

Appendix A

Harlow Council

Performance Report for the Period Ending

31/03/2020

Foreword from the Leader of the Council



Report Summary from Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council

As we review our performance over 2019/2020, we can once again be proud of what Harlow Council has achieved for our town.

Our performance over the last year shows that we are an effective council and an effective community leader and that we have improved our performance.

We have made good progress in meeting our climate emergency pledges making it a great year for Harlow's environment. A key target was to reduce the CO2 emissions from our operations. With the help of over 100 residents we also planted over 5,000 trees beating the target of planting 1,000 trees in a year! We have also eliminated the use of single-use plastic across the council and we did this four months ahead of our target.

As I write this, we are in the middle of an international pandemic which has tested the council's resolve and resilience as a community leader and service provider. Our priorities have and will change as we respond to the pandemic and lead our town's recovery, but we can be very proud of what has been achieved and the strong foundations we have built as a council which is flexible enough to respond. We have met the challenges head on, providing the essential services that our residents and businesses need and adapted our services to ensure those in need are helped and supported.

I know that residents and businesses need reassurance and security at this time, and they will need it as we move forward too. For the town's recovery it is now vital that we move ahead with projects and schemes which will help Harlow to rebuild and become an even better place to live, work and visit. Despite some uncertainty for the future our ambition to improve Harlow whilst retaining those things people hold dear remains.

The world-leading public health science campus moves a step closer every day and work continues on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town project. Harlow Enterprise Zone led by the council will be vital in supporting Harlow's economy and we will keep playing our part in making sure Harlow's residents and those who work so hard at Princess Alexandra Hospital get a new modern hospital. We want to move ahead with building new council homes and also improving our town centre.

There is a lot to look forward, Harlow's future continues to shine brightly. We will ensure that we keep pressing for the investment and attention that our town needs.

As well as making sure Harlow gets what it needs our day-to-day role in providing services will remain. We have to continue being an effective council and work closely with those who provide services for the town. Whatever operational and financial challenges lie ahead I'm confident that as a council we will do our very best for Harlow and to support those who need us.

I thank council staff, councillors, our partners and the community groups we work with for their help and hard work over the last year.

Mark Ingall

Leader of Harlow Council

Foreword from the Chief Executive



Report Summary from Brian Keane, Chief Executive, Harlow Council

We can look back at 2019 to 2020 and be very proud of our performance. We have performed well across the council and made improvements. We continue to provide a wide range of services for Harlow. The pressure on the council to always deliver and the expectations of residents do not change. We know we need to continue to perform and provide good quality services.

There will always be challenges and opportunities which we must be prepared for. Resources continue to be tight; we cannot do everything on our own, we need to work together to make things happen. We are in the middle of a global pandemic which towards the end of the financial year changed the way we operate and will impact on the way we operate in future.

There is no bigger challenge than being in the middle of this pandemic, but I am proud of how we are responding. We never started the last financial year expecting anything like this would ever happen, but we have shown that as a council we can be flexible, and we can work together in times of need.

Our day-to-day work has and is going to change. Priorities are going to be different. The communities we serve are going to continue to need our help and leadership. We have a prominent role in reducing the spread of this virus.

The health and safety of our communities is our number one priority and we will do whatever we can to protect the people who live and work here from the coronavirus. From making sure the services and facilities we and our partners provide are safe, to ensuring that the public and businesses have the very latest public health information and guidance, we will work together to keep everyone safe.

We can however look ahead with renewed opportunism because developments such as Public Health England's relocation, Harlow & Gilston Garden Town and Harlow Enterprise Zone continue. We will do what we can to make these things happen. How we respond as the town recovers is probably going to be our greatest challenge.

Thank you to all our staff for everything they have done this year and will continue to do for Harlow.

Brian Keane
Chief Executive

The Council's aim for 2019-20:-

"to improve Harlow for residents, businesses and visitors"

The Council's priorities:

1. More and Better Housing



2. Regeneration and a Thriving Economy



3. Wellbeing and Social Inclusion



4. A Clean and Green Environment



5. Successful Children and Young People



How to use this report

You may wish to consider the following questions to form an idea on how well the Council is doing in achieving its priorities and objectives.

Questions which the reader may wish to consider:

1. What are the reasons for the performance being below target?
2. What is the Council's expenditure on this service?
3. Has performance fluctuated between quarters and what are the reasons for this?
4. Is it anticipated that the target will be met by the end of the year?
5. What are the proposed actions to improve performance and achieve the target and when will this be done by?
6. How well is the Council responding to gaps in performance or shortfalls in income?

Other areas for consideration could include:

1. Is the indicator a high priority for the Council? Is this reflected in the budget?
2. How does the service compare to other local authorities in terms of value for money – how does the Council's expenditure on this service and performance achieved compare to similar local authorities?
3. What are other Council's doing to improve performance in this area?
4. Are there any overspends/underspends in the budget area within which the underperforming indicator sits?
5. Are there any future projects planned that will enhance existing performance?
6. How severe or likely are risks associated with lower level performance?

Performance Symbols:

Symbols used to measure performance.

Below Target: e.g. more than 5% worse than target	On Target: e.g. within 5% of target	Above Target: e.g. more than 5% above target	Data not yet available: e.g. survey information pending
			

Section One: Key Considerations

The key issues relating to the Council's finances, performance, risks, and corporate plan:

FINANCE

Due to Covid 19, there is no financial performance information currently available. An assessment of the Council's financial /budgetary position is taking place. A report to be made available at a later date.

The following indicators had poor performance in Quarter 4 2019/20:

- CS50 Average waiting times of calls received by Contact Harlow
- BV008 Invoices paid within 30 days (%)
- HTS: 3.11d Tree works carried out within 80 working days

PERFORMANCE

RISK

At end of Quarter 4 2019/20, there are no exceptional strategic risks (rated 20 or higher – high likelihood, high impact) recorded on the Council's Risk Register.

The position of the Corporate Milestones as at 31 March 2020 are broken down as follows:

- 94% (145 out of 155) of the milestones have been successfully completed;
- 6% (10 out of 155) of the milestones were either deferred due to Covid 19 or cancelled/suspended due to changes in priorities; until the new financial year 2020/21.

CORPORATE PLAN

Section Two: What our customers are telling us (Complaints)

The council provides and commissions a large number of services, to a population of around 86,600 residents (2018 estimate). Every year the council undertakes over 600,000 housing transactions and deals with hundreds of thousands of enquiries at Contact Harlow.

Contact Harlow also provides an administrative service for housing benefit and local council tax support. The caseload for this is just under 8,000 benefit claimants and is down from 9,000 last year, due to the impact of Universal Credit.

The council aims to respond and resolve all Stage One and Stage Two complaints within 10 working days, and Stage Three complaints within 15 working days.

The chart below shows two years of complaints (April 2018 to March 2020) by the monthly and quarterly figures, monthly is in blue and quarterly is in red.

When quarter four of 2019/20 is compared to the same quarter in 2018/19, there is a 52.6% increase in the number of complaints received.

Being a significant increase, further work was undertaken to ascertain the reason for this.

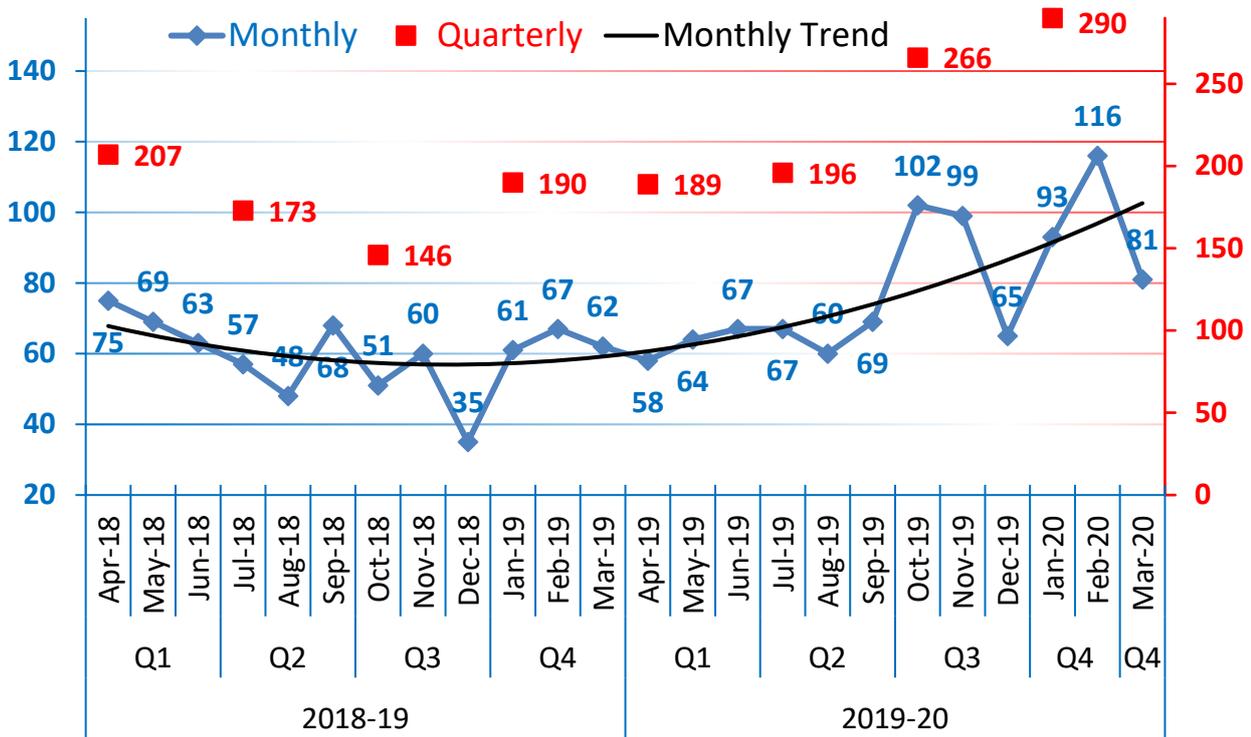
One of the key themes highlighted from the HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd complaints analysis include customer contact, communication, and access issues.

This has been looked at by HTS and they are in the process of reviewing their customer access procedures as part of the wider Best Value Improvement Plans reported to the council. These are currently being reviewed in response to Covid-19 implications and organisational priority requirements.

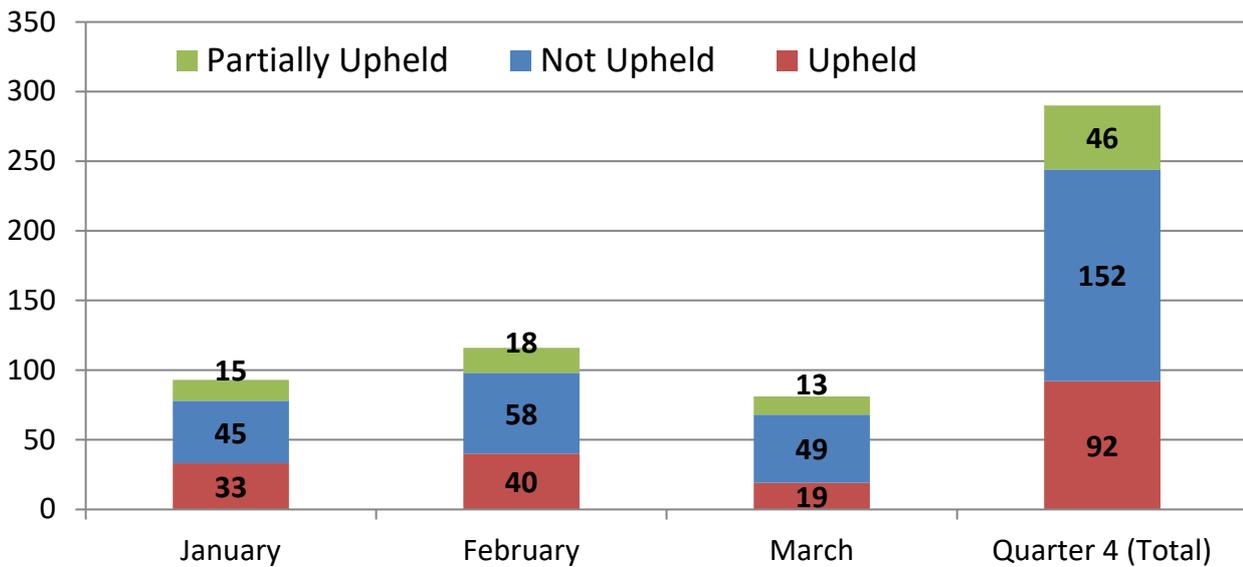
HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd have also been requested to provide a performance action plan to the Senior Management Board in the first instance to ensure that there is a structured approach to continuous improvement.

With regard to Environment and Planning complaints, Veolia had some short-term issues with supervisory capacity in January and February which resulted in some loss of communications with the workforce about some collections. This was rectified by March with the appointment of new permanent supervisors and the level of complaints dropped off significantly as a result.

In the last twelve months (April 2019 to March 2020) there was an average of 78 complaints per month, whereas in the previous 12 months (April 2018 to March 2019), the monthly average was 60. The increase in this period, equates to 30%.



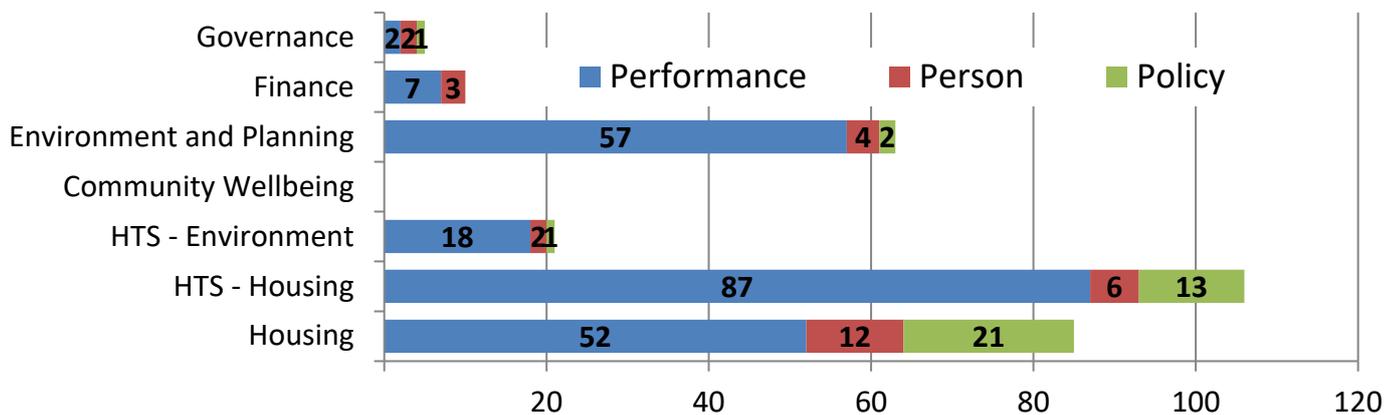
In quarter four (2019/20), the council received a total of 290 complaints. These complaints break down as 92 (32%) upheld, 152 (52%) not upheld and 46 (16%) partially upheld. The chart below shows the breakdown by classification for each month and the quarter total.



The table below shows the breakdown of complaints by the stage, for each month in quarter four. Eighty-two percent of the complaints were resolved by stage one, 13% of complaints were resolved by stage two and 4% of the complaints reached stage three.

Month	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
January	75	11	7
February	99	13	4
March	64	15	2
Quarter Four Total	238	39	13

The chart below shows a breakdown of the three complaint types and the number of complaints against the relevant service area. In quarter four (2019/20), there were 223 performance: 29 person and 38 policy related complaints.



Additional information is collected on all closed complaints that were either upheld or partially upheld, to ensure lessons are learnt to improve service delivery and minimise the risk of reoccurrence.

This information is logged by the service areas responding to the complaint and includes:

- What will be done as a result of the complaint?
- Who by?
- By when?

The Customer Services Officer receives monthly reports, to ensure that action(s) are being completed. Any failures/blockages are reported to the Customer and Media Services Manager, to progress to the relevant Head of Service.

Reports on trends and resolutions are provided to the Senior Management Board, to ensure continuous improvement.

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Finance and Property. Simon Freeman

The Service has performed very well during 2019/20 and has met the majority of its key performance targets and service milestones. The one KPI that has missed the target relating to payments performance features in the Improvement Action Plan as part of this report. Financial performance will feature in a later report once the Council's accounts have been closed in line with revised timescales resulting from the national Covid crisis.

Performance of Key Contracts

HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd

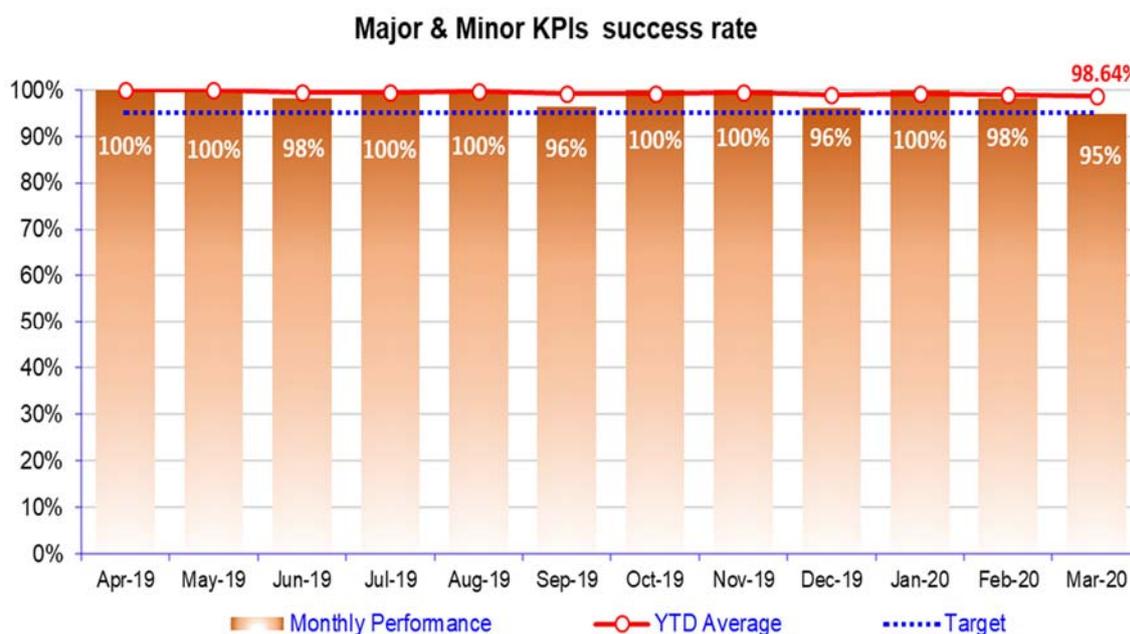


HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd. started operations in February 2017 to serve Harlow residents with their housing repairs and maintenance needs as well as looking after the Town's environment.

HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd. provides:

- Council housing repairs and maintenance including garage repairs
- Council building repairs and maintenance
- Street cleaning, dumped rubbish collection and graffiti removal
- Grass cutting and landscape maintenance
- Cleaning and caretaking of communal areas.
- Pest control
- Stray dog collection
- Drainage, gully, and highways repairs on Harlow Council land.

HTS successfully completed its third year (2019/20) of operation with an average performance of 98.64% against full suite of Major and Minor KPIs that govern the contract across all work streams.



Notable highlights in performance include:

Housing:

- 99% of emergencies attended within 2 hours and completed within 24 hours.
- 100% compliance with turning voids around into lettable properties within agreed timescale.
- 96% tenants' satisfaction from questionnaires feedback.
- 100% compliance for Gas Compliance (annual servicing completed).

Street Scene:

- 91% customer satisfaction with street cleaning services
- 100% of offensive and non-offensive graffiti removed within 24 hours.
- Average time taken to remove fly tips reduced to 1 hour and 35 minutes.
- 100% of damaged bins repaired or replaced within 2 working days.

Grounds Maintenance:

- 100% compliance with Prevention of dangerous trees reported, inspected, and made temporarily safe within 24 hours
- 100% Maintenance of existing playgrounds and hard standing areas.

Non-Housing:

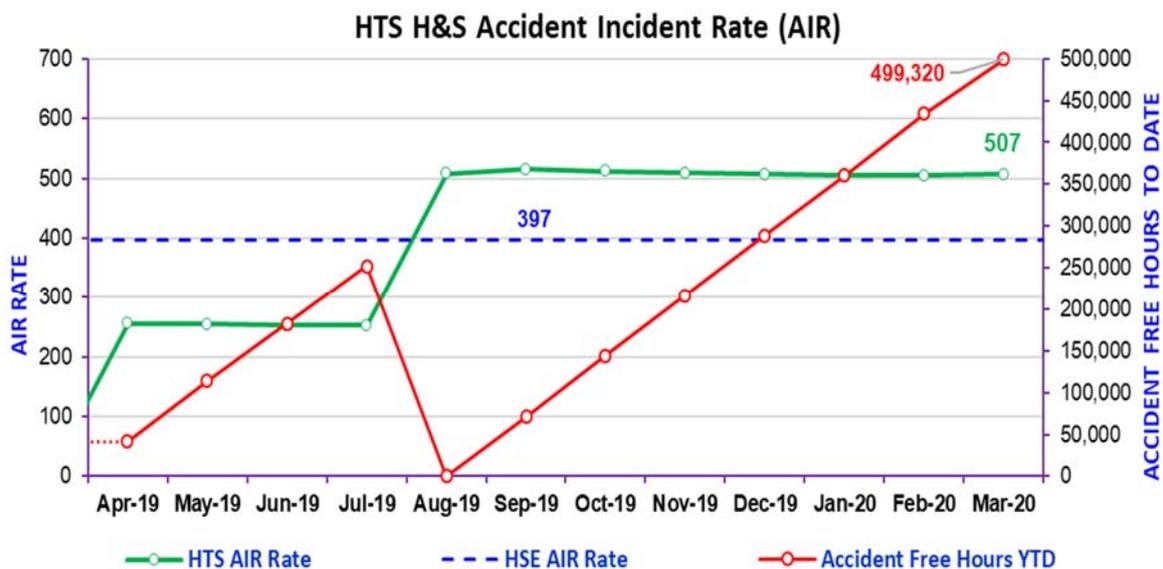
- 99% Customer Satisfaction with Non-Housing Repairs service.
- 100% compliance with managing emergencies (attend within 2 hours).

Call Centre

- Call centre has consistently exceeded its target, performing at an average of 94% customer service answering level against the target of 90%.

Safety Health Environment & Compliance (SHEC)

- Covid 19 national lockdown: working with each section to discuss disaster recovery plans and the impact of the pandemic. Plans for reducing staffing, 'emergency only' and 'no leaving the home' all now in place.
- Completed 499,320 working hours without an incident.
- AIR rating of 507 achieved following RIDDOR in August 2019.
- RoSPA Gold award received in both H&S and Fleet.
- British safety council award achieved for the 4th year running



Veolia:
Waste and Recycling services



Veolia Environmental Services collect domestic recycling, food waste and residual (black bag) waste town-wide; and ancillary services include bulky, green, and nappy/incontinence waste.

The Veolia Team works closely with the Council's Client and Communications Teams to ensure consistent service delivery, and to minimise service disruption due to adverse weather, bank holidays and similar events.

Veolia has established a flexible and adaptable approach to changes in requirements. The collection methodology introduced in the current contract continues to ensure high rates of diversion of waste from landfill.

The residual household waste per head of population remains low. Unfortunately, uncertainty over the developing international Coronavirus outbreak led the Council and Veolia to delay preparations to roll out a revised green waste collection service, although mainstream collections continued to operate normally.

Westerleigh:
Crematorium



Westerleigh Group leases the Cemetery and Crematorium site from the Council and takes responsibility for all operations and maintenance.

There is access to industry expertise and a wider pool of equipment and staff resources within the Group; this together with the capital resources has enabled much needed investment into the site infrastructure with a wide ranging upgrade to the customer experience.

The business continues to perform well in 2019/20 with a corresponding benefit of rental income for the Council.

Section Four: Performance

The Council performed on or above target for 51 out of 54 (94.4%) of its monthly, quarterly, and annual indicators. Fifty per cent of the indicators have been maintained or improved compared to Quarter Four 2018/19.

Percentage of indicators within or better than target	Qtr ended 31/03/19	Qtr ended 30/06/19	Qtr ended 30/09/19	Qtr ended 31/12/19	Qtr ended 31/03/20
	100%	96%	98%	98%	95%
Percentage of indicators improving or unchanged from the same period last year	Qtr ended 31/03/19	Qtr ended 30/06/19	Qtr ended 30/09/19	Qtr ended 31/12/19	Qtr ended 31/03/20
	62%	57%	60%	57%	50%

Good Performance:

Thirty-eight (70.4%) of the indicators performed significantly better than their targets. Listed below is a selection of the performance indicators which have contributed to this achievement.

		31/03/20	31/03/20	31/03/19	31/03/19
		Actual	Target	Actual	Target
★	NI185:CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations	38.55	20.00	12.93	15.00
★	CS04b: No of hits to website	662,536	500,000	523,827	500,000
★	NI156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation	251.00	332.00	255.00	287.00
★	BF005: Average days to process new claims	21.58	25.00	25.39	25.00
★	NI157b: Processing of minor applications within 8 weeks or agreed timescale	83.33	65.00	80.00	65.00
★	BF006: Average days to process change events	8.78	13.00	9.85	13:00
★	HTS 2.4: Average time (in hours) to remove fly tips	1.35	3.50	1.19	3.50
★	BV082aii: Household waste recycled (tonnes)	7,642.46	7,200.00	7,985.37	8,000.00
★	CS25q: % of customers complaints responded to within target time	92.35	85.00	94.74	85.00
★	RGN001: Commercial property portfolio occupancy rate	94.00%	87.00%	94.00%	87.00%

Section Five: Improvement Action Plans

The Council and HTS (Property & Environment) Ltd monitors all performance indicators which have been subject to an Improvement Action Plan (IAP) during the past 12 months. The table below illustrates how the indicators subject to an IAP have performed over time.

All performance indicators are reported as red, blue, and green in line with the Council performance monitoring.

Quarterly / Monthly Performance Indicators	QTR ended 31/03/2019	QTR ended 30/06/2019	QTR ended 30/09/2019	QTR ended 31/12/2019	QTR ended 31/03/2020
BV008 Invoices paid within 30 days (%)	●	●	●	▲	▲
CS50 Average waiting time of calls received by Contact Harlow	★	▲	●	●	▲
BV010 NNDR collected (%)	●	●	▲	●	●
CS02b% Lost calls for Contact Harlow (Quarter Cumulative)	★	▲	★	★	★
HTS 3.11d Tree works carried out within 80 working days *	★	★	▲	●	▲

Number of Red Quarterly/ Monthly Performance Indicators	0	2	2	1	3
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Annual Performance Indicator	QTR ended 31/03/2019	QTR ended 31/03/2020
Number of Red Annual Performance Indicators	0	0

*As part of a reassessment of KPI HTS 3.11d, it was established that the 'green' performance reported by HTS (P&E) Ltd in Quarter 2 2019/20 was incorrect. The actual performance of the KPI should have been 'red'. The Improvement Action Plan (IAP) for Quarter 4 2019/20 will address and ensure the performance of the KPI is brought back on track for 2020/21.

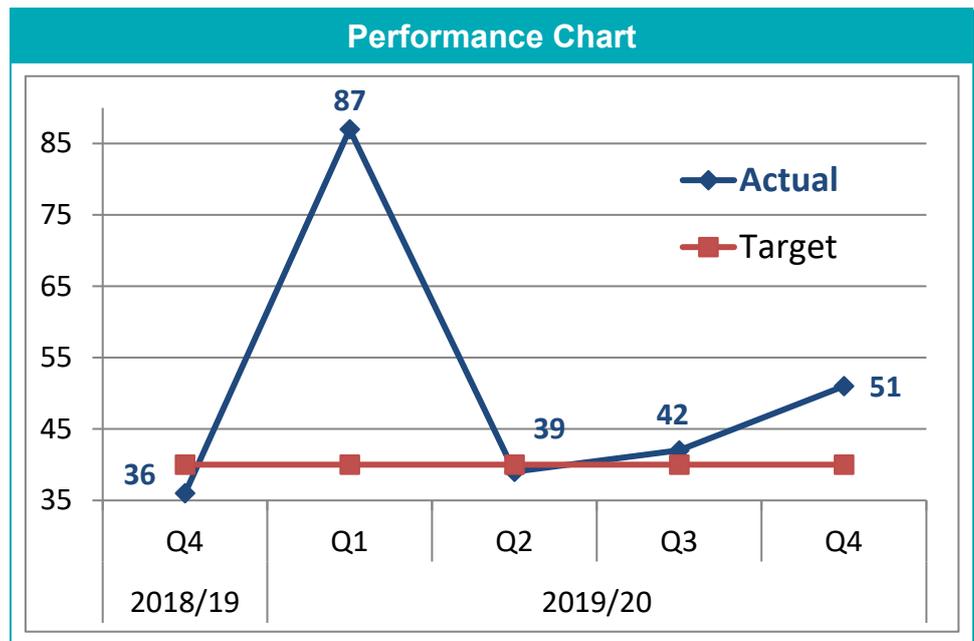
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2020

KPI
CS50 Average waiting time of calls received by Contact Harlow

Performance					
Harlow	to 31/03/19	to 30/06/19	to 30/09/19	to 31/12/19	to 31/03/20
Actual	36.00	87.00	39.00	42.00	51.00
Target	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00

Description
Average waiting time of calls received by Contact Harlow before they speak to a Customer Advisor



Direction of Travel


What is the performance situation?

Increase in calls in January following Christmas and New Year closedown added to an increase in March regarding Corona Virus means that the call waiting times increased.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

Several staff have now returned from maternity leave and one from a secondment meaning that the additional demand can be dealt with effectively.

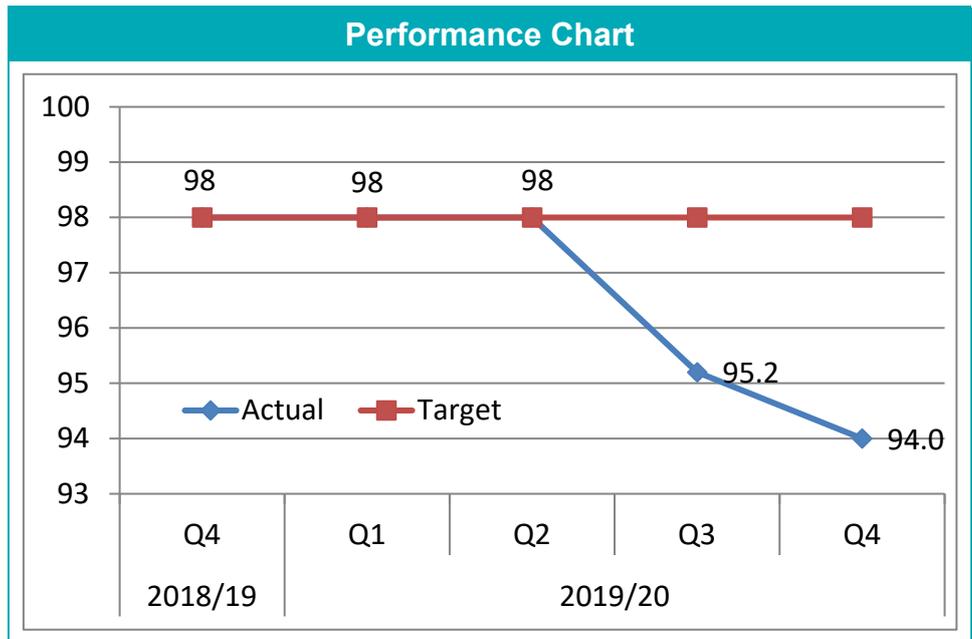
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2020

KPI
BV008 Invoices paid within 30 days (%)

Performance					
Harlow	to 31/03/19	to 30/06/19	to 30/09/19	to 31/12/19	to 31/03/20
Actual	98.00	98.00	98.00	95.20	94.00
Target	98.00	98.00	98.00	98.00	98.00

Description
The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services which were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received by the authority.



Direction of Travel


What is the performance situation?

There is an issue across service areas where they are failing to correctly identify the date an invoice is received or to notify the payments team if they are in dispute/under query with the supplier. This has an implication for achievement of the KPI 30 day target for payment.

Whilst training is the key to addressing this issue it was not undertaken in Q3 and this has been exacerbated by the homeworking situation imposed as a result of the Covid lockdown in late March.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

Despite the homeworking arrangements training has been delivered during Q1 2020/21 and in addition the Covid crisis has forced new ways of working to be explored which it is expected will result in improved performance against the KPI in Q1 2020/21 and moving beyond that reporting period.

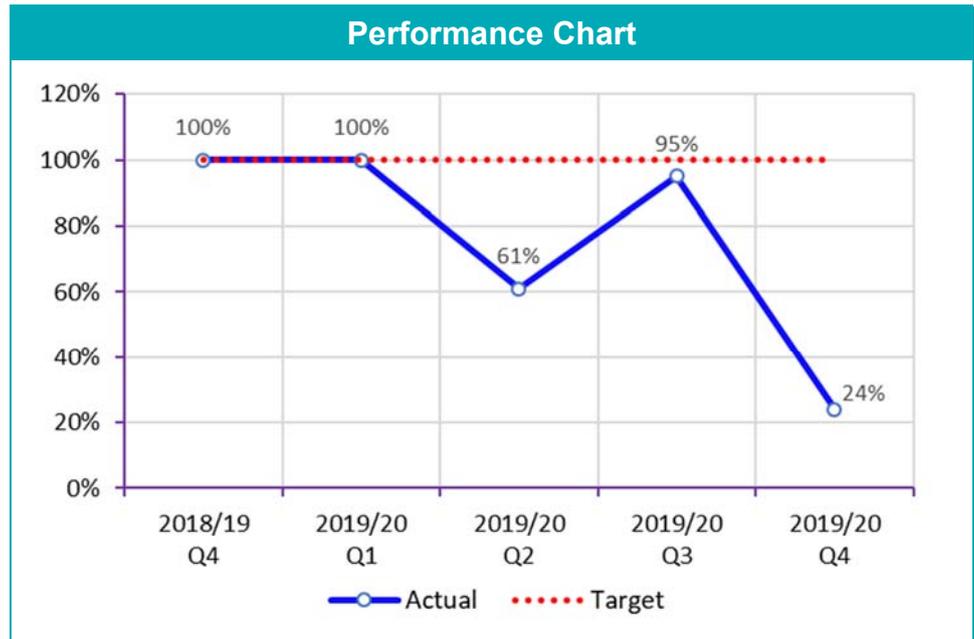
Improvement Action Plan (IAP)

Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2020

KPI
HTS 3.11d - Tree works carried out within 80 working days

Performance					
Harlow	to 31/03/19	to 30/06/19	to 30/09/19	to 31/12/19	to 31/03/20
Actual	100.00	100.00	61.00	95.00	24.00
Target	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Description
Inspection of trees (not dangerous) reported requiring attention / maintenance within 20 working days and work carried out within 4 months.



Direction of Travel

What is the performance situation?

There has been a steady build-up of tree works WIP affecting HTS performance. Whilst some of the jobs have been delayed by environmental reasons such as birds nesting, tree health monitoring etc. the adverse weather conditions have also affected the increase in jobs flow.

The most recent storms Ciara and Dennis caused severe damage throughout Harlow in February 2020. The number of jobs reported increased from an average of **1.65** per day to **29** in just one day with further reports in the days after the storm. This had a direct impact on HTS performance in quarter 4 (January to March 2020). In addition, the national lockdown due to Covid 19 pandemic significantly restricted HTS operations. Although routine work has now resumed, social distancing guidelines have meant that no tree climbing will take place until reliable Covid testing is available.

These factors mentioned above have meant the workflow pipeline has increased significantly reducing the HTS KPI performance to **24%** against the target and this improvement plan is compiled to mitigate against further delays. This plan also reviewed the process followed to ensure that correct data is recorded reflecting accurate HTS Tree works position. As a result of completing this Improvement Plan HTS identified an adjustment in performance for Q2 which was reported as 100% whereas, further interrogation of data illustrated the performance at 61% as on the chart above. This IAP will also address this issue to provide greater visibility of data going forward.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

HTS has reviewed its working practices and have adapted to use MEWP/cherry picker in place of tree climbing for all but the most inaccessible jobs. This will be carried out as soon as the MEWP training is completed which is due on 16 June 2020. We expect this to increase our potential and flexibility to complete inspections and other tree works thus reducing the pipeline.

Housing

- Work to trees in void properties are prioritised in order to re-let the property within agreed timescales.
- Trees implicated as the cause of structural damage to housing property require urgent removal or crown reduction, to limit associated repair costs.
- HTS will utilise subcontractors to reduce impact on HTS resources so outstanding routine jobs are completed without further delay.

Enquiries

- 163 Routine tree inspections have not been carried out due to lockdown.
- The enquiry system requires updating to close off completed jobs and to update enquiries.
- Team 1 will be used to complete tree inspections according to WIP tracker. This will be completed daily and reviewed with Client team and HTS Arborist Manager on monthly basis for compliance.

Routine work

- 209 outstanding jobs require completion and closure with some jobs delayed due to restricted operations.
- Arborist manager will allocate works to Team 1 and Team 2 to complete all outstanding jobs by 4 September 2020. See resources below.

Resource

- An apprentice arborist has been recruited to increase the staff resource from five to six arborists.
- Upon completion of essential training on 16 June 2020, this will increase capacity to run three teams of two arborists.
- HTS have purchased a MEWP for use by electrical and arborist teams.
- MEWP training is to be provided to 4 arborists this month to increase capability.
- Aerial tree work will be completed using both owned and hired MEWPs until tree climbing operations resume.
- Subcontractor to assist with both structural and routine work once approved by HTS SHEC team due by 19 June 2020.
- Using the present two teams, team 1 will be deployed for work to trees causing structural damage, team 2 will attend emergencies and routine work.
- A third team will be deployed following the successful completion of first aid training by our apprentice.
- Routine work will be programmed estate by estate and ward by ward, to improve efficiency by reducing travelling time between jobs.

- Work to trees causing structural damage will continue to be prioritised as agreed. HDC Insurance Manager has provided a prioritised list of jobs. This will be allocated to Team 1.

Process

- Work will be issued to the arborists daily and weekly depending on priority of work. Completed work will be returned to the Arborist manager on a daily basis to record and close the enquiry. The Arborist manager will update the main spreadsheet on daily basis with all comments for auditing.
- This will greatly increase job visibility and provide an accurate workflow.
- The workflow tracker will be presented to the Operations Director on weekly basis.

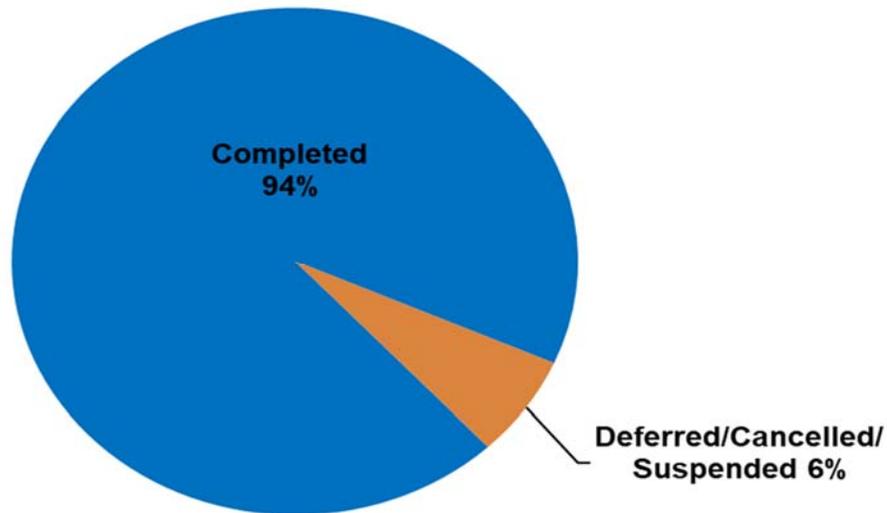
Section Six: Key Corporate and Financial Risks

Risk Name	Risk Owner	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Impact	Controls Already in Place	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score	Residual Risk Indicator	DoT	Foreseeable Likelihood	Foreseeable Impact	Foreseeable Risk Score	Additional actions to mitigate risk	Last Reviewed
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There are no exceptional strategic risks (rated 20 or higher – high likelihood, high impact) recorded on the Council’s Risk Register.

Section Seven: Progress in delivering the Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan sets out the goals the Council needs to complete in order to deliver its corporate priorities and principles. A total of 155 corporate milestones were established for the financial year 2019/20. Below is an update of how well the Council did in delivering its Corporate Plan.



The position of the Corporate Milestones as at 31 March 2020 are broken down as follows:

- 94% (145 out of 155) of the milestones have been successfully completed;
- 6% (10 out of 155) of the milestones were either deferred due to Covid 19 or cancelled/suspended due to changes in priorities; until the new financial year 2020/21.