Third Quarter Performance Management Report

1st October to
31st December 2025

Braintree District Council

Contents

Section 1: Introduction and Summary

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>

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.

<u>Summary of the Corporate Projects current position for the end of the quarter</u>

Corporate Priorities	**Status of projects and actions**				
	Completed	On target	Requires attention	Requires amendment	Aborted/closed
Communities	3	13	-	-	-
Prosperity	4	9	1	-	-
Environment	5	4	2	-	1
TOTAL	**12**	**26**	**3**	**-**	**1**

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

<u>Summary of the Key Performance Indicators position for the end of the quarter</u>

Status of indicators			
Achieved target	Up to 5% below target	5% or more off target	Data Only
10	2	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 third quarter is broadly in line with expectations with most projects underway and progressing well. 26 projects are on track at the end of the third quarter.

Four projects completed in the third quarter, where:

- The Council successfully procured and implemented a new leisure contract.
- All 18 memberships for sole traders at the Hatchery have been allocated under the Business Incubation Scheme.
- The programme of jobs fairs completed with The Midlife Employment, Skills and Health Fair taking place on 13 November concluding the schedule.
- The Air Quality Strategy was adopted by the Council at November cabinet.

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

- Supporting school access to University of Essex open days, where the university's capacity and funding to deliver open days to pupils has been much lower than anticipated.
- Revision of the Tree Strategy, where following a period of recruitment a new project timeline is needed.
- Development of the Waste supplementary planning document, where announced changes to the plan framework have resulted in a pause on this work.

No projects have a red status. One project has been cancelled where work on the renewable energy supplementary planning document has been stopped until publication of the local plan, so that the supporting guidance on renewable energy can be informed by the content of the local plan.

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

Ten performance indicators have met or exceeded target and six have not met target. For the performance indicators that have not met target, two 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:

- Kilograms of residual waste collected per household.
- Collection rate for council tax.

The following indicators missed target by more than 5%:

- Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.
- Percentage of fly tips cleared within 24 hours.
- Percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved on time.
- Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the customer service centre.

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

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
1.1 - Support residents and communities impacted by the cost-of-living crisis through initiatives raised by the £1m new homes bonus. "Baby Stuff Braintree" provided a 6-month update in the third quarter covering the period April to October, in which they provided 91 bags of clothes and essential items to parents of young children. In addition, 5 prams, 4 moses baskets and 2 cots were also provided. This followed a £3,500 grant from the Council to help the group provide a consistent offer whilst donations from the public fluctuate. Arrangements have been made with Braintree Foyer to offer homeless individuals the opportunity to use their showers, which can be offered as part of the Housing Options process. 600 electric blankets have been distributed to trusted partners across the district to help support vulnerable residents through the winter months with low-cost personal heating, subsidised by a £16,245 grant from the New Homes Bonus. The Homelessness Support Leaflet was published and distributed, providing a comprehensive guide to all services available across the district. REACH Community Projects concluded its 12-month programme, assisting 195 beneficiaries access to over £287,000 worth of financial support. Citizens Advice concluded a 12-month programme supporting 109 clients to access over £88,000 worth of financial support, resolving over 360 separate issues. The Bags of Taste scheme saw 60 residents sign up its first quarter of activity, particularly reaching those on benefits and with mental health needs. 30 individuals have already completed the course. Strong demand for this has resulted in exploration of further capacity. Early intervention work has started to make use of numerous datasets, provided by partners, to better understand need across the district, using postcode level data to create a more detailed picture of service use.	August 2026

1.2 - Deliver activities to support the priorities of the LiveWell Strategy. A business case for a new Active Rewards programme with Fusion Leisure is under development, with a view to have this launch in April 2026. A £9,000 Public Health grant has been ringfenced to support partners deliver Compassionate Communities projects, and a session was held with partners in December to explore collaborative project ideas. A joint partnership bid with Healthwatch Essex to the Specialist Centre of Public Health was submitted to develop a social research programme on the impact of the Cost-of-Living Partnership. A legacy-phase action plan has been created following the conclusion of the Beat the Street activity programme earlier in the year, which will be managed by the Active Braintree network steering group. The Agewell Fair took place in Witham, which was supported by over 30 partners and saw over 160 residents attend. The Year 2 Livewell Outcomes report is being prepared and is set to be shared with Members in March 2026.	March 2026
1.3 - Administer the Health and Wellbeing Panel Grants. All 10 small grants have now been allocated for the 2025/26 year, including to partners such as CARA Essex, Braintree Mencap, Crossroads Braintree and Chelmsford, and Essex Dementia Care. The allocation of the remaining public health money will be distributed via large grants of up to £10,000, and Compassionate Community grants up to £1,500.	March 2026
1.4 - Procure and implement a 3-year contract for leisure services in the Braintree District. The new contract with Freedom Leisure commenced on 1 September 2025. Monthly operational contract management meetings have been established, and quarterly strategic partnership board meetings have begun with the first in November. An annual service plan has been drafted to be signed off in January's monthly meeting, with remedial and compliance works completing in the first months of the contract. Some larger capital projects are expected to be undertaken through the Council's capital programme in 2026/27.	October 2025

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

2.1 - Revise the Local Plan in line with recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Development Scheme was updated in Autumn 2025 to reflect a necessary change to the Local Plan timetable. It is still intended to submit a Local Plan under the current system, however the new timetable moves submission of the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate to December 2026. Milestones within the project are as follows: • Preferred Options Consultation (Regulation 18) February 2026 • Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 19) September 2026 • Submission to Planning Inspectorate December 2026 Currently the draft local plan is due to be considered at an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 2 February 2026. Subject to the draft plan being approved, the Regulation 18 consultation is expected to launch on 19 February 2026 and close on 8 April 2026, although this is subject to the Sustainability Appraisal being received as anticipated.	December 2026
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. The County Wide Advisory Group continues to progress collaborative work to strengthen the local supported housing landscape, with a particular focus on improving shared data, partnership arrangements, and strategic consistency across Essex. Activity during the third quarter centred on consolidating evidence to inform the evolving Supported Housing Strategy and preparing the groundwork for future regulatory and commissioning developments. Recent work has emphasised the need to better understand the current mix of supported accommodation, including the balance between Registered Provider and non-Registered Provider provision and the extent to which legacy commissioning arrangements influence present-day supply. A county-level data overview has been developed and shared with partners as an initial phase, with further contextual detail to be added to support local interpretation and decision-making. Discussions also highlighted the ongoing challenge of identifying appropriate accommodation that meets the needs of homeless households with support requirements, particularly where pressures exist around single-person provision and affordability. Partners reiterated the importance of ensuring that future supported housing models are aligned with Local Housing Allowance levels and are manageable in scale to ensure effective oversight. The group has also begun refining an action plan in response to national guidance, recognising that this work is data-led and will need to evolve as further information becomes available. Early priorities include improving access to consistent benefit and	December 2026

provider data, clarifying nomination and management arrangements, and strengthening engagement with a broader range of partners, including health, revenue, and benefits services. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have shared an indicative timeline for delivery, with a government response expected imminently. A consultation on regulations is anticipated in early 2026, with a deadline for local strategies to be in place by mid-2027.	
2.3 - Establish a Landlord Register as part of the regulations introduced by the Renters Rights Bill. The Working Group prepared and presented an Options Appraisal relating to the level of response required for the Renters Rights Act. A comprehensive response option was approved and the Working Group is now moving towards delivery of the actions that develop this response. Training has begun with both Housing and Environmental Health Officers attending the Shelter enforcement training. A landlord Forum is being prepared to update landlords on the Renters Rights Act requirements.	March 2027
2.4 - Through the Homelessness Prevention Partnership distribute the rough sleeping Winter Pressure Fund. The Homelessness Prevention Partnership remains central in identifying cases where targeted financial help could prevent rough sleeping or stabilise threatened tenancies Three awards were completed within December alone totalling over £10,000, including the CHESS Wednesday meal provision and a grouped award to sustain 5 separate tenancies in the private rented sector. This means £5,142.99 still available from the original £30,000 budget. The fund continues to underpin key prevention and rough-sleeping responses, including support for emergency accommodation needs, tenancy sustainment, and coordination with partners such as CHESS and First Stop to supply essential items for people sleeping rough. A fuller assessment of December and early-January commitments will carry into the next reporting period to reflect increased demand and delayed processing over the cold weather and holiday period.	March 2026
2.5 - Develop options and feasibility to provide Temporary Accommodation that is fit for the future needs of the district. Three properties had been identified to undergo a feasibility assessment as potential replacements, however one of these properties has since sold, and the remaining two are both too big and do not meet temporary accommodation requirements. Asset Management and Strategic Housing are actively seeking alternative accommodation and are working with Agents, Developers and Registered Housing Providers to establish opportunities. From October the Housing Research & Development are focusing on a Temporary Accommodation Improvement Plan which focuses resources within the Housing department for 3 – 6 months. The focus is to support the team to review processes, improve efficiency and reduce the use of costly nightly lets.	March 2026

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

3.1 - Build Witham Sports Ground 3G Pitch. Practical completion was achieved on 30 May, marking the project as complete.	June 2025
3.2 - Continue to work with partners to deliver various activities and initiatives supporting people experiencing loneliness or social isolation. In October the Social Isolation and Loneliness meeting took place at Ridgewell Community Chapel. The meeting was well attended, with information shared by partners on community transport, blue badges, benefits access and befriending services. A survey for partners was undertaken across the third quarter, aiming to generate insights into existing services, how professionals assess loneliness, understanding the geography of loneliness in the district, and to generate suggestions and practical ideas. The survey closed at the end of December and is currently being evaluated. The AgeWell Fair in Witham was attended by the Community Services Officer in November, who spoke directly to residents about their experiences of social isolation and loneliness, highlighted the importance of communication, which events and services are available, and how elderly residents often rely on friends or relatives to accompany them. Numerous events took place throughout December, including Dementia Friendly Christmas events at the Town Hall and Braintree Museum, a visit to Blackthorn Care Home, and the Dementia Friendly Choir Carol Concert, which filled the Halstead Empire Theatre to capacity. The Communities team also visited Autism Inclusive in Earl's Colne, an initiative that aims to create a more accessible, understanding and welcoming community for neurodiverse people and their families. The project works to provide training and implement inclusive practices across the village. This model could easily be replicated across the wider district and information about this has been shared with the wider Social Isolation and Loneliness partnership, with attendance at a community event planned in January.	March 2026
3.3 - Award contract and start to build Witham Community Centre. The building is progressing to schedule. The roof timbers are complete with coverings in place and the 'Topping Out' ceremony, attended by Councillors and the Mayor of Witham was a success. Ducting work to bring electrical cable to the entrance gates has been completed and the team are chasing Essex Highways for legal approval for the Highway work at the entrance to the car park. The reptile fence is scheduled to be moved in mid-January.	July 2026

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.	September 2025
4.2 - Continue to administer the Councillor Community Grant Scheme. Twenty individual projects were funded in the third quarter, nine in October, four in November and seven in December. To date this financial year, £46,294 has been allocated across all Councillor Community Grants. In the third quarter, funded projects included: • Crossroads Braintree & Chelmsford, for Dementia Day Centre activities. • Sunnyday Baby and Toddler Group, for antenatal expert classes. • Greener Silver End, for bulb planting in the village. • Earls Colne Heritage Museum, for a commemorative plaque for Mary Gee. • Feering Community Centre and Parish Council Office, for a new fire door. • Terling Cricket Club, for kits for the ladies club. • Hedingham Heritage Centre, for a new scanner. • Gosfield Parish Council, towards the development of the nature reserve. • The Martial Arts Centre, towards the establishment of a new judo club in Braintree.	March 2026
4.3 - Oversee the coordination of the Community Safety Action Plan to increase awareness of child exploitation, domestic abuse, fraud and cybercrime. 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. There are currently 2 Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews in progress for the Braintree District and14 ASB Case Review requests have been received since 1 April 2025. During the third quarter the national 16 days of activism against gender-based violence campaign too place between 25 November and 10 December. As part of this, the Council hosted three Domestic Abuse Awareness Days at the three main towns:	March 2026

Braintree, Witham and Halstead. The events provided an opportunity to promote Domestic Abuse related support services to members of the public. The specialist Domestic Abuse Officer, Community Safety Officer and partners including Essex Police, Fire Safety, Essex COMPASS, SET DAB, Eastlight Community Homes, Cranstoun and the Dogs Trust were also in attendance to promote their services and advise members of the public on the help available. Across the three days of action: • Approximately 200 residents engaged with the events. • Five individuals disclosed domestic abuse, including one perpetrator who was referred to Phoenix Futures and later supported into emergency accommodation. • Several residents received Home Fire Safety Checks, including one vulnerable person with no working smoke alarms. • A range of crime-prevention materials were distributed, such as purse bells, card defenders and anti-spiking kits. • The Dogs Trust helped five residents learn about fostering arrangements for survivors’ pets. • The Council ran a social media campaign regarding domestic abuse across the 16 days which reached more than 74,000 people, significantly boosting engagement and awareness. Essex Police have provided the following figures for the 2025 year, relating to Domestic Abuse: 1,115 arrests were made and 471 domestic abuse perpetrators have been brought to justice.	
4.4 - Continue to support local investment in communities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year 4). All 17 activities under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund are underway and on track to complete their delivery by the end of the financial year. These include development of Park Play, enhancement of connectivity of Braintree CCTV, business support via the North Essex Economic Board, the Crucial Crew scheme, Mental Health training workshops and the continued funding of a Community Engagement Officer.	March 2026

Prosperity

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

Project title & progress	Target date & status
1.1 - Deliver physical improvements to Halstead and Witham Town centres. All phase 1 work, and work on land owned by the Council, has been completed with documents for the phase 1 minor works agreement closure provided to Essex County Council awaiting return of the bonds. Signage and paving work has been completed in Witham, with a new bench installed and additional railings painted in Halsted. Painting of lamp columns in both towns is underway and due to be completed by the end of January. The major work to lamp columns will be carried out between mid-March and mid-April, subject to the design approval from Essex Highways. Following a change control process for the project, which was undertaken in response to delays incurred whilst gaining approvals for all works, a new target date of April 2026 has been set reflecting the remaining programme of works agreed with the contractor.	April 2026
1.2 - Support the development and adoption of Neighbourhood Plans in Earls Colne, Wethersfield and Finchingfield and Bures/Bures St Mary's. The Earls Colne neighbourhood plan was adopted in the second quarter. The Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary plan concluded its consultation and is now at the examination stage. The Finchingfield and Wethersfield plan is at the screening stage, after which it will go to consultation.	March 2026
1.3 - Develop a design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Work has continued on delivery of the Design Code, collating and analysing responses from the first public consultation. Drafting an outline design code document, including scoping illustrations, is underway. Significant preparations are being made for the next stage of public consultation. A pilot workshop with the Planning team in March is due to take place, followed by multiple in person public workshops across April and May 2026.	December 2026

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

2.1 - Build on inward investment activity through the North Essex Economic Board to create an action plan for Braintree. A video case study of Millbank in Earls Colne was filmed in December and is due to be published in the new year on the Locate website and other social media channels. The Council is reviewing further content provided by Essex County Council, and continues to contact other companies to provide additional case studies.	March 2026
2.2 - Complete the final infrastructure delivery elements of Horizon 120 by removing excess soil. Contracts to sell the remaining plots with the soil in situ have been agreed with the developer. This project is now complete.	September 2025
2.3 - Finalise an approach to zone A at Horizon 120. The Council continues to work with the developer for the site on options for zone A. The development of options has taken longer than expected, but it is anticipated that an approach will be decided upon by the end of the financial year. The project is now showing as on tract as it was taken through a change control process reflecting the above challenges, and a new target date has been set for March 2026.	March 2026
2.4 - Sell plots 5 – 8 at Horizon 120. Contracts to sell plots 5 – 8 have been agreed with the developer completing this project.	September 2025
2.5 - Take forward the recommended option from the viability study for the Witham Enterprise site. The Council continues to work with a land agent to identify available options to develop the site and the best route to market.	March 2026
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. The North Essex Growth Priorities are currently under review by all partners, and anticipated to be agreed and published prior to the pre-election period.	March 2026

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

3.1 - In association with the North Essex Economic Board, provide business support services focussed on enhancing financial management and business growth. The third quarter saw a special event, additional to the original programme, provided at HMP Chelmsford which supported the prison's programme to support inmates who are interested in starting a business post-release. The 2-hour workshop covered: Finding a business idea, legal status, funding and finance, and how the North Essex Economic Board can help with identifying customers, marketing, admin and sales. In addition to this extra event, attendance and performance across the scheduled events continues to be strong. Since delivery began in the second quarter, the programme has seen attendance by 140 unique business, of which 34 have attended more than one event. 80% of attendee businesses had less than 10 employees, with 70% have been established for greater than 2 years. Across wider interactions, 164 unique enterprises have been supported, 84% having not received local authority support previously.	March 2026
3.2 - Support businesses and residents across the district through delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year 4) projects. All 18 available memberships have been allocated, providing free membership to the hatchery space for sole traders, with opportunity to offer one additional space found, taking the total to 19. As all memberships for the year are now allocated, this project is functionally complete, although memberships run until the end of the financial year. Some budget from the scheme remains, and the Council is exploring whether this can be used to fund a 'digital directory' board at the Plaza, to better help visitors and clients contact resident businesses.	March 2026

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

4.1 - Support school engagement to access University of Essex open days. Visits to the University of Essex have been challenging to arrange for schools, in part due to logistical and cost challenges for schools, but also due to reduced central government funding received by The University to facilitate such visits. The Council has identified an alternative programme to provide to schools whereby a private education specialist will deliver a session in schools in combination with university students and staff, which will be funded by the Council in lieu of the funding set aside for transportation. This approach presents a more achievable programme of	March 2026

activity to engage secondary school students with higher education, whilst reducing the demand on both schools and The University to facilitate whole-day visits. One trust is exploring the opportunity to visit Anglia Ruskin University, and the Council is working to facilitate this. Due to the challenges experienced and the divergence from the original scope, this project is marked as amber to reflect this.	
4.2 - Organise and deliver jobs fairs in the district. The Autumn Job Fair took place on 14 October at Witham Public hall, with 28 exhibitors in attendance. The Midlife Employment, Skills and Health Fair took place on 13 November at Causeway House, with 30 exhibitors. 76% of attendees found the events helpful to their job searches, and 88% would recommend the event to others. 91% of exhibitors found the event useful. The Midlife Employment, Skills and Health Fair was a pilot of the concept, and due to positive feedback from both attendees and exhibitors, will be incorporated next year into the schedule as an annual event. The three planned jobs fair events have taken place this year, marking this project as complete.	March 2026
4.3 - Through the Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver year 2 of the Green Skills Programme. The reduced scope of the Green Skills Programme was agreed in the third quarter, aiming for half of the originally funded learners to complete the programme. Against the revised performance indicators, the programme is now delivering with 60% of target learners engaged, and 82% of expected learners profiled. Six qualifications have completed already (17%), but the programme is still too early in its delivery to track outcomes. Additionally, the funding which was returned to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as a result of the re-scope has been successfully re-invested prior to the end of the funding window in March 2026.	March 2026

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 The moderation of tender bids was completed on 17 December, with a decision made to award the tender. Due to the value of the contract, the approval for the award needs to be agreed by Cabinet and is set to be presented at the March meeting. Due to the unsuccessful first round of tenders in the first quarter, the programme of works will not complete this financial year, and a new target date has been set to July 2026 ensuring the works are completed ahead of the school summer holidays.	July 2026
1.2 - Develop a renewable energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Council is required to have an adopted Local Plan which is less than five years old. The Government has announced plans to change the way plan-making is carried out and has set a deadline for plans being assessed under the current system of December 2026. As such, in March 2024, a decision was taken to commence a review of the adopted Local Plan in order that it could be kept up to date in advance of any new system coming into effect in order to protect the District from speculative development which is more likely to happen where a Council does not have an up to date Local Plan. Since the decision was taken to undertake a Local Plan Review, the Planning Policy Team, which is a small team of 6 officers, has focused on the delivery of this significant project which has impacted the delivery of a number of other projects including this SPD. It should also be noted that the Local Plan Review changes the need for an SPD. This is because an SPD should provide more detailed guidance on a matter which supports how a development plan policy is interpreted. The existing Local Plan contains three policies which could be supported by an SPD these are Climate Change, Resource Efficiency, Energy Generation and Energy Efficiency, and Renewable Energy Schemes. Since the adoption of the current local plan, collaboration across Essex has taken place led by the Climate and Planning Unit (CAPU) at Essex County Council. This work has involved drafting 'model' planning policies for new homes and buildings for lower tier authorities to include within their Local Plans. These have been tested through Uttlesford's Local Plan Examination. The aim is for planning policies to be set across Greater Essex that deliver healthy, revenue and energy efficient, climate resilient, future proofed, homes and buildings which align with local and national climate targets.	December 2025

Given that the Local Plan Review is likely to update policies relating to renewable energy, it has been recommended that the existing Renewable Energy SPD project is removed from the Annual Plan whilst the Local Plan Review work updates the existing relevant policies and that once the updated Local Plan is adopted, a new SPD project can be delivered to develop guidance which supports the new development plan policies. The Local Plan Review project will be completed, which establishes a new policy framework. Following this, a detailed SPD which supports the updated policies can be developed. This is likely to commence at the end of 2027 or early in 2028 once the new Local Plan has been adopted.	
1.3 - Work with partners on the requirements to deliver a Local Nature Recovery Strategy across Essex. 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.	March 2026
1.4 - Revise The Council's Tree Strategy. The newly appointed Landscape Services Manager joined the Council in December, and is now working to develop a high-level scoping review and outline for the new strategy, along with the preparation of a detailed project plan. It is anticipated that a revised target date for publication of the Tree Strategy will be presented in the fourth quarter once the project plan is finalised.	March 2026

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

2.1 - Work with Essex Air Consortium to finalise and adopt a joint Essex Air Quality Strategy. Following the adoption of the Essex Air Quality Strategy at Essex County Council's cabinet in September, the Council (Braintree) adopted the Air Quality Strategy at its own cabinet in November, marking the project as complete. The Council continues to be an active member of the county-wide working groups who will be developing and delivering the actions from the strategy. This will continue to form part of business-as-usual for the Environment team.	December 2025

2.2 - Through the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership, develop a shared risk register and best practice for adapting to climate change events. 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.	March 2026
2.3 - Work with partners to address the complex challenge of fuel poverty. The Warm Homes Local Grant Scheme has now gone live and the Council is passporting residents through to the scheme. The Council has also been involved in an exercise with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in reviewing the new criteria eligibility criteria imposed compared to the previous Home Upgrade Grants. In addition to this, the Council has continued to support residents through other channels such as the Handyman Scheme and Green Doctor Service which saw 71 and 77 residents assisted respectively in the third quarter. Further, the Energy Switch Auction which took place on 30 September saw 588 residents register across the Braintree district in October.	March 2026

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.	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 77 residents in accessing the service in the third 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 A review of Plaza space and the potential access for vehicles was undertaken. To ensure enough of the space was suitable for bin storage, multiple loads of aggregate were added and compacted to improve the hard standing capacity. Following which 16,000 bins were delivered to The Plaza, with a further 10,000 scheduled for the week commencing 12 January 2026. Preparations have been made to facilitate the delivery of new bins/boxes by frontline crews, including investment in digital solutions such as new tablets. A new Waste Service Review project group (Communal & Commercial Project Group) was established to deliver all aspects of communal and commercial work, including data preparation and cleansing, and engagement with system providers to improve reliability and usability ahead of the changes. The Communications and Engagement Project Groups facilitated delivery of key assets and agreed comms tasks, including a special newsletter, social media posts, a property assessment flowchart and a customer display in Causeway House Reception area. The Policy Implementation Project Group provided consistent and proactive support to operational colleagues who have been undertaking property review applications. This included offering clear guidance, ensuring the accuracy of information being processed, and resolving queries in a timely and effective manner to achieve SLA compliance. A working group is meeting throughout January to review all actions, timelines and resources relating to the successful delivery of routing tasks, both for receptacle delivery and for the revised rounds to commence in June. A face-to-face engagement event is planned to be held in Witham, on 7 January, to allow residents an opportunity to ask questions about the changes to the waste collections service. More events are expected to take place through the fourth quarter.	April 2026
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 In November the Council wrote to all households in the district to advise on the recycling container they can expect in 2026. To support this messaging an environment newsletter and magnetic display board in reception was produced, in addition to reminders and messaging circulated on social media channels. Councillor T Cunningham also featured in a social media video and provided a column for local	March 2026

newspapers to support the messaging. The engagement with digital posts on this topic has been high, and it is evident that messaging is reaching a large number of residents. Communications officers have been taking the opportunity to reply to comments on these posts with information and helpful resources for residents who had questions. Various other campaigns took advantage of seasonality to promote food waste recycling, particularly focussing on Halloween and Christmas as key drivers. Campaigns also looked at Christmas themed recycling ideas such as sustainable gifting, green guides to ‘Elf on the Shelf’, and advice on disposing of batteries and cheap gadgets, with the annual Christmas Tree recycling advice following Christmas. Throughout the third quarter the Council has continued its programme of engagement campaigns, visiting schools, Brownie and Scout groups, NHS hubs and weekly town markets, to explain the simpler recycling changes and deliver educational messages about food waste. The Operations team is taking advantage of the ‘Gov Notify’ service to better reach schools and parishes. The Council is also exploring a re-fresh of the advertising trailer to better align with 2026 messaging around recycling changes.	
4.3 - Develop a waste Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The new Waste SPD has been drafted which represents around 70% of the project being progressed, however, the Government has set a deadline for the production of SPDs under the existing system which is end of June 2026. The SPD needs to be screened and then a public consultation is required. Taking into account the Local Plan project, it is not possible for this project to be completed under the government’s deadline. In the second quarter report, it was stated that a change management process would likely be required for the waste SPD, but this was before changes to the system were known. As such, it is recommended that this project is paused until the Council has clarity in respect of the process for developing a Supplementary Plan within the new plan-making system.	December 2025

Climate Change Action Plan

Introduction

Work has started on the Climate Change Action Plan (CAP) for 2026-27, identifying projects that are completed and new actions for reporting from Business Plans across the services.

The post of Climate Change Project Manager, vacant since May 2025, has appointed and welcomes a new Project Manager starting on 5 January 2026, after securing approval for funding from the Climate Change Reserve.

Resources

In this quarter the Council has built up engagement with residents on the June 2026 waste collection changes and published further information on the waste review including the transition to 3-weekly residual black bin waste collections.

The Council promoted recycling of WEEE waste as part of international E-Waste day in October. The Council promoted free water literacy training for residents and businesses in the newsletter.

Work is progressing on the UK Power Networks (UKPN) Local Area Energy Plan in partnership with colleagues across Essex on a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). The LAEP is an important document that informs the energy infrastructure requirements for current and future growth across Essex. In January there will be a series of webinars on understanding how it will be integrated into UKPN's online planning tool.

Energy Conservation

In this quarter the Sustainability Team and Assets Team have submitted 3 sites for 2026-27 capital investment and await the decision in March for their inclusion in the capital programme. Sites include Enterprise Court, Silver End village hall, and The Plaza carpark.

Work has been completed in the Plaza building to close off the first floor Hatchery from the main atrium to minimise heating and cooling requirements and the benefits in reduced energy use has already been seen.

The replacement LED lighting project commenced in December replacing sports hall lighting at Halstead leisure centre, the rest of the site will be upgraded by mid-February. It has been calculated that the payback on the lighting will be less than 12 months.

Procurement has started on replacing and insulating the roof of Silver End village hall. It is hoped that once works are completed the solar rooftop project will commence subject to funding.

Display Energy Certificates (DEC's) have been completed for the buildings on the Councils' estate with public access.

The Green Doctor Service which offers advice and energy efficiency home visits installed 77 measures in residents' homes in this quarter. The scheme is funded by Cadent and has confirmed funding up to March 2028.

The Council's Handyman scheme installed 71 measures for residents in this quarter.

The Essex Energy Switch auction on 30 September has resulted in 588 registrations by residents in Braintree district during October.

Transport

The Council has promoted the North Essex Parking Partnership NEPP public consultation on street parking changes, which are intended to encourage sustainable travel.

The Council has also promoted a survey on a Digital Demand Responsive Transport service to understand the level of interest and demand, the findings of which will form the basis of future bids and funding.

The Council is continuing to progress the replacement electric vehicle charging contract for charging infrastructure on the Council's estate for public and staff to use.

Built Environment

In this quarter the Council has continued to promote the Green Skills Programme of retrofit training.

Business & the Green Economy

In this quarter the Council has promoted reuse for residents, publishing case studies on local businesses and highlighted the launch of the next round of Love Essex Fund applications.

The Council has also promoted and hosted a series of Christmas fairs around the district championing local producers.

Natural Environment

In this quarter the Council adopted the Essex Air Quality Strategy which sets out the shared aims and actions to improve air quality across the district and wider Essex.

Work is progressing on a tree and bulb planting programme utilising the £30k allocated from the Climate Change Reserve budget. Officers met in December to agree how to progress the programme which will be spilt between the 2025-26 and 2026-27 planting seasons.

Adapting to Climate Change

The Council continues to promote flood advice for residents and actively work as a member of the Essex Flood Executive to implement flood protection measures. Essex County Council have invited stakeholders to complete a survey and attend a workshop in January on delivery of the new Integrated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

The Council continued to issue seasonal weather warnings as required, (Storm Benjamin in October, Claudia in November). Through December the Council continued preparation of the flood exercise with Blue Light Services for February.

The Environment Agency's (EA) new flood warning system went live in October. The EA will lead on communications to the public. The Council and other partners will promote the tool.

Fit For The Future

During the third quarter the Fit for the Future Transformation Programme made strong progress in modernising how the council works and improving the experience for residents and staff. A new structure was put in place to make sure each part of the programme has dedicated project management support, giving clearer ownership and better coordination across all activities. Regular meetings now bring project managers and senior sponsors together to identify risks earlier, resolve issues faster, and keep delivery on track. This new approach has strengthened governance, improved efficiency, and helped ensure that resources are focused where they can make the greatest impact.

Across People, Processes and Culture, important steps were taken to improve how the organisation operates and supports its staff. The staff survey results were analysed, shared with employees, and used to shape a new Culture and Resilience work package. Preparations began for improving key corporate processes, ready for the arrival of our new Business Analyst in January, and the Council continued developing its plans to strengthen organisational skills, including digital capabilities. These activities are laying the foundations for a more confident, capable, and resilient workforce.

In the Digital workstream, the council continued to upgrade its technology, strengthen cyber security, and improve online services. New projects were approved to make it easier for residents to access personalised accounts, use single sign-on for third-party systems, and book and pay for services online. Cyber security training was completed for staff and councillors, and work progressed on improving the local network, backup systems, and digital tools such as the Noise App. Investment also continued in modern meeting room technology and collaboration spaces to support more flexible and efficient working. These improvements are helping ensure the Council has secure, modern systems that are fit for the future.

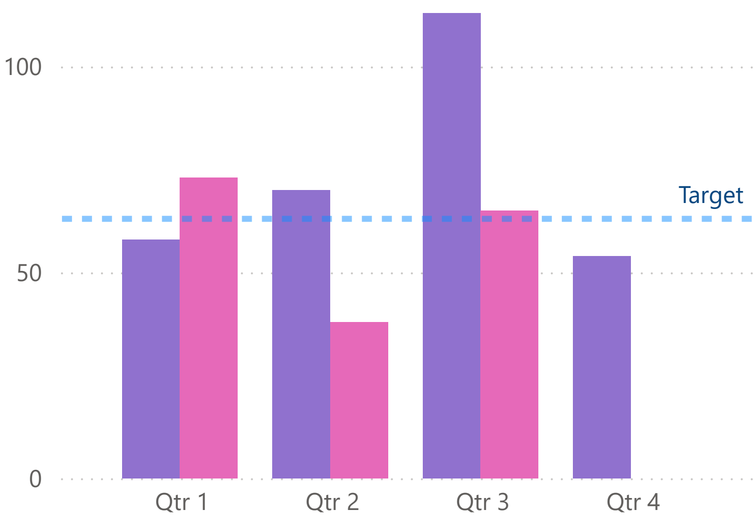
Service Reviews and Asset Management also moved forward, ensuring that individual services are operating efficiently and delivering value for money. Several service reviews advanced through key stages—such as Housing, ICT, Finance, Internal Audit and Benefit Fraud, while new change requests were introduced for areas including Legal Services and Commercial Waste. At the same time, the Asset Management workstream made progress in implementing recommendations to strengthen how the Council manages its property portfolio, while Shared Services work supported preparations for Local Government Reorganisation by improving collaboration and alignment across Essex councils. Together, these steps will help streamline services, improve consistency, and ensure the council is well-prepared for future changes.

Performance Indicators in detail

Number of affordable homes delivered

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26

Desired trend: Higher



Status: ✔

Year to date position:

176

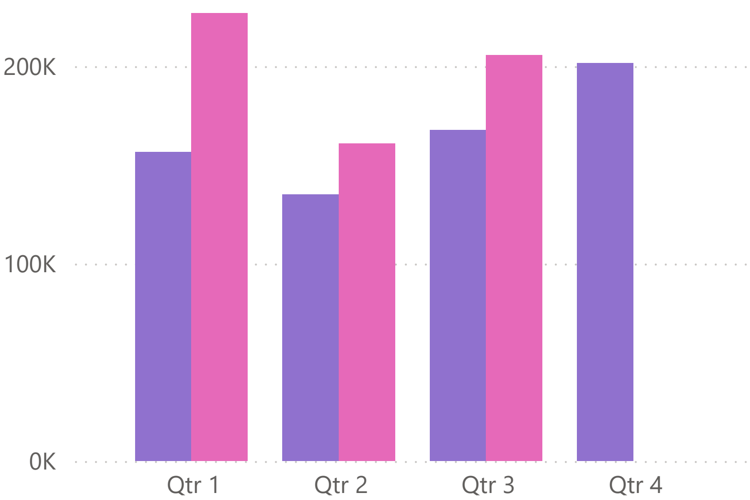
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	58	63
24-25	Qtr 2	70	62
24-25	Qtr 3	113	62
24-25	Qtr 4	54	63
25-26	Qtr 1	73	63
25-26	Qtr 2	38	62
25-26	Qtr 3	65	62

Comments: There were 65 affordable homes delivered in the third quarter, achieving the target for the quarter. The current forecast is that around 100 completions are anticipated before the end of the financial year, which indicates that this metric should achieve the yearly target of 250.

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:

(Blank)

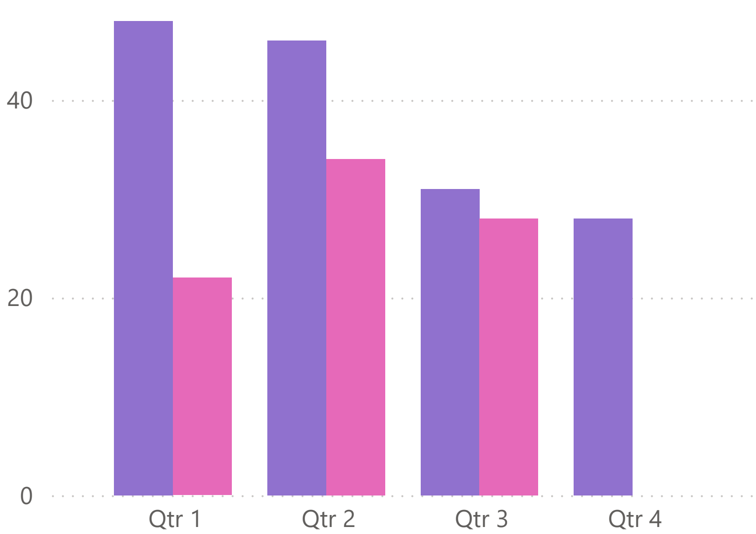
Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	156,554	228,341
24-25	Qtr 2	134,916	208,939
24-25	Qtr 3	167,508	171,666
24-25	Qtr 4	201,461	175,513
25-26	Qtr 1	226,836	
25-26	Qtr 2	160,874	
25-26	Qtr 3	205,545	

Comments: Leisure centre visitors increased in the third quarter, compared to the previous quarter and the same period last year.

Note: following transition of the leisure contract, a revised figure for September has been received, and so the second quarter figure has been updated.

Number of homelessness cases prevented

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

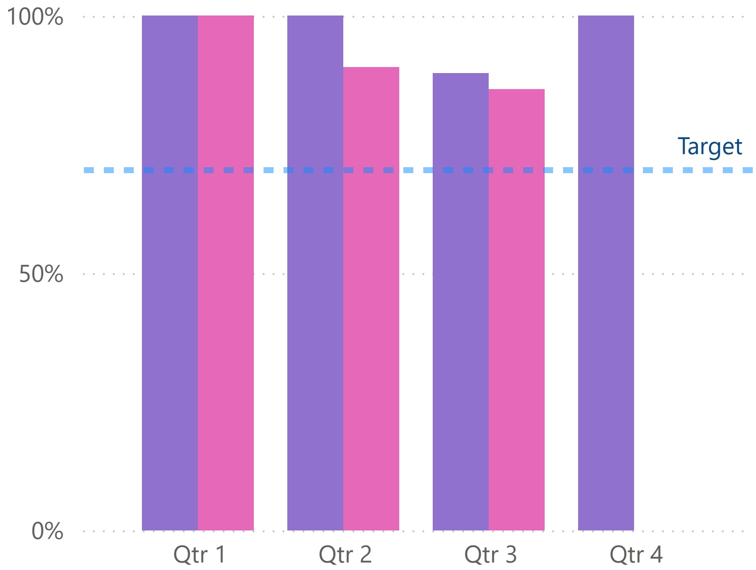
70

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
25-26	Qtr 3	28

Comments: The number of homelessness cases prevented decreased in the third quarter compared to the second 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:

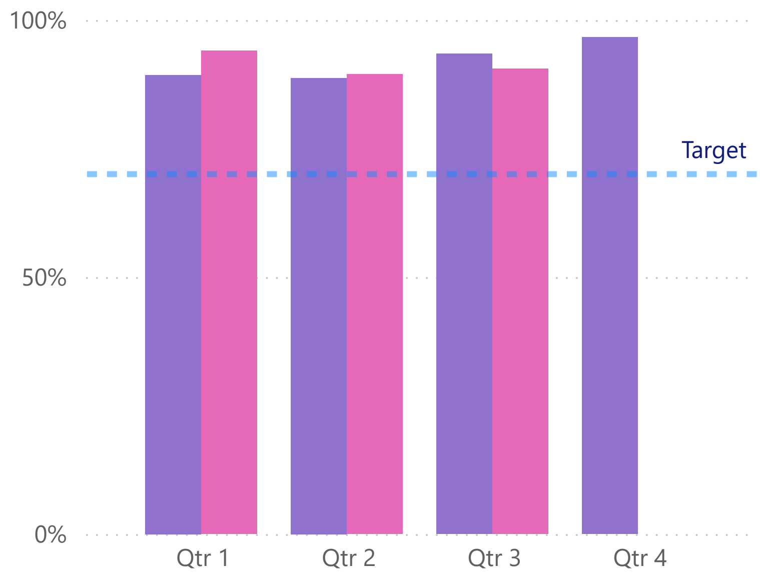
94.12%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	85.71%	70%

Comments: 6 out of 7 major planning applications were decided on time in the third 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:

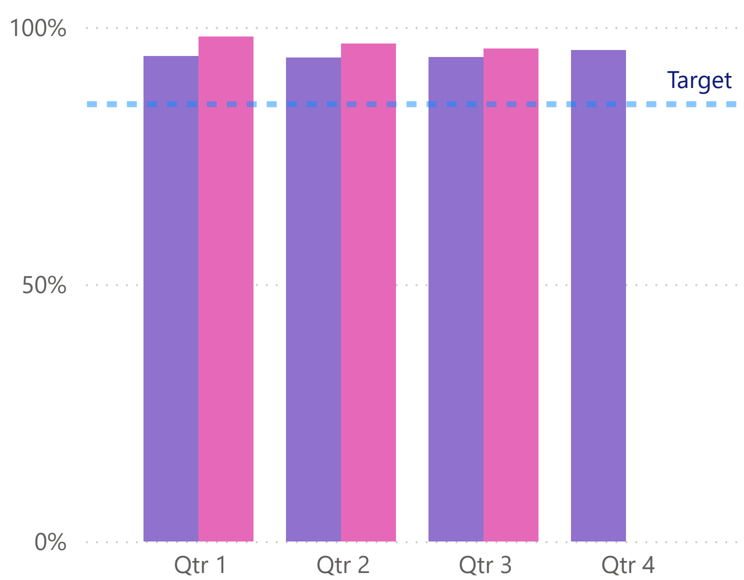
91.82%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	90.48%	70%

Comments: 90.48%, 57 out of 63 minor planning applications were approved in time in the third 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: ✔

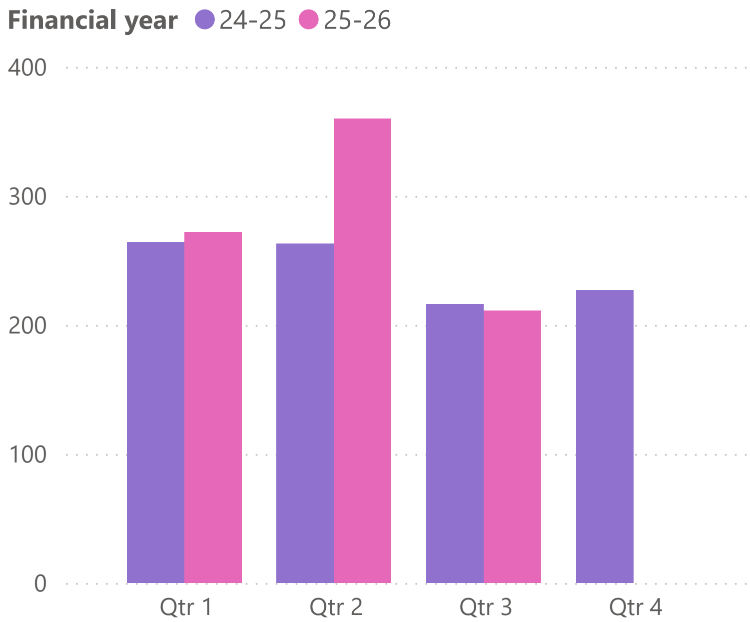
Year to date position:

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	95.86%	85%

Comments: The third quarter outturn for other planning applications decided on time was 95.86%, representing 139 out of 145 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



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

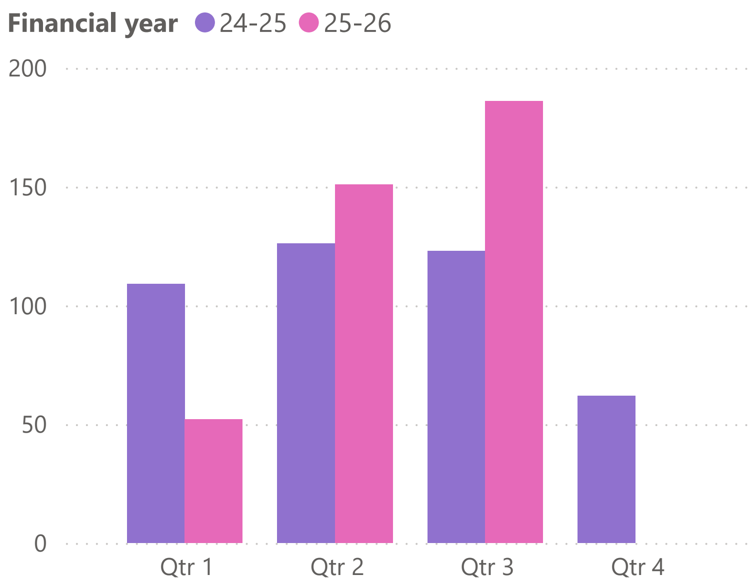
Year to date position:

571

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
25-26	Qtr 3	211

Comments: 211 new businesses were registered in the third quarter, which is a similar outturn to the same quarter last year. Following a strong outturn in Q2, the year to date position is comfortably ahead of the previous year.

Number of businesses accessing business support



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

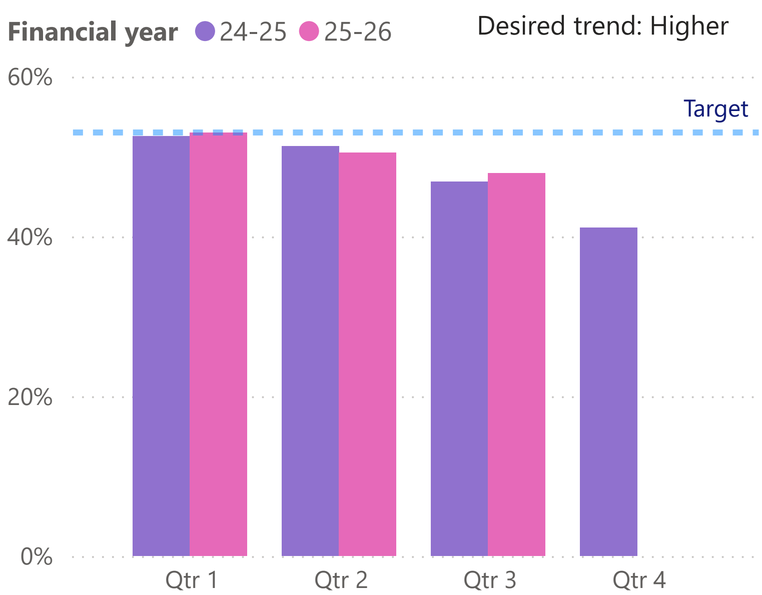
Year to date position:

337

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
25-26	Qtr 3	186

Comments: The number of businesses accessing business support continued an upward trend in the second and third quarters, following a low outturn in the first quarter. This is a result of funding made available in the first quarter funding activity in subsequent quarters. The third quarter outturn represents the largest number of businesses access support in the past 2 years.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting



Status:

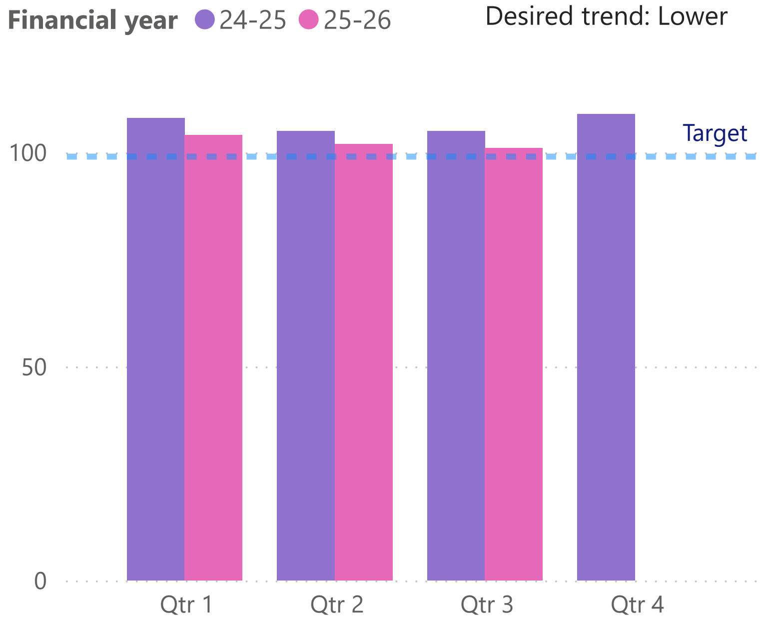
Year to date position:

50.56%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	47.9%	53%

Comments: Recycling rate in the third quarter missed target, by 5.1 percentage points. However, this demonstrates a 1.1 percentage point increase compared to the same period last year. Additionally, all recycling waste streams (garden, food and dry recycling) saw increased tonnages, with the tonnage of residual waste decreasing year on year.

Kilograms of residual waste per household



Status:

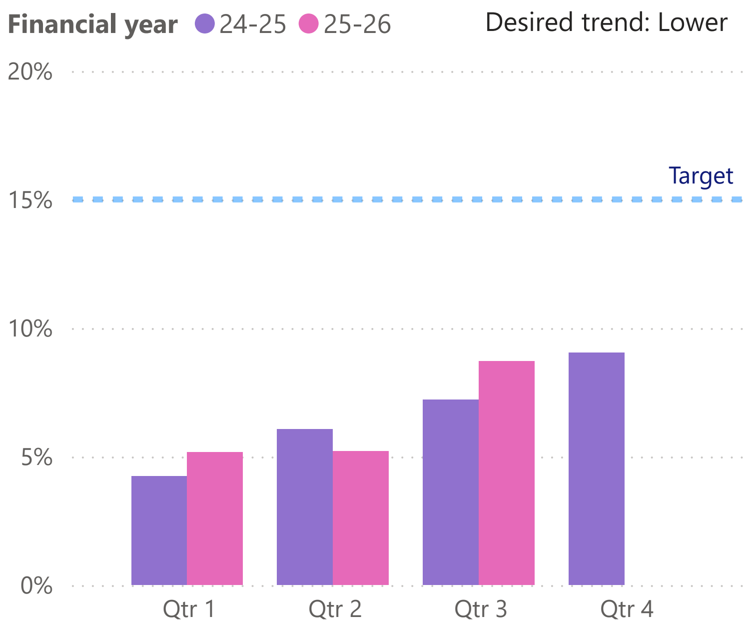
Year to date position:

236

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
25-26	Qtr 3	101	98

Comments: The kilograms of residual waste collected per household missed target by 3kg in the third quarter. However, this outturn is the best performance so far this year, and reflects and improvement on the same quarter in the previous year (105 vs 101 kgs). This figure represents the lowest outturn for this indicator in the last 8 quarters.

Recycling contamination rate



Status:

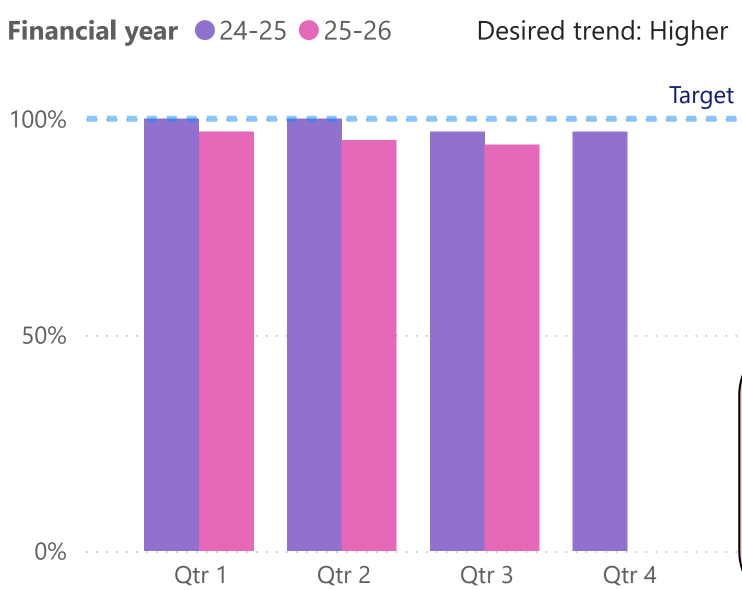
Year to date position:

6.96%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	8.71%	15%

Comments: Recycling contamination rate achieved target in the third quarter. Whilst this demonstrates an increase on the same quarter last year, it is still well below the target rate of 15%.

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



Status:

Year to date position:

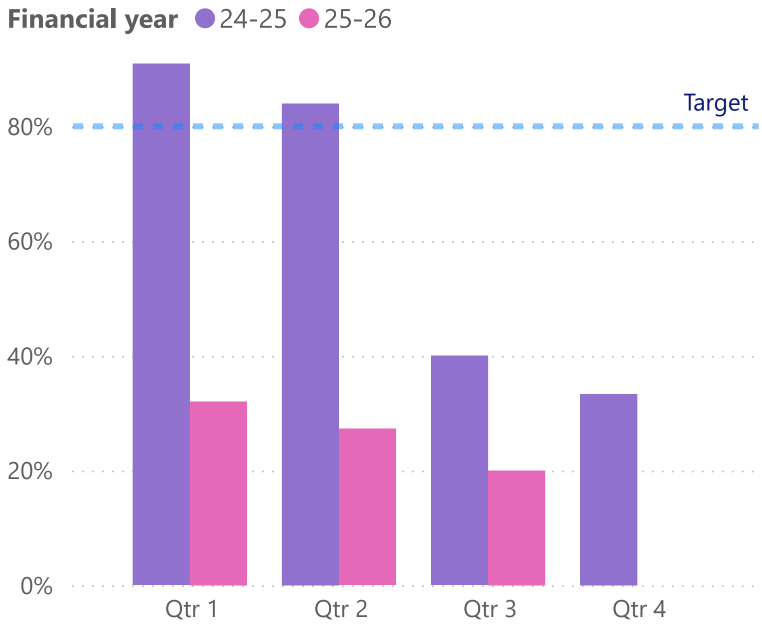
96%

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	95%	100%
25-26	Qtr 3	260	94%	100%

Comments: In the third quarter, 94% of fly tips were cleared within 24 hours (244 out of 260). 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, however vehicle maintenance and location access also were factors in some breaches.

Percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved on time

Desired trend: Higher



Status:

Year to date position:

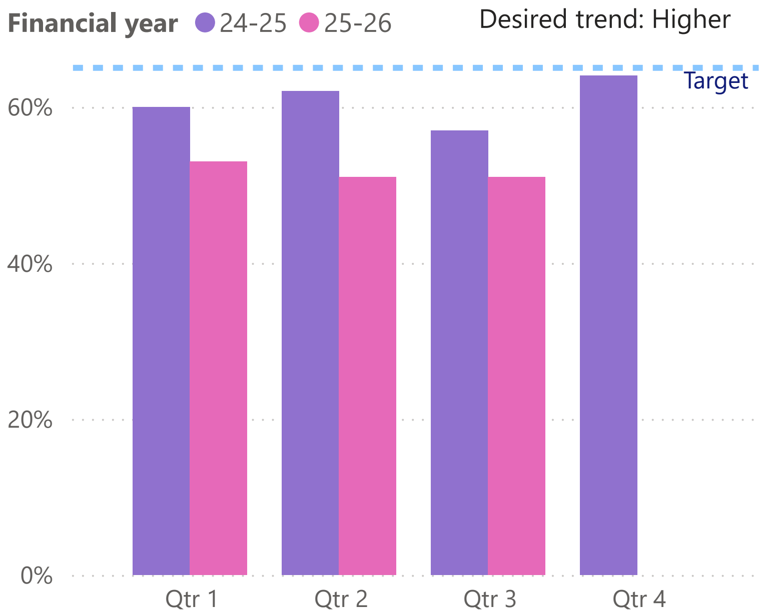
30.56%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	20.0%	80%

Comments: 6 out of 30 disabled facilities grants were approved within timescales in the third quarter. The approval of 30 grants this quarter reflects the highest number of grants approved in a quarter since Q1 2024/5. This indicator will remain low whilst the backlog of applications due to funding challenges is cleared. However, successful recruitment to the team has increased capacity, and will further improve clearance of the backlog of applications.

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

Desired trend: Higher



Status:

Year to date position:

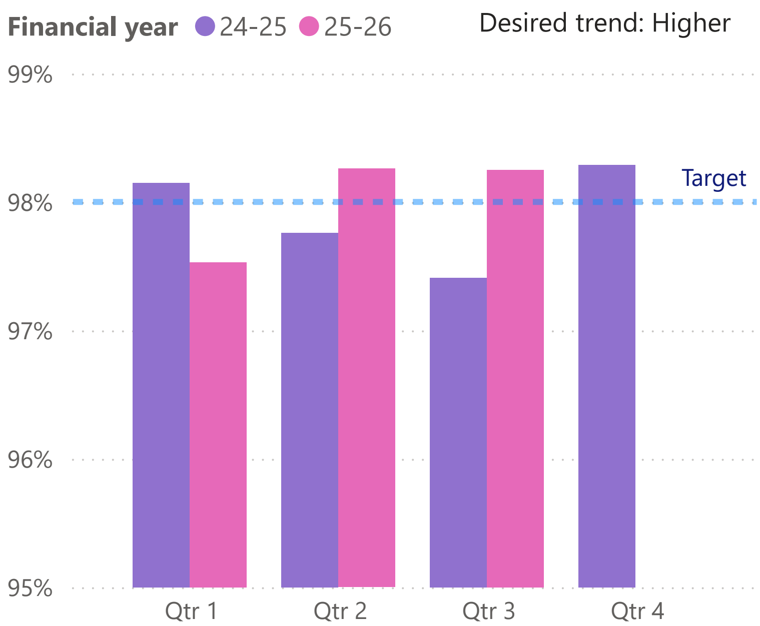
51%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	51%	65%

Comments: In the third quarter, the Customer Services team supported 18,069 callers, successfully resolving 9,199 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 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

Desired trend: Higher



Status:

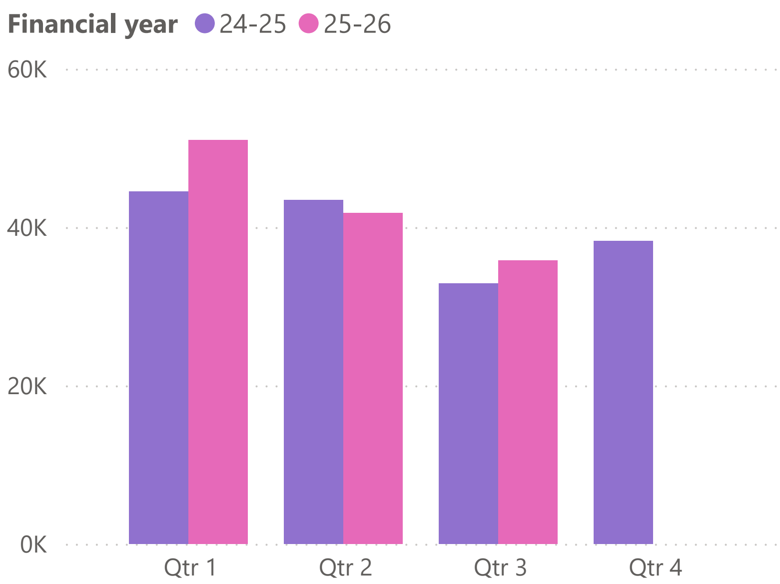
Year to date position:

98.00%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	98.3%	98.0%

Comments: The percentage of invoices paid on time was 98.3% in the third quarter, achieving the target by 0.3 percentage points, and matching the second quarter performance. 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



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

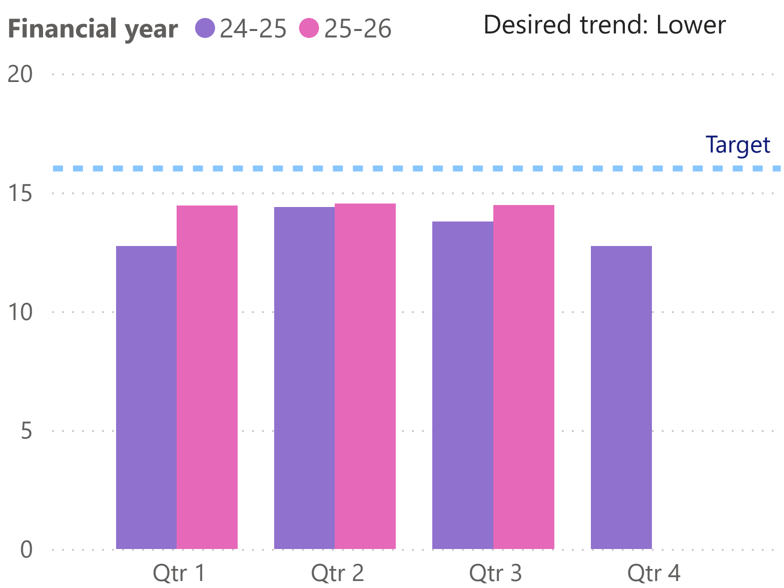
Year to date position:

92,101

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
25-26	Qtr 3	35,778

Comments: The Council observed a decrease in web transactions in the third quarter when compared to the second quarter. However, this follows a seasonal trend, and this year's performance represents a roughly 10% improvement on the same period last year.

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



Status:

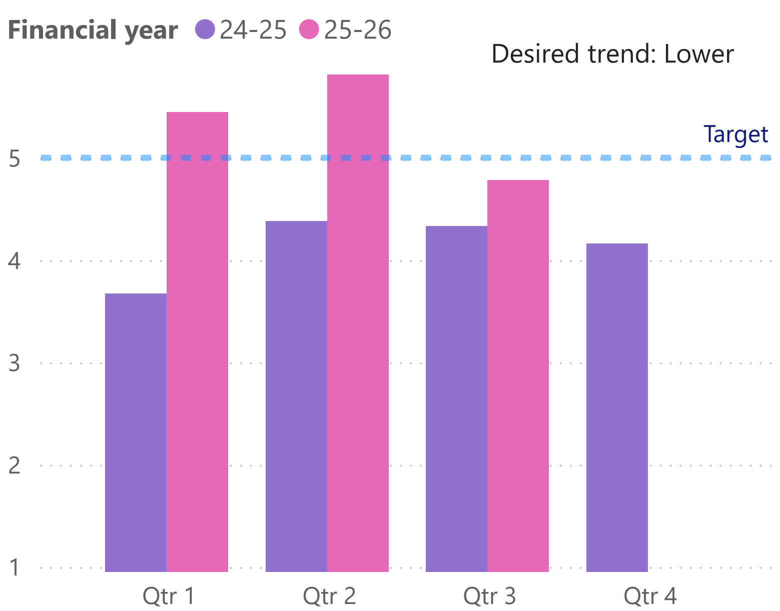
Year to date position:

14.53 days

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
25-26	Qtr 3	14.47	15

Comments: The time taken to process new benefit claims has remained below the lower target for 25/26 in the third quarter with an outturn of 14.47 days.

Days taken to process housing benefit claim changes



Status:

Year to date position:

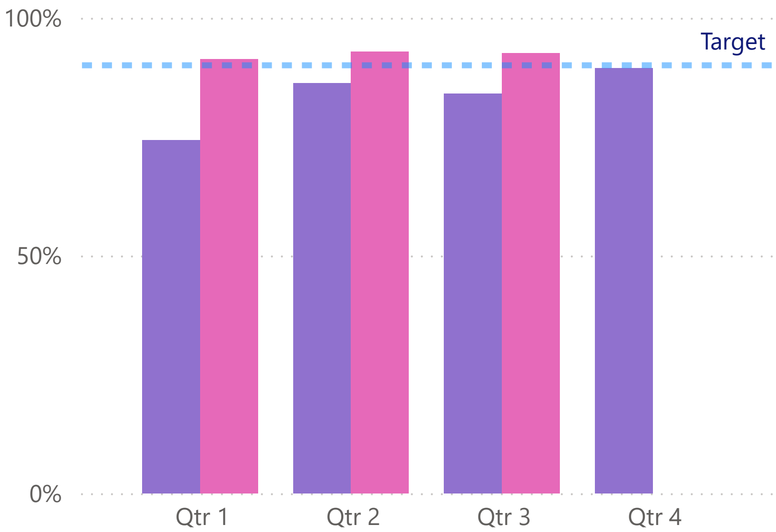
5.38 days

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
25-26	Qtr 3	4.78	5

Comments: Days taken to process housing benefit claim changes achieved its target in the third quarter, for the first time since changes were made to the local council tax support scheme. Successful recruitment to a vacancy has increased the capacity in the team, and allowed claim changes to be processed faster resulting in an improvement in performance against this indicator.

Percentage of stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescale

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



Status:

Year to date position:

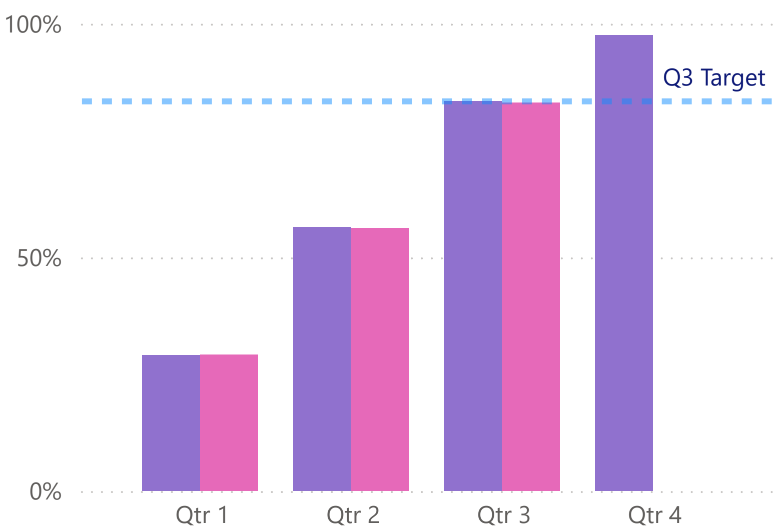
92.35%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	92.56%	90%

Comments: Complaints response timescales remained positive in the third quarter with 112 out of 121 (92.56%) stage one complaints responded to within 7 working days. This continues a trend of improved performance across all three quarters compared to the previous year.

Collection rate for Council Tax

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



Status:

Year to date position:

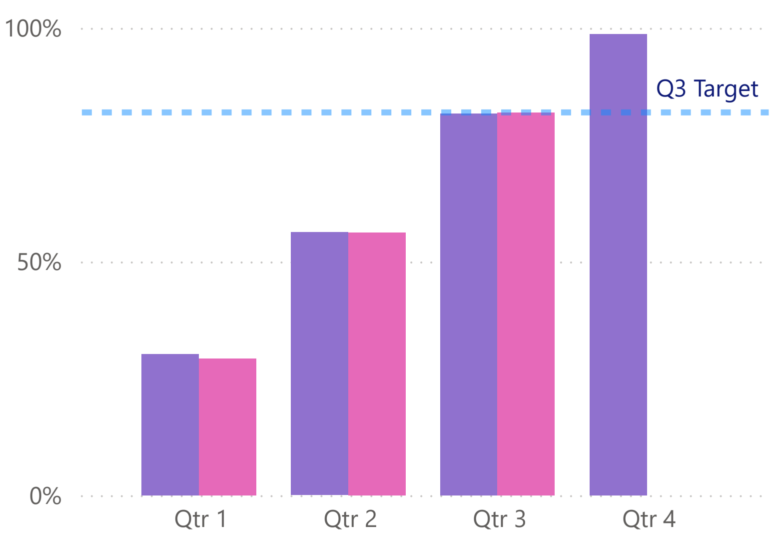
83.11%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	83.11%	83.38%

Comments: Council tax collection rate was marginally below the target in the third 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

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



Status:

Year to date position:

81.90%

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%
25-26	Qtr 3	81.90%	81.70%

Comments: Business rates collection achieved target by 0.2 percentage points for the third quarter, and is on track to achieve target 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	Q3 25/26
Justified	115	102	56	74	83	93	**64**
Not Justified	62	33	25	26	16	48	**57**
Partially Justified	14	23	11	12	2	10	**2**
Not known	5	1	2	2	4	4	**4**
Total	196	159	94	114	105	155	**127**

Comments:

The third quarter saw an overall reduction in complain volume compared to the second quarter, with significantly less justified complaints. A decrease in partially justified complaints was also observed. The decrease in volume was driven by a reduced number of escalated complaints in the third quarter (4 vs 14), and a reduction in planning complaints where the second quarter saw numerous complaints about one particular case. A small number of complaints were received in relation to the waste review changes following communications with all households, but this has not impacted overall complaint volumes in an observable way in the third quarter.

In the third quarter the Council responded to 92.56% (112 out of 121) stage 1 complaints within the 7 working day timescales. The reason for delays in the remaining cases was often due to the time taken to investigate a more complex matter or difficulty in contacting the complainant.

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

October

Notice from LGO that they have deemed a complaint premature – Decision of the LGO reached without enquires of the Council. This complaint related to a Housing Register and Banding decision. The matter was under consideration by the Council under the Corporate Complaints Procedure. This complaint was upheld under the corporate complaints procedure and remedies provided to the complainant

November

Initial Enquiry on the handling of an ongoing/live Planning Enforcement Case – response provided to the LGO's initial enquiries and await further contact from the LGO as to next steps.

Initial Enquiry in the handling of a Council Tax complaint, a refund of payment Council tax following a Tribunal Decision. Response provided to the LGO's initial enquiries and await further contact from the LGO as to next steps.

December

Nil matters to report

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	Q3 25/26	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	499	509	505	506	503	513	**524**	+11	-
Headcount – Permanent employees	463	467	464	467	467	474	**482**	+8	-
Headcount – Fixed term contract	36	42	41	39	36	39	**42**	+3	-
Total employee FTE	458.52	467.96	465.91	467.21	466.63	475.32	**485.94**	+10.62	-
Level of employee turnover	2.4%	3.1%	1.98%	2.17%	3.18%	1.56%	**0.95%**	0.61	-
Number of leavers	12	16	10	11	16	8	**5**	-3	-
Number of starters	10	26	6	12	13	18	**16**	-2	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee (rolling)	6.22	5.65	6.01	6.85	7.27	8.52	**8.77**	+0.25	8.0
Percentage of employees with nil sickness	80.8%	67.4%	51.5%	45.3%	79.92%	66.28%	**54.39%**	Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	688	842	1068	895	1235	753	**840**	+87	-
Number of delegates	345	314	363	377	289	234	**245**	+11	-
Number of apprentices *	21	20	23	23	20	26	**25**	-1	-

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.

Sickness absence
The increasing rate of sickness is attributable largely to long term absence, with this making up two thirds of total absence.

The prevalent reasons are stress/depression/mental health and musculoskeletal/injuries/back problems.

The highest levels of absence are seen in Operations and Housing/Community, with stress/depression/mental absence figures equally high in both services. In Operations, the underlying cause for stress/depression/mental health is split between underlying mental health conditions and work-related issues, in Housing/Community it is predominately work-related issues. The majority of musculoskeletal absence falls within the Operations Service.

For comparison, Colchester City Council current absence figure is 9.6 days and Tendering District Council current absence figure is 7.11 days.

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	Q3 25/26
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	5	16	16	10	9	10	**10**
Accidents/ incidents to employees	5	14	14	10	9	9	**9**
Accidents/ incidents to contractors	0	0	1	0	0	0	**0**
Accidents/ incidents to non-employees	0	2	1	0	0	1	**1**
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	25	0	10	0	0	38	**13**
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	3	2	2	4	1	5	**3**
Number of near miss incidents	0	1	0	1	0	1	**1**
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	0	0	0	1	2	0	**3**
Number of claims settled	0	2	0	0	1	2	**0**

Comments:

Ten accidents/incidents were recorded in the third quarter, nine of these involved employees. Of the incidents involving employees, three resulted from slips, trips or falls, three were hit by a moving object, two occurred whilst handling or lifting, and one was hit by something stationary.

One of these accidents occurred to a non-employee, where a member of the public tripped on a step outside the town hall.

A total of 13 days were lost as a result of three employee accidents/incidents. None of the incidents constitute a RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incident. One incident accounted for five days, and two incidents accounted for 4 days each.

Three separate verbal abuse incidents occurred to employees in the Housing department.

One near miss was reported where a Housing employee experienced an incident with an aggressive dog.

The accidents/incidents resulted in an insurance claim, and no claims were settled this quarter.

Financial Summary

The review of the financial performance and projection for the year shows an overall positive variance of £1.8 million, an increase of £0.3 million from the second quarter.

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 due to staffing vacancies and overachievement of income, in part due to changes in statutory fees for household applications but also from increased activity including from major applications. Income can be volatile and subject to market conditions where the position can change significantly.

There are also positive variances within the Operations, Governance and ICT services. These have arisen due to a combination of staffing vacancies and reduced operating expenditure. 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% (or £50k) of their budget. Environment is forecasting a shortfall in income and there are additional staffing costs due to ongoing interim staffing in Building Control.

Housing is anticipating spending more on staffing related costs due to service demand pressures and the need to cover unplanned absences through agency. Consultancy support is being used on the Housing Service review. There are also additional unbudgeted costs from temporary accommodation. These additional costs are in part being funded by the higher than expected Homelessness Prevention Grant receivable for the year mitigating the variance on the general fund account; however an additional drawdown from the Housing reserve is also required to cover a residual amount.

Strategic Investment is projecting an overspend due to increased staffing costs and a reduction in service costs rechargeable to capital projects.

Taking into account the in-year forecasts, adjustments have been made to the 2026/27 budget proposals. These include higher projected income from Treasury Management, Car Parking, Planning fees, and Green Waste services. Adjustments have also been made where there are anticipated shortfalls in income within Asset Management and Building Control. Salary budgets have been updated for 2026/27, and the vacancy allowance remains set at £300k

Capital expenditure was £5.6 million, with the main areas of spend being on the Witham Community Centre, a new 3G artificial pitch in Witham, Disabled Facilities adaptations, 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 projects are continuing to progress faster than was assumed bringing forward spend into the current year that was originally profiled in 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 Q3.

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	(2,972)	(2,845)	127	153	R
Community & Leisure	1,067	1,058	(9)	(15)	G
Corporate Management Plan	1,731	1,697	(34)	(28)	G
Economic Development	197	148	(49)	(40)	G
Environment	1,016	1,331	315	267	R
Finance	488	(175)	(663)	(704)	G
Governance	1,688	1,567	(121)	(79)	G
Housing Services	1,073	1,152	79	67	R
ICT & Facilities	2,210	2,082	(128)	(105)	G
Marketing & Communications	760	702	(58)	(65)	G
People & Performance	1,242	1,216	(26)	(15)	G
Operations	7,499	6,967	(532)	(479)	G
Strategic Investment	345	400	55	53	R
Sustainable Development	2,175	1,343	(832)	(622)	G
Service Plan Total	**18,519**	**16,643**	**(1,876)**	**(1,612)**	G
Corporate Financing	2,997	2,809	(188)	(139)	G
Est. Impact of Pay Award	0	0	0	0	
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	300	300	
Net Total	**21,216**	**19,452**	**(1,764)**	**(1,451)**	G

Business Plan Service	Staffing Expenditure			Other Expenditure			Gross Income		
	Updated Budget £'000	F//Cast £'000	Variance £'000	Updated Budget £'000	F/Cast £'000	Variance £'000	Updated Budget £'000	F/Cast £'000	Variance £'000
Asset Management	576	538	**(38)**	1,410	1,572	**162**	(4,958)	(4,955)	**3**
Community & Leisure	1,036	990	**(46)**	1,115	1,129	**14**	(1,083)	(1,060)	**23**
Corporate Management Plan	2,226	2,189	**(37)**	(116)	(113)	**3**	(379)	(379)	**0**
Economic Development	199	150	**(49)**	65	65	**0**	(67)	(67)	**0**
Environment	1,965	2,225	**260**	166	183	**17**	(1,115)	(1,077)	**38**
Finance	2,918	2,798	**(120)**	21,303	21,407	**104**	(23,733)	(24,380)	**(647)**
Governance	1,015	859	**(156)**	922	919	**(3)**	(249)	(211)	**38**
Housing Services	1,920	1,920	**0**	318	401	**83**	(1,165)	(1,169)	**(4)**
ICT & Facilities	1,184	1,123	**(61)**	1,026	960	**(66)**	0	(1)	**(1)**
Marketing & Communications	599	538	**(61)**	323	304	**(19)**	(162)	(140)	**22**
People & Performance	1,157	1,128	**(29)**	85	88	**3**	0	0	**0**
Operations	8,664	8,575	**(89)**	7,271	7,275	**4**	(8,437)	(8,884)	**(447)**
Strategic Investment	400	424	**24**	6	6	**0**	(61)	(30)	**31**
Sustainable Development	3,122	2,738	**(384)**	611	650	**39**	(1,559)	(2,046)	**(487)**
Service Plan Total	**26,981**	**26,195**	**(786)**	**34,505**	**34,846**	**341**	**(42,968)**	**(44,399)**	**(1,431)**
Corporate Financing	726	646	**(80)**	5,574	5,526	**(48)**	(3,301)	(3,361)	**(60)**
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	**300**	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
Net Total	**27,407**	**26,841**	**(566)**	**40,079**	**40,372**	**293**	**(46,269)**	**(47,760)**	**(1,491)**

General comments:

- Staffing projections are based on vacancies and other known changes at the end of Q3 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 Second Quarter is a positive variance of £313k. The main reasons for this change relate to the following areas:

- **Sustainable Development (-£210k)** – Income from planning applications is now forecast to exceed expectations, based on extrapolated actual income and anticipated timing of major application fees. In addition, the increase in major applications received during the year has generated a further favourable variance from income in relation to street naming

- **All Other Services (-£103k 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. This is due to a combination of factors including additional income in Operations and staffing vacancies within a number of services.

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

Asset Management

- Reduced income at the Plaza from the Makerspace and causal lettings (+£96k)
- Additional rental income following backdated rent reviews (-£61k)
- Lower income at Victoria Square due to vacant units (+£52k)
- Net reduction in staffing costs charged to capital (Net +£36k)
- Net other variances, mainly related to properties (Net +£4k)

Community and Leisure

- Net saving on staffing costs mainly in Community Transport due to vacancies (-£45k)
- Community Transport income is lower due to difficulty finding volunteer drivers (+£42k). The Service is currently undergoing review as part of the Service Review programme.
- Other minor variances (-£6k)

Corporate Management

- Net saving on staffing costs from vacant post and roles being filled at a lower grade than originally budgeted (-£38k).
- Other minor variances (+£4k)

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 (+£263k).
- Forecast shortfall in the income on the Building Control fee earning account (+£110k)
- Higher recharge of service costs to capital to support an increased Disabled Facilities Grant programme (-£47k)
- Increased fees and charges for pest control on internal transactions (-£31k)
- Licensing fee income is projected to be under achieved by c£110k; however, as the account operates under a statutory regime, any shortfall will be met from a ringfenced reserve rather than General Fund.
- Other minor variances (net +£20k)

Finance

- Additional treasury management income due to higher cash balances, higher-for-longer interest rates, and better performance of strategic pooled funds (-£821k).
- Housing Benefits net additional cost of benefits paid (+£190k) – Expenditure is demand led and subject to subsidy limitations on certain types of benefit payments. Several backdated claims have reduced in-year subsidy but maybe subject to future overpayment recovery from claimants.
- Net underspend on staffing due to vacancies, and reductions in contracted hours or staff appointed at lower scale points than assumed (-£120k)
- 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 (-£17k).
- Increased system related costs for the Revenues and Benefits system (+£22k).
- Underspend following Insurance contract annual renewal (-£19k)
- Net additional external audit fees (+£14k)
- Other minor variances (+£20k).

Governance.

- Staffing variances across the service (-183k). Ongoing recruitment and retention challenges particularly in Legal Services where two senior lawyer posts have been vacant.
- Member allowances are projected to be higher due to increased National Insurance contributions partly as a result of increases to the Basic Allowance (+£28k).
- Shortfall in net income from Land Charges searches, partially offset by reduction in payments to Essex County Council, and Legal sealing charges (+£23k).
- Net other variances Overspend on Electoral Registration service e.g. postage costs (+11k)

Housing

- Increased staffing costs are projected due to ongoing service demands combined with the need to use agency staff to cover unplanned absences (+£200k) which will be funded by additional Homelessness Prevention Grant.
- The service is also facing higher costs due to an increase in the use of nightly lets and temporary accommodation (£79k) which will be funded by additional Homelessness Prevention Grant.
- Consultancy costs in relation to a review of the Housing service (+£60k). which will be funded by additional Homelessness Prevention Grant.
- Agreed funding to support an element of accommodation costs at Digby's court and New Directions (+£195k). It was agreed that this would be part funded by the Additional Homelessness Prevention Grant but also from an additional drawdown from reserve (+£79k).

ICT & Facilities

- Corporate ICT systems maintenance (-£52k)
- Net other underspend (-£15k) mainly on Causeway House operating costs.
- Net saving on staffing costs due to vacancies and reduction in hours (-£60k).
- Other minor variances (-£1k)

Marketing and Communications

- Net saving on staffing costs due to vacancies (-£61k)
- Income from Sponsorship and Advertising is being underachieved (£24k) but offset by savings on expenditure in Graphic & Reprographics and other service-related variances, resulting in a net overall variance (+£3k)

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 (-£90k)
- The subscription-based garden waste collection service is projected to generate additional income but there will be an increase in operational costs over related expenditure headings that will partially offset this. (-£112k)
- Postage costs related to garden waste service were lower than originally budgeted as these were included in the contract for printing of bin labels, and computer related expenditure is lower as re-routing deferred pending planning and preparing for changes in household collections from June (-£76k)
- Demand for commercial waste and bulky waste services continues to increase resulting in a forecast of net additional income (-£82k).
- 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 (-£79k). There are increased related cost associated with transportation and tipping away (+£70k)
- Additional costs of hire of vehicle at Cordons Farm (+£25k).
- In relation to Street Cleansing, lower maintenance cost on Street Cleansing vehicles (-£12k) and reduction of costs in relation to the purchase of sacks (-£15k).
- Car parking income has been overachieved mainly on pay & display, partially offset by increased collection costs (-£83k).
- Income received from recycled glass is higher due to market prices (-£31k)
- Other variances across all services (-£47k).

Strategic Investment

- Increase in staffing costs following a review of the service (+£24k) 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 mainly in Development Management (-£266k) and Landscape Services (-£118k), partially offset by agency cover and recruitment / advertising costs (+£23k). Posts within the Landscape Service have now been appointed.
- Projected overachievement in Planning Application income (-£270k) due to increases in the statutory charges for household applications and major applications received during the year, Pre-application income (-£89k), Planning Performance Agreements (-£50k). Income can be highly variable and subject to economic conditions.
- Additional income from street naming (-£79k) due to the number of major applications in year.
- Other variances (+£17k)

Corporate Financing

- The Council Tax Sharing Arrangement gainshare is projected to be higher based on collection performance at Q3 (-£70k). The amount is provisional and assumes 7% share-back. Subject to the final performance achieved across all Essex authorities, there is potential for the share-back to increase to 9% (resulting in a further positive variance of £122k against budget).
- Other staffing related underspends such as the employee leave purchase scheme, central staff retention provision, and lower pension fund costs (-£129k).
- Legal settlement costs arising from the Wethersfield legal challenges (+£40k).
- Net increase (-£30k) in use of reserves as a contra to the projected variance on Economic Development (+£49k) 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 (-£18k)

Capital Programme

Current capital programme totals £18.4m (excluding prior year spend) of which £4.2m 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	137	11	126	-92	0	34
Horizon 120 - The Plaza	92	54	38	0	0	38
Waste Review	3,378	202	3,176	0	0	3,176
Witham Community Centre	2,752	1,582	1,170	346	0	1,517
Town Centre improvements	663	266	396	-288	0	108
Property planned maintenance (incl. Causeway Hse)	1,663	516	1,147	343	-819	671
Information technology systems & equipment	430	99	331	-169	-20	142
Community facilities, play areas, parks & open spaces	790	389	401	-179	-2	220
Cemetery improvements	29	3	26	0	0	26
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	114	11	103	-57	0	46
Operational equipment	499	12	486	-39	-2	445
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	1,076	631	444	-212	-6	226
Climate change initiatives	170	50	120	0	-58	62
Shared / Rural Prosperity Fund	239	83	156	0	0	156
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	1,480	779	700	-145	0	555
Capital salaries	278	176	102	0	-26	77
Passported Funds	886	772	115	0	0	115
Total	**14,676**	**5,638**	**9,038**	**-492**	**-933**	**7,614**

Comments on the Capital Programme

- The overall programme has increased by £176k due to various new projects (incl. £80k for Braintree CCTV Improvements mainly funded from a mix of Shared Prosperity and Safer Streets Funds).
- Section 106 Funds paid to third parties delivering projects are shown in the above table and total £886k. This includes £527k towards new artificial grass pitches across three schools, and £169k for tennis courts in Hatfield Peverel.
- Actual spend at the end of Q3 was £5.6m with anticipated spend in the remaining fourth quarter of £7.6m.
- Spending profiles have been developed in conjunction with Project Officer and where appropriate have used project milestones and related cash flow statements.
- There has been a net decrease of £492k in the budget profiled to be spent in the current year, due to the following:-
  - Budgets totalling around £816k originally profiled to be spent in 2026/27 have been reprofiled into the current year, mainly for Witham Community Centre (£346k) and Planned Maintenance of Council Assets (£428k).
  - Estimated slippage of £1.3m which includes: leisure centre compliance & improvement works (£297k), play area refurbishments (£150k), ICT projects (£169k) and Town Centre improvements (£288k)
- The programme is projected to be £933k under spent in 25/26, mainly due to the reduced scope of works to be undertaken on the Causeway House refresh. This has been reflected in the 2026/27 Budget when ascertaining available capital resources.

Capital resources generated

- Eastlight agreements: Right-to-Buy sales – number of completed sales 15 with £2.0m due to the Council. A further 16 applications are in progress (In 2024/25 only 4 sales in the year were completed generating £533k); and VAT shelter £292k. 2 further sales under clawback arrangements generating £200k.
- The sale of plots 5-8 at H120 completed for a net £1.6m after allowing for deductibles and transfer of responsibility for removal of excess soil to the developer.
- Other minor receipts totalling £51k.
- Capital grants and contributions received to date total £1.97m consisting of:
    - Funding through Better Care, Eastlight and other housing totalling nearly £1.5m for the DFG programme.
    - Capital grants totalling £240k received from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund.
    - Sport England grant of £271k received from the Football Foundation towards the Artificial Grass Pitch at Witham Sports Ground.

Treasury Management

At the start of the year £73.1m was invested. The average amount under management up to the end of December was £90.4m with a peak of £100m. New investments of £110.3m were made, and £97.5m matured, resulting in £85.9m being held at the end of the quarter.

Monies held in long-term pooled funds was maintained 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 third quarter was £580k and interest on short-term investments was £2.248 million, a total of £2.829 million or annualised return of 4.15%.

The market value of shares and units in long-term pooled funds at the end of the quarter was £24.5m, representing an unrealised gain of £5.5m.

General Fund Balances

Based on the projected outturn at this quarter, the General Fund balances are currently estimated to be £12.0m by the end of the year, before additions/ withdrawals proposed in the 2026/27 Budget.