qtr 2	50.5%	53%

Comments: The second quarter outturn for recycling rate has missed target. This decrease is due to a reduced tonnage of garden waste collected compared to the first quarter likely due to a hot summer. The second quarter observed less residual waste being collected, but this was offset by the reduction in garden waste tonnage.

Kilograms of residual waste per household

Financial year 24-25 25-26 Desired trend: Lower



Status:



Year to date position:

206

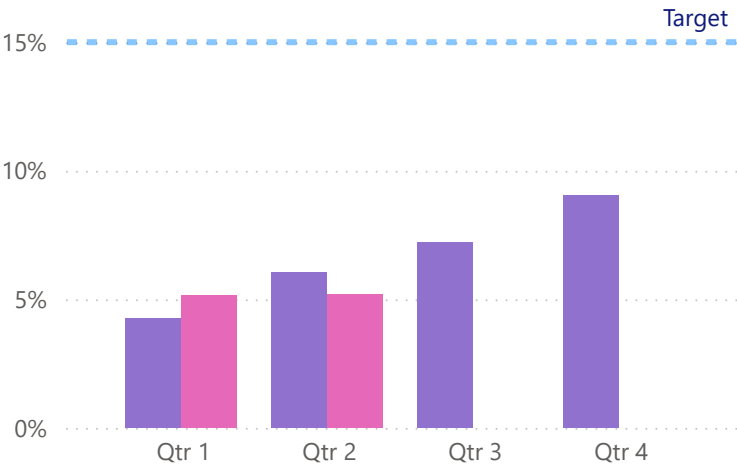
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	108	100
24-25	Qtr 2	105	100
24-25	Qtr 3	105	100
24-25	Qtr 4	109	100
25-26	Qtr 1	104	98
25-26	Qtr 2	102	98

Comments: The second quarter outturn for residual waste missed the new, lower target, returning 102 kgs per household. However, the second quarter outturn is 3kg lower than the same quarter last year, and a reduction on the first quarter. The second quarter outturn would have achieved target if not for a peak in residual waste tonnage in July.

As part of the waste review, trials, engagement events and opportunities to drive behaviour change are underway to improve recycling and reduce residual waste.

Recycling contamination rate

Financial year 24-25 25-26 Desired trend: Lower



Status:



Year to date position:

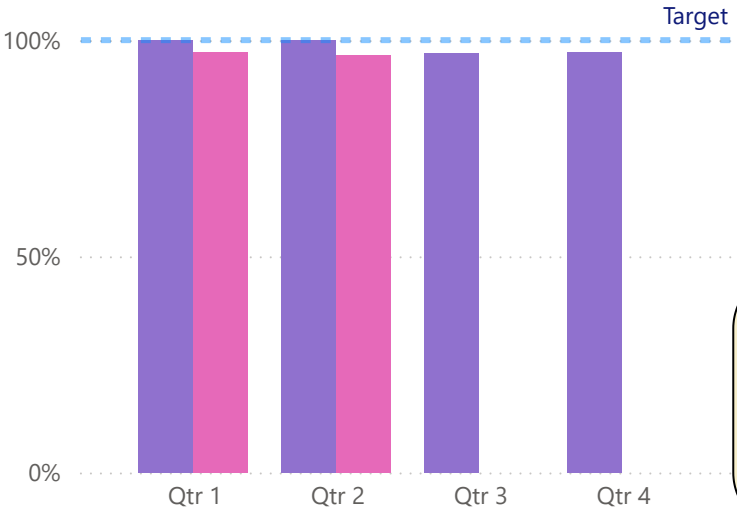
5.19%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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%
25-26	Qtr 1	5.17%	15%
25-26	Qtr 2	5.21%	15%

Comments: Recycling contamination rate was below target for the second quarter returning a rate of 5.21%. This reflects an improved position compared to last year.

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

Financial year 24-25 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:



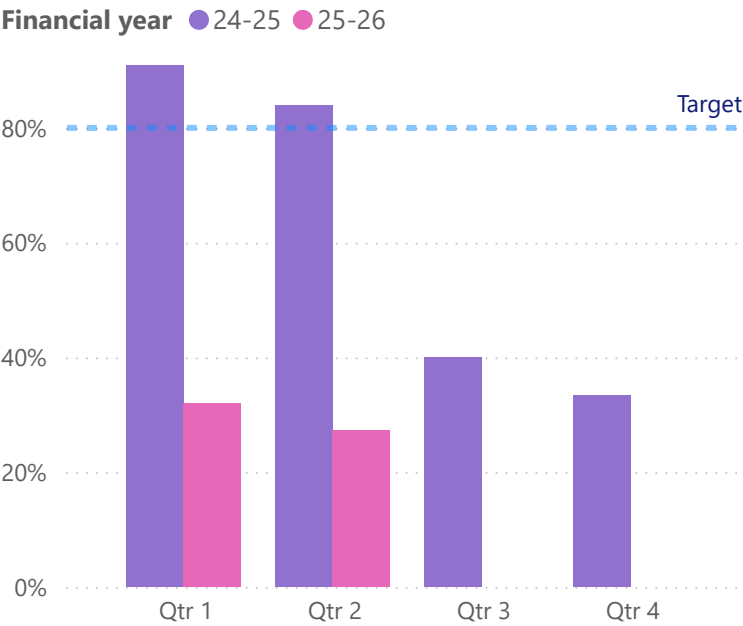
Year to date position:

97%

Financial year	Quarter	Number	Outturn	Target
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	214	97%	100%
25-26	Qtr 1	224	97%	100%
25-26	Qtr 2	240	97%	100%

Comments: In the second quarter, 97% of fly tips were cleared within 24 hours (231 out of 240). The main reason for the delayed clearances resulted from taking increased time to gather evidence for enforcement before the fly tips were able to be cleared.

Percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved on time



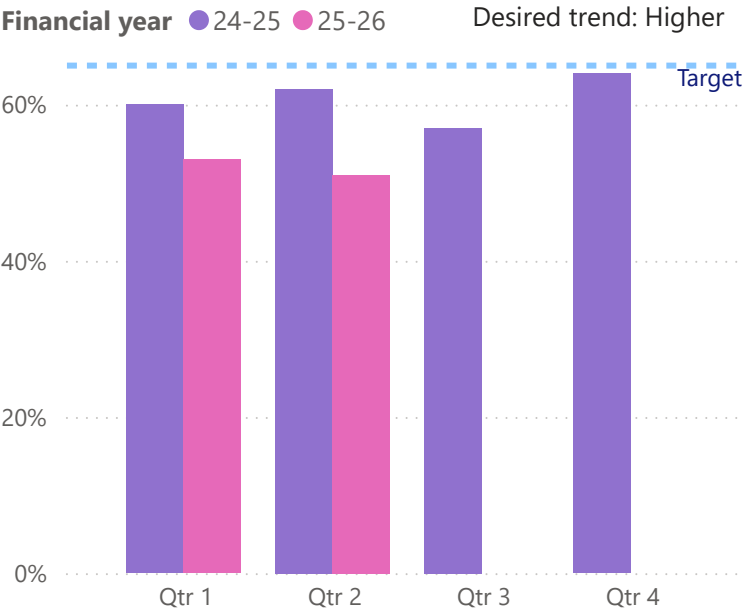
Status:

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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%
25-26	Qtr 1	32.0%	80%
25-26	Qtr 2	27.3%	80%

Year to date position: 30.56%

Comments: The percentage of DFGs approved on time missed target in the second quarter, returning 27.3% (3 on time out of 11 approved). This is the result of two factors. Firstly, applications now being approved which were delayed by the availability of funding during the previous year. Secondly, the resource required to action historic applications whilst processing new ones. Recruitment to a vacant position in Q2, and additional recruitment in Q3 is hoped to relieve this. During this time the Council has prioritised urgent grants, ensuring that critical requests have been able to be actioned.

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



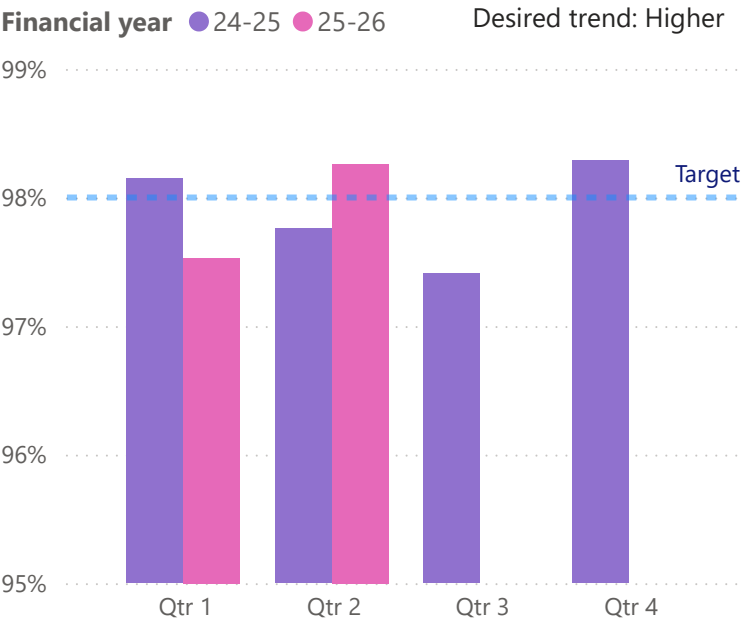
Status:

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	60%	65%
24-25	Qtr 2	62%	65%
24-25	Qtr 3	57%	65%
24-25	Qtr 4	64%	65%
25-26	Qtr 1	53%	65%
25-26	Qtr 2	51%	65%

Year to date position: 52%

Comments: In the second quarter, the Customer Services team supported 21,178 callers, successfully resolving 10,723 enquiries straight away. The more complex matters are passed through to the relevant departments ensuring the callers receive the right expertise to respond to their enquiry. A review of Customer Services is now underway, looking at opportunities to enhance how the service operates and making it easier for residents to access the support they need.

Percentage of invoices paid on time



Status:

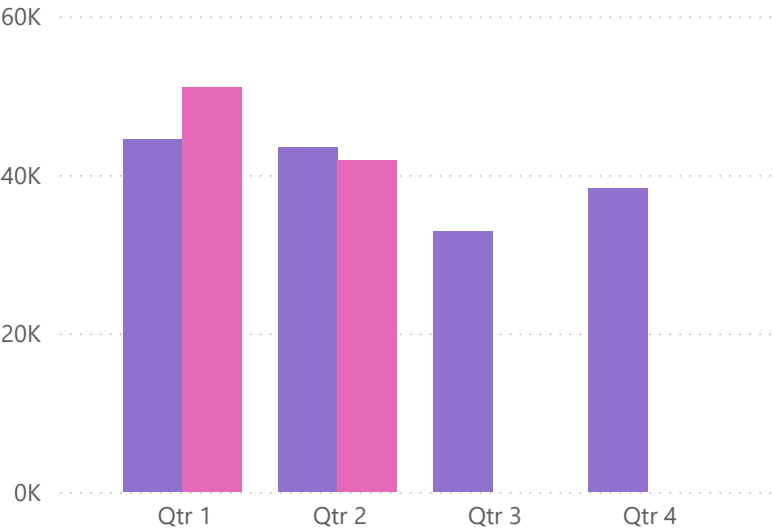
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	98.2%	98.5%
24-25	Qtr 2	97.8%	98.5%
24-25	Qtr 3	97.4%	98.5%
24-25	Qtr 4	98.3%	98.5%
25-26	Qtr 1	97.5%	98.0%
25-26	Qtr 2	98.3%	98.0%

Year to date position: 97.9%

Comments: The percentage of invoices paid on time was 98.3% in the second quarter, achieving the target by 0.3 percentage points. This is due to ongoing work by the Finance team with departments across the organisation to improve the processing speed of invoices.

Number of people transacting with the Council online

Financial year 24-25 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
24-25	Qtr 1	44,532
24-25	Qtr 2	43,440
24-25	Qtr 3	32,904
24-25	Qtr 4	38,253
25-26	Qtr 1	50,991
25-26	Qtr 2	41,776

Year to date position:

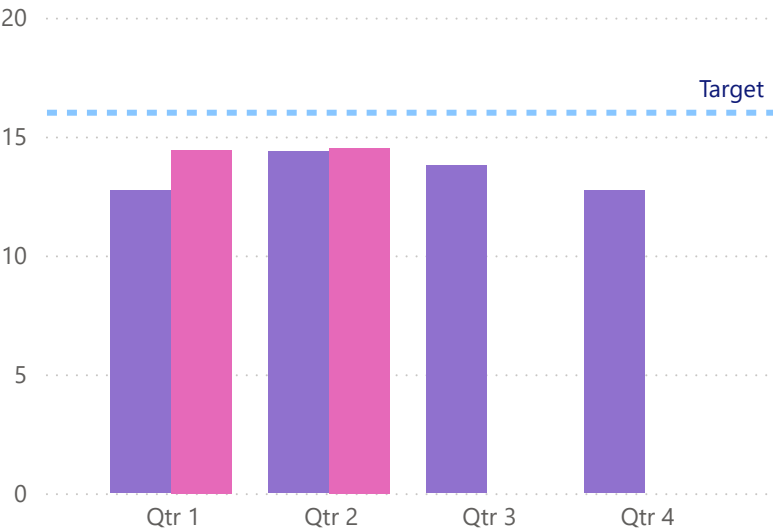
92,767

Comments: The Council observed a decrease in web transactions in the second quarter when compared to the same period in the previous year. However, following a high outturn in the first quarter, the year to date position for 2025/26 is ahead of the previous year.

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

Financial year 24-25 25-26

Desired trend: Lower



Status:



Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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
25-26	Qtr 1	14.44	15
25-26	Qtr 2	14.52	15

Year to date position:

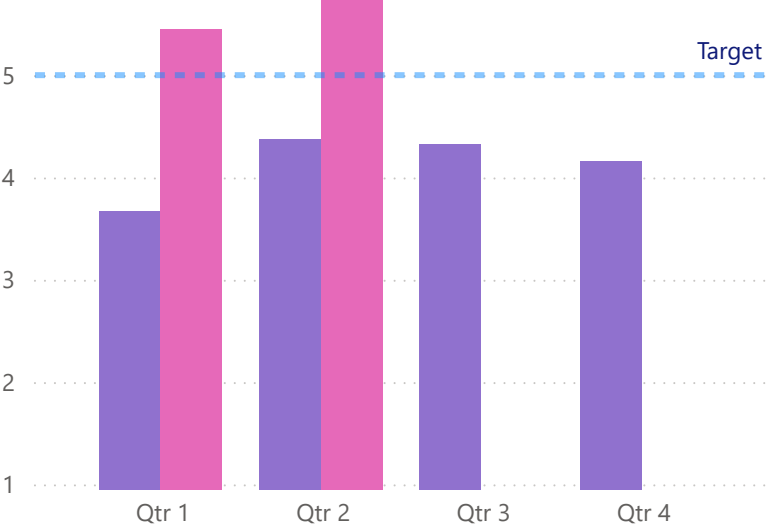
14.48 days

Comments: The time taken to process new benefit claims has remained below the lower target for 25/26 in the second quarter with an outturn of 14.52 days.

Days taken to process housing benefit claim changes

Financial year 24-25 25-26

Desired trend: Lower



Status:



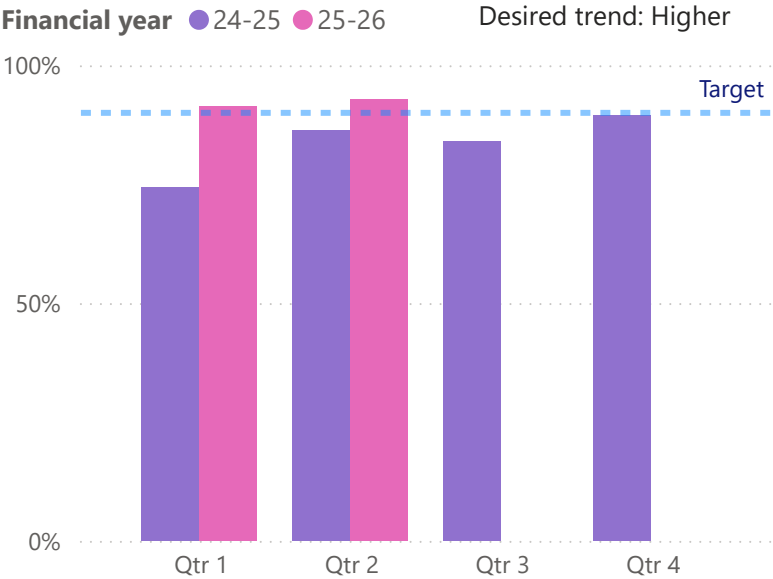
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	3.67	3
24-25	Qtr 2	4.38	3
24-25	Qtr 3	4.33	3
24-25	Qtr 4	4.16	3
25-26	Qtr 1	5.45	5
25-26	Qtr 2	5.81	5

Year to date position:

5.63 days

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. In the second quarter 77% (2840 out of 3695) claims were processed in less than 5 days. When a change request is received the timer is started, any time taken to have the claimant provide the required information occurs during the recorded processing time , which can result in claims taking far in excess of 5 days.

Percentage of stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescale



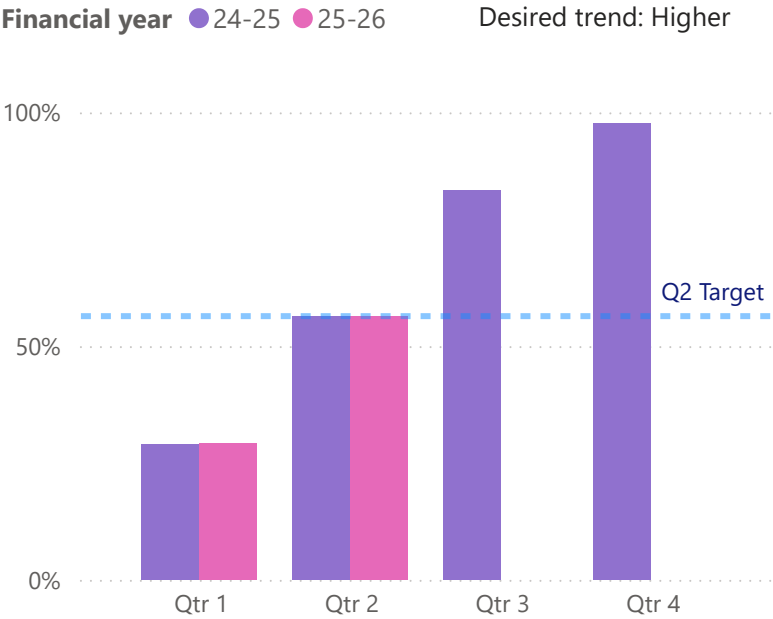
Status: ✔

Year to date position: 91.35%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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%
25-26	Qtr 1	91.35%	90%
25-26	Qtr 2	92.91%	90%

Comments: The percentage of complaints responded to within timescales achieved target again in the second quarter, continuing a trend of improved performance.

Collection rate for Council Tax



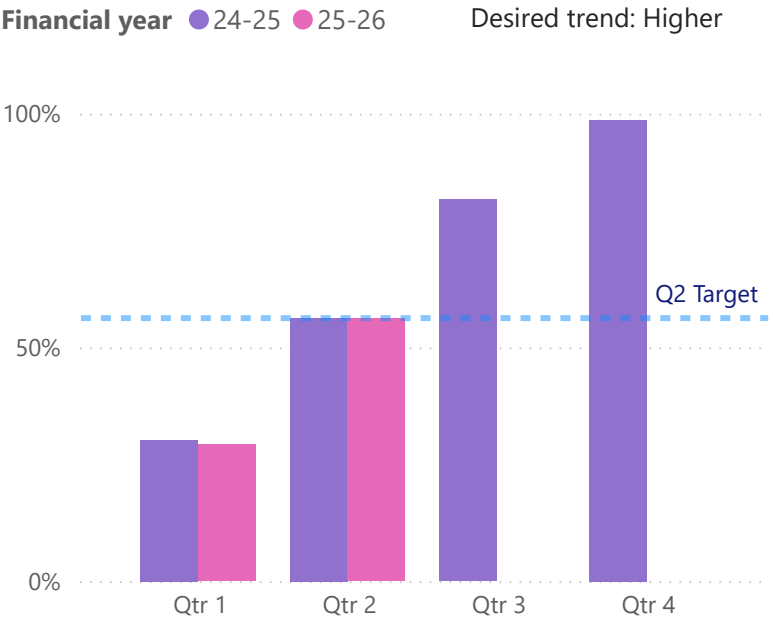
Status: ⚠

Year to date position: 56.27%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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%
25-26	Qtr 1	29.18%	29.06%
25-26	Qtr 2	56.27%	56.41%

Comments: Council tax collection rate was marginally below the target in the second quarter. Minor variations are anticipated year on year, and this is expected to achieve target by the end of the year.

Collection rate for Business Rates



Status: ⚠

Year to date position: 56.19%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
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%
25-26	Qtr 1	29.27%	30.17%
25-26	Qtr 2	56.19%	56.27%

Comments: Business rates collection missed target by 0.08 percentage points for the second quarter. Minor deviations are anticipated year to year, and this is expected to recover by the end of the year.

Complaints

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

Complaint Category	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Justified	115	102	56	74	83	93
Not Justified	62	33	25	26	16	48
Partially Justified	14	23	11	12	2	10
Not known	5	1	2	2	4	4
Total	196	159	94	114	105	155

Comments:

The second quarter saw an increase in the volume of complaints compared to the first quarter (+48%). This resulted from several factors. Firstly, a number of Planning complaints were received in relation to a single matter. Secondly, Finance, Operations and Housing received slightly more complaints than previously. Thirdly, ten stage 2 and four stage 3 complaints were escalated, compared to one escalated complaint in the previous quarter. However, complaint volumes in the second quarter are within the range of complaints received over the past year and represent a slight improvement on the same quarter in the previous year.

Operations received the most complaints (118), with the majority relating to waste collections. Compared to the same quarter last year, this was a 16% reduction in complaint volume. Planning received six complaints in relation to an enforcement case, with four other complaints received regarding tree protection orders, whilst only having received one complaint in the first quarter.

Despite an increase in complaint volume in the second quarter, the Council improved its response rate to complaints, responding to 92.91% (131 out of 141) of stage 1 complaints within the 7 working day timescale, compared to 91.35% in the first quarter.

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

July 2025

Two complaints were received from the LGO in July.

Complaint 1 - The complaint was in respect of the Council's consideration of a planning application. The substantive issues are not separable from the planning appeal. In addition, for the remaining elements of the complaint, there was no significant injustice, and elements are better considered by the Information Commissions' office.

Complaint 2 - The complaint was about how the Council dealt with a planning application. The complaint was late, and the complainant had a right of appeal to the Planning Inspector. As a result, the LGO decline to investigate.

August 2025

No correspondence was received from the LGO in August.

September 2025

The LGO confirmed that the Council had satisfactorily complied with the remedies agreed in relation to a housing complaint and now had closed its file. The Council was required issue an apology together with a symbolic payment and to draw up an action plan with clear timescales for reducing avoidable delay when dealing with an applicant's request for a review of their housing application. The aim being to ensure the Council can make decisions within 8 weeks of a review request in line with its housing allocations policy.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	499	509	505	506	503	513	+10	-
Headcount – Permanent employees	463	467	464	467	467	474	+7	-
Headcount – Fixed term contract	36	42	41	39	36	39	+3	-
Total employee FTE	458.52	467.96	465.91	467.21	466.63	475.32	+8.69	-
Level of employee turnover	2.4%	3.1%	1.98%	2.17%	3.18%	1.56%	-1.62%	-
Number of leavers	12	16	10	11	16	8	-8	-
Number of starters	10	26	6	12	13	18	+5	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee (rolling)	6.22	5.65	6.01	6.85	7.27	8.52	+1.25	8.0
Percentage of employees with nil sickness	80.8%	67.4%	51.5%	45.3%	79.92%	66.28%	Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	688	842	1068	895	1235	753	-482	-
Number of delegates	345	314	363	377	289	234	-55	-
Number of apprentices *	21	20	23	23	20	26	+6	-

Year on Year Headcount	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	492	499	492	486	501	506

* 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 employees, 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 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	5	16	16	10	9	10
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	5	14	14	10	9	9
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	0	2	1	0	0	1
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	25	0	10	0	0	38
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	3	2	2	4	1	5
Number of near miss incidents	0	1	0	1	0	1
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	0	0	0	1	2	0
Number of claims settled	0	2	0	0	1	2

Comments:

In the second quarter the Council recorded a total of ten accidents/incidents. Nine incidents affected employees, of these three were struck by a moving object, four were slips/trips/falls, and two were injured whilst handling or lifting.

One incident occurred to a non-employee, where the individual tripped on steps outside of the Town Hall.

A total of 38 days were lost due to three employee incidents. All three incidents were recorded under RIDDOR (Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). One incident related to an employee who injured his hand whilst handling bins. One incident related to an employee slipping and twisting his ankle, and the third related to an employee who suffered a head injury after being struck by a tree. It is to be noted two of the above employees are still absent as of the end of the second quarter, and as such the third quarter days lost statistic will include days from these incidents.

Five incidents of verbal or physical abuse were recorded in the second quarter. Four incidents relate to verbal abuse, and one related to a physical altercation by a member of the public towards a member of the waste crew.

The near miss relates to an incident which occurred whilst a vehicle was reversing.

Financial Summary

The review of the financial performance and projection for the year at this second quarter (Q2) shows an overall positive variance of £1.5 million.

Treasury management income is projected to outperform budget due to higher cash balances and higher-for-longer interest rates.

Sustainable Development is projecting a positive variance, mainly due to staffing vacancies but also from overachievement of income. The budget reset the previous baseline income target; however, this was before government confirmed significant increases in household application fees. Income from this source can be volatile and subject to market conditions where the position can change significantly, particularly in respect of major applications.

There are also positive variances within the Operations and ICT services. These have primarily arisen due to staff vacancies across both areas. Additionally, there has been an increase in operational income, further contributing to the positive variance.

Asset Management, Environment, Housing, and Strategic Investment are all projecting adverse positions greater than 5% (and £50k) of their budget. Both Asset Management and Environment are forecasting a shortfall in income, and there is additional staffing costs anticipated in Environment due to ongoing interim staffing in Building Control. Housing is projecting an overspend on staffing related costs due to service demand pressures and the need to cover unplanned absences through agency. Strategic Investment is projecting an overspend due to increased staffing costs and a reduction in service costs rechargeable to capital projects.

Following confirmation of the pay award, service budgets have been updated, and the in-year cost pressure is being met from overachieved treasury management income.

Significant adjustments were identified and included in the initial budget proposals for 2026/27 after a review of Q1 was conducted. With the updated forecast, a further review will be undertaken to identify any further ongoing risks and opportunities that may still need to be reflected in the final budget proposals.

Capital expenditure to the end of Q2 was £2.6 million, with the main areas of spend being on the Witham Community Centre, a new 3G artificial pitch in Witham, planned maintenance on Council owned property and community assets. While there are several projects where budgeted spend is now expected to slip into 2026/27, there are also several areas where spending is progressing faster than was assumed and therefore bringing forward budgets originally profiled into 2026/27. A projected underspend on the Causeway House refresh project has been included in forecasting available capital resources for the 2026/27 budget, along other capital resources generated to date.

Background

Full Council agreed a net budget of £21.2m. 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. The financial review is a collaborative process between Finance and Service Managers. The assessment uses information that is available at the end of the quarter and applies previous experience for making assumptions over the remainder of the year.

General Fund Revenue Spending

The tables below show the projected outturn for the year by service as forecast at the end of Q2.

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	(2,995)	(2,842)	153	205	R
Community & Leisure	1,117	1,102	(15)	(37)	G
Corporate Management Plan	1,731	1,703	(28)	(2)	G
Economic Development	203	163	(40)	0	G
Environment	1,016	1,283	267	214	R
Finance	488	(216)	(704)	(952)	G
Governance	1,688	1,609	(79)	(22)	G
Housing Services	1,073	1,140	67	0	R
ICT & Facilities	2,210	2,105	(105)	(107)	G
Marketing & Communications	760	695	(65)	(36)	G
People & Performance	1,242	1,227	(15)	17	G
Operations	7,455	6,976	(479)	(288)	G
Strategic Investment	339	392	53	46	R
Sustainable Development	2,175	1,553	(622)	(442)	G
Service Plan Total	18,502	16,890	(1,612)	(1,404)	G
Corporate Financing	3,014	2,875	(139)	(51)	G
Est. Impact of Pay Award	0	0	0	60	
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	300	300	
Net Total	21,216	19,765	(1,451)	(1,095)	G

	Staffing Expenditure			Other Expenditure			Gross Income		
Business Plan Service	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	553	524	(29)	1,410	1,541	131	(4,958)	(4,907)	51
Community & Leisure	989	946	(43)	879	883	4	(751)	(727)	24
Corporate Management Plan	2,226	2,189	(37)	(116)	(107)	9	(379)	(379)	0
Economic Development	206	166	(40)	65	65	0	(67)	(67)	0
Environment	1,965	2,184	219	166	178	12	(1,115)	(1,079)	36
Finance	2,918	2,831	(87)	26,132	26,242	110	(28,562)	(29,289)	(727)
Governance	1,015	900	(115)	922	926	4	(249)	(217)	32
Housing Services	1,721	1,788	67	423	423	0	(1,071)	(1,071)	0
ICT & Facilities	1,184	1,163	(21)	1,026	943	(83)	0	(1)	(1)
Marketing & Communications	599	546	(53)	315	296	(19)	(154)	(147)	7
People & Performance	1,157	1,139	(18)	85	88	3	0	0	0
Operations	8,575	8,416	(159)	7,262	7,339	77	(8,381)	(8,778)	(397)
Strategic Investment	393	415	22	6	6	0	(61)	(30)	31
Sustainable Development	3,122	2,740	(382)	611	639	28	(1,559)	(1,827)	(268)
Service Plan Total	26,623	25,947	(676)	39,186	39,462	276	(47,307)	(48,519)	(1,212)
Corporate Financing	742	640	(102)	5,574	5,604	30	(3,301)	(3,368)	(67)
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	300	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total	27,065	26,587	(478)	44,760	45,066	306	(50,608)	(51,887)	(1,279)

General comments:

- Staffing projections are based on vacancies and other known changes at the end of Q2 and reflect service expectations for the remainder of the year. Changes are likely to occur across the year which will impact future quarterly reviews
- A vacancy allowance of £300k is included in the base budget anticipating that staffing costs may be lower than budgeted due to staff turnover and other changes

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

The change in forecast from that at the First Quarter is an improvement of £356k. The main reasons for this change relate to the following areas:

- **Sustainable Development (-£180k)** – Several posts within the service have remained vacant longer than originally anticipated (-£92k), while income from planning applications is forecast to exceed expectations based on extrapolations of actual income and including an estimate of when income from major applications could be received (-£88k).
- **Finance (+£248k)** – Budget adjusted to reflect virement approved for funding the increased cost of the staff pay award and uplift to Members' allowances, and a reduction in forecast average cash balances. Housing benefit subsidy reduction from several backdated claim adjustments. Amounts may be recoverable but are likely to be subject to extended payment plans.
- **Operations (-£191k)** – The change in underspend is primarily due to vacancies within Street Cleansing and Refuse and Recycling service areas.
- **All Other Services (-£233k Net)** – whilst there was an adverse shift in Environment due mainly to the position in Building Control, there was an overall improvement across most other services mainly in relation to staffing costs including Asset Management, Governance and Marketing and Communications.

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

Asset Management

- Reduced income at the Plaza from the Makerspace and casual lettings (+£119k)
- Additional rental income following backdated rent reviews (-£51k)
- Lower income at Victoria Square due to vacant units (+£45k)
- Net staffing pressure due to reduction in costs charged to capital (Net +£26k)
- Net other variances, mainly related to properties (Net +£14k)

Community and Leisure

- Net saving on staffing costs due to vacancies (-£44k)
- Community Transport income is lower due to difficulty finding volunteer drivers (+£37k).
- Other minor variances (-£8k)

Corporate Management

- Net saving on staffing costs from vacant post and roles have been filled at a lower grade than originally budgeted (-£38k).

Environment

- Staffing variance due to the extremely difficult labour market. Interim staff have been appointed to the Building Control service to cover vacant permanent posts resulting in net additional costs (+£228k).
- Forecast shortfall in the income on the fee earning account (+£97k)
- Revenue cost reduced due to a higher recharge of service costs to capital in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (-£49k)
- Other minor variances (net -£9k)

Finance

- Additional treasury management income due to higher cash balances, higher-for-longer interest rates, and better performance of strategic pooled funds (-£841k).
- Housing Benefits net additional cost of benefits paid (+£147k) – Expenditure is demand led and subject to subsidy limitations on certain types of benefit payments. Several backdated claims have reduced in-year subsidy recovery.
- Net underspend on staffing due to vacancies, and reductions in contracted hours or staff appointed at lower scale points than assumed (-£87k)
- One-off cost associated with asset & insurance valuations for 2025/26 (+£39k)
- Current level of Council Tax discounts for annexes exceeds the grant received from government (+£29k).
- Projected additional income from Local Tax and Housing Benefit cost recoveries assuming similar position to recent years' outturns (-£23k).
- Increased system related costs for the Revenues and Benefits system (+£22k)
- Other minor variances (£10k).

Governance

- Recruitment and retention challenges have resulted in continued vacancies, including two senior lawyer posts. (-£142k).
- The cost of Member allowances is projected to be higher due to increased National Insurance including as a result of increases to the Basic Allowance approved by Full Council on the 21st July 2025 (+£27k).
- Shortfall in net income from residential searches and sealing charges partially offset by increased income from commercial searches (+£20k).
- Overspend on Electoral Registration service e.g. postage costs (+£16k)

Housing

- Increased staffing costs are projected due to ongoing service demands combined with the need to use agency staff to cover unplanned absences (+£67k). This increase in cost is offset by a higher than planned use of the Housing reserve shown under corporate financing.
- The service is also facing higher costs due to an increase in the use of nightly lets and temporary accommodation, estimated to be c£100k; however, this cost pressure is able to be contained within the total allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant for the year and therefore results in a net nil reported service variance at this time.

ICT & Facilities

- Corporate ICT systems maintenance (-£60k)
- Net other underspend (-£25k) mainly on Causeway House operating costs.
- Net saving on staffing costs due to vacancies and reduction in hours (-£20k)

Operations

- Net saving from vacancies within Street Cleansing, Horticultural Services and Fleet workshop; a reduction in overtime cost; and appointments at a lower grade than originally budgeted (-£159k)
- The subscription-based garden waste collection service is projected to generate additional net income (-£109k)
- Demand for commercial waste and bulky waste services continues to increase resulting in a forecast of net additional income (-£69k).
- Income received on recycling material, composting credits and tipping away payments are projected to be higher for the range of materials collected due to changes in market prices and

tonnages (-£70k). There are forecast increased related cost associated with transportation and tipping away (+£67k)

- Reduction in vehicle maintenance costs as a result of the vehicle replacement programme net of additional costs of hire of vehicle at Cordons Farm (-£24k).
- Car parking income has been overachieved mainly on pay & display, partially offset by increased collection costs (-£55k)
- Income received from recycled glass is higher due to market prices (-£34k)
- Other minor variances (-£26k).

Strategic Investment

- Increase in staffing costs following a review of the service (+£22k) and a reduction in service costs recharged to capital as the work of the team is being refocused to support on wider project management across the council (£31k).

Sustainable Development

- Net staffing variance due to vacancies in Development Management (-£264k) and Landscape Services (-£118k), partially offset by agency cover. Posts within the Landscape Service have now been appointed.
- Projected overachievement in Planning Application income (-£100k), Pre-application income (-£90k), Planning Performance Agreements (-£40k). Income can be highly variable and subject to economic conditions.
- Additional income from street naming (-£30k)
- Other variances (+£3k).

Corporate Financing

- The Council Tax Sharing Arrangement gainshare is projected to be higher based on collection performance at Q2 (-£78k). The amount is provisional and assumes 7% share-back. Subject to final performance for the year achieved across all Essex authorities, there is potential for this to increase to 9% (resulting in an additional positive variance of £124k against budget).
- Other staffing related underspends such as the employee leave purchase scheme, central staff retention provision, and lower pension fund costs (-£74k).
- Legal settlement costs arising from the Wethersfield legal challenges (+£40k).
- Net increase (-£27k) in use of reserves as a contra to the projected variance on Economic Development (+£40k) and Housing (-£67k)
- Staffing costs recharged to capital are estimated to be lower than assumed in the budget, based on current project officers' timesheet data (+£20k).
- Other variances, including leased car scheme, apprentice levy, business rates transitional adjustments, and other grant funding (-£20k)

Capital Programme

Current capital programme totals £17.4m (excluding prior year spend) of which £3.3m is profiled into 2026/27:

	Budget Profiled 25/26 £000	Actual Spend 25/26 £000	In-year Variance 25/26 £000	Slippage (-or deduction from future budget) £000	Forecast Project Variance 25/26 £000	Expected Remaining Spend 25/26 £000
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	134	11	123	0	0	123
Horizon 120 - The Plaza	87	54	33	0	0	33
Waste Review	3,378	0	3,378	0	0	3,378
Witham Community Centre	2,752	702	2,051	402	0	2,453
Town Centre improvements	663	200	463	-31	0	432
Property planned maintenance (incl. Causeway Hse)	2,117	272	1,845	591	-819	1,617
Information technology systems & equipment	367	95	272	-169	-12	92
Community facilities, play areas, parks & open spaces	788	295	493	22	-4	511
Cemetery improvements	29	3	26	0	0	26
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	68	5	63	0	0	63
Operational equipment	499	12	486	0	0	486
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	1,076	601	475	-173	0	302
Climate change initiatives	135	35	100	0	0	100
Shared / Rural Prosperity Fund	239	15	225	0	0	225
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	1,031	209	821	-214	0	608
Capital salaries	278	109	170	0	-26	144
Total	13,641	2,616	11,025	428	-861	10,592

Comments on the Capital Programme

- The overall programme has increased by £145k since Q1, mainly due to the addition of a S106 funded project for Witham Riverwalk Footpath and an increase to the DFG budget in line with additional ringfenced contributions.
- Spend at the end of the Q2 was £2.6m and anticipated spend in the remaining quarters of the year are: £2.7m (Q3) and £7.9m (Q4).
- Spending profiles have been developed in conjunction with Project Officer and where appropriate derived from project milestones and related cash flow statements.
- There has been a net increase of £428k in the budget profiled to be spent in the current year due to the following:-
 - Budgets totalling around £1 million originally profiled to be spent in 2026/27 have been reprofiled into the current year, mainly for Witham Community Centre (£403k) and Planned Maintenance of Council Assets (£591k)
 - Estimated slippage of £595k of budgeted spend, mainly Disabled Facility Grants (£214k), Leisure Centre improvements (£180k), and ICT related projects (169k)
- The programme is projected to be £861k under spent in 25/26, mainly due to the reduced scope of works to be undertaken as part of the Causeway House refresh project.

Capital resources generated

- Eastlight agreements: Right-to-Buy sales – number of completed sales 12 with £1.6m due to the Council. A further 17 applications are in progress (In 2024/25 only 4 sales in the year were completed generating £533k); and VAT shelter £191k. 2 further sales under clawback arrangements generating £200k.
- Other minor receipts totalling £29k.
- Agreement for the sale of plots 5-8 at H120 was in progress at the end of Q2 and subsequent completion will be reflected in Q3.

Treasury Management

At the start of the year £73.1m was invested. During the first half of the year the average amount under management was £90.1m with a peak of £98.0m. New investments of £81.1m were made, and £64.5m matured, resulting in £89.7m being held at the end of the quarter.

Monies held in long-term pooled funds was kept at £19m with varying exposures to property, equities, and other financial assets. The remainder of managed funds were held in short-term investments comprising money market funds; Debt Management Office Account (UK Government); other local authorities; bank deposits; and liquid cash held with Lloyds Bank.

Dividend income earned to the end of the second quarter was £396k and interest on short-term investments was £1.536 million, a total of £1.932 million or annualised return of 4.24%.

The market value of shares and units in long-term pooled funds at the end of the second quarter was £23.6m, representing an unrealised gain of £4.6m.

General Fund Balances

General Fund balances are currently estimated to be £11.7m by the end of the year, a net decrease of £0.4m.