

Harlow Council

**Joint Finance and Performance Report
for the Period Ending**

31/12/2020

The Council's aim for 2020-21:-

"to improve Harlow for residents, businesses and visitors"

The Council's priorities:

1. Resilience and Recovery



2. More and Better Housing



3. Regeneration and a Thriving Economy



4. Wellbeing and Social Inclusion



5. A Clean and Green Environment



6. Successful Children and Young People



Introduction

The Central Government requires all Councils to collect and report data relating to their function as a Local Authority in areas such as waste, planning, benefits, and housing.

The Council monitors its performance against its Corporate Priorities, Principles and Goals through its Performance Management Framework. The Framework sets out the mechanisms and the range of tool utilised by Officers and Councillors in gathering and reporting the Council's performance data.

The Council's Priorities, Principles, Goals 2021/22 are set out in its [Corporate Plan 2021 - 2022](#), available on the Council's website.

To view the Council performance data and reports, please visit our website at <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/your-council/spending-and-performance/performance>

Covid 19 Recovery Group

The Council established a Cross Party Members Working Group to co-ordinate its response to the Coronavirus pandemic, including the responsibility for the corporate priority specific action plan and performance. The Groups meetings can be found here

<https://moderngov.harlow.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=299&Year=0>

Operational Performance

This report provides a summary of the Council's operational performance of its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Service Milestones, Finance and Risk for the quarterly period ending 31 December 2020 (Quarter 3 2020/21).

Officers have provided the following commentary on the performance of their Service Milestones and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for which they are responsible.

Community Wellbeing, Jane Greer

Financial Performance:

The reduction of income continues due to a number of services being closed or running a reduced service over a period of several months. There has been a corresponding reduction in costs due to facilities being closed and events not taking place this year.

Service Performance:

The ongoing pandemic has resulted in the Community Wellbeing Team having to adapt to ensure that as many services as possible are able to continue, albeit in a different and Covid safe way. For example, The School Readiness Project and Youth Council have been able to provide "virtual" sessions, and Leah Manning centre continue to provide telephone and other support to residents.

Service Milestones:

The majority of the service milestones are on track, with proposals in place for those that require

further action.

Service Risk:

A review of risks has recently been completed and is reported elsewhere in this document.

Environment and Planning, Andrew Bramidge

A shortfall in performance on the delivery of tree works has continued into the third quarter and is likely to be maintained through to the end of the year. The recruitment of a specialist consultancy has in fact identified a larger number of works to be completed – during Q3 HTS completed the highest number of jobs in a quarter for three years (218), but was still unable to meet the KPI. The situation is unlikely to be recovered fully until 2021/22.

Street cleansing and grass cutting services and performance were maintained during Q3.

Although Veolia's performance had started to recover by the end of Q2, this suffered again in November with the second national lockdown and a number of staff having to shield and others having to self-isolate due to Covid. This position will continue into Q4 with the third national lockdown.

The Planning team continue to exceed performance indicators with faster determination of planning applications. A relatively stable staff team during the course of this year has helped considerably as well as the implementation of new performance management processes.

The Local Plan work was completed in Q3 with the Plan being adopted by Full Council in December 2020.

Housing, Andrew Murray

Demand for housing has increased during the first nine months of the year due to increased responsibilities following implications of Covid 19.

An additional 39 rough sleepers were accommodated in Sept 2020, taking vulnerable individuals off the street, and working with them to find suitable settled accommodation. This work continues, providing help and support. Numbers in T/A have increased by 26 to 277 in December 2020.

Increased resources for housing needs are required which means continued prioritisation against limited resources and increased demand for housing. The position remains fluid and it is still difficult to predict future demand and will depend on a number of factors both nationally and locally. The service continues to focus on the prevention of homelessness, as well as types of ongoing support required.

In addition, the implications of Covid 19 and associated restrictions has meant there is a reduction in the anticipated income for Telecare installations which will mean there will be a need to re-align budget estimates for 2021/22.

Governance, Simon Hill

Financial Performance:

During quarter 3, services which would normally generate income continue to be affected by the ongoing pandemic. The Playhouse did manage to present (for a brief period) its pantomime and children's Christmas show before the tier changes prior to the end of the quarter. Both were in profit at the point of closure. Land charges income is also adversely affected by restrictions preventing personal searches.

The service however will show significant underspending at Q3. This is as a result of a number of factors. Elections scheduled for 2020/21 financial year were cancelled. There are a number of staffing vacancies, which are in the process of being filled, but recruitment during a pandemic has proved problematical. Some posts have not attracted applicants of sufficient quality to appoint.

Service Performance:

During quarter 3 the service continued to provide effective support to the ongoing response and recovery work of the Council outside of their normal roles. This has included Governance staff supporting the Community Hub and associated pandemic response and Playhouse staff working on a number of online and community activities, other staff across the service have worked 'behind the scenes' supporting the ongoing effort. HR have completed the phase 1 implementation of a new HR/Payroll system which will lead to policy and procedural changes during the next 12 months. HR also continues to support staff working from home and their managers. Within Legal, the challenge has been increasing workloads with staff vacancies and council house purchase conveyancing. Local Land searches have also significantly increased during a Stamp Duty 'holiday'. Workloads within the Contact Centre remain high as the Council offices have remained closed and the Council shifts transactions away from face to face enquiries to online and telephone. Contact staff are amongst the few staff that have been present in the offices throughout the pandemic.

Service Milestones:

The Service completed 11 out of its 62 milestones for 2020/21 on or before the due dates during the quarter. A further 36 milestones are due during the last quarter.

There are a number of service milestones which, at the end of quarter 3, it is apparent cannot be completed this year. These are detailed elsewhere in this report and are all pandemic delay related. They will be transferred to service planning for 2021/22 where they are still required.

Service Risk:

A review of the Corporate Risk for Information Governance has put forward a revised residual risk rating, covered elsewhere in this report.

Finance and Property, Simon Freeman

At Quarter 3 of the financial year the service continues to perform well even under the significant restrictions that have been experienced as a result of the National Covid crisis. Normal activity has continued to operate as expected and where necessary adjustments to comply with changing national restrictions and guidelines have been implemented. In addition it should be recognised that the service has also had a significant additional workload to accommodate in direct response to the crisis since April 2020.

The key area of performance that is off target is the collection statistics for Council Tax and Business Rates. This is not unexpected due to the current climate and formal recovery action has been placed on hold at the current time due to the closure of the Courts during the initial lockdown, government guidelines associated with recovery and the recognition locally of the impacts the crisis is having on residents. This situation is replicated across many other local authorities and the moves by the government to allow deficits to be carried across three financial years as opposed to just one is a clear indication that this matter is being recognised nationally.

The financial performance of the service is significantly affected by the crisis as reflected in this report and the table of service variations. Two key issues impacting the service budget and reflected within the major variations table are firstly the loss of income from the closure and subsequent reduction in usage of the town's car parks and secondly the extremely difficult market conditions that have been created in terms of letting the new council owned building Nexus at the Science Park. Whilst there will be no improvement in this situation in the current financial year there has been the income compensation scheme and other government funding provided to support the Council which is also shown in the non-service variations in the variations table and totals £1.5m to date. There is also good progress in relation to Nexus with one lease now secured and a second being very close to completion. This will see rental income being achieved during 2021/22 and will result in approximately 50% of the building being let.

HTS (Property & Environment) Ltd, John Phillips

HTS continues to make progress in tackling the backlog built up following the full lockdown period. Quarter 2 KPI performance resulted in the average success rate of 95 per cent against a target of 96 per cent.

HTS operations were initially reduced to run emergencies only in compliance with Government guidelines. These services were then extended to cover urgent jobs as the lockdown was eased. Subsequently, with further relaxation of restriction, HTS began to increase operations to manage the backlog of non-urgent jobs. Consequently, the second quarter saw an improvement with only 1.75 per cent of the KPIs going into Red and 5 per cent into Amber. HTS has implemented Improvement Action Plans (IAP) for KPIs falling into Red to improve performance and has been on target for recovery.

Some notable highlights in performance include:

1. Standard request for housing repairs (attend within 20 days) - **Excellent recovery to 94% performance following 65% performance during Q1 Covid-19 period.**

2. Voids works – **Excellent recovery to 100% performance following 67% performance during Q1 Covid-19 period.**
3. Average time (in hours) to remove fly tips – **Excellent performance at 1.60 hours per job to clear dumped rubbish against the target of 3.5 hours.**
4. Graffiti / Fly posting removal of racist or obscene nature - **Excellent performance maintained at 100%**

In addition, HTS delivered a number of social actions benefiting the wider community with some listed below:

- HTS supported the move of the Harlow Save Credit Union office from the Town Centre library into new premises in the Harvey Centre through September into early October within a 5-week period, all in time for them to be able to launch their Christmas campaign.
- HTS are facilitating Coronavirus testing by allowing a testing station to be sited at their Mead park offices car park with the appropriate welfare facilities for people as a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of its staff and to the wider community, increasing from an initial 2 days to 4 days per week.
- Playgrounds were re-opened following safety inspections by HTS to support Harlow Council and allowing children and families across Harlow to start using the 43 playgrounds again.
- Board memberships and regular attendance on two not-for-profit organisations throughout the period.

HTS performance in Quarter 3 resulted in 93% against the full suite of KPIs, maintaining an average of 95% year to date. There was an increase in operational activity to complete outstanding jobs however compliance with further National Lockdown in November '20 slowed progress. The learnings from the first National Lockdown during Q1 supported revised working practices which lessened the impact on services in this quarter.

HTS Major & Minor KPI Performance Analysis

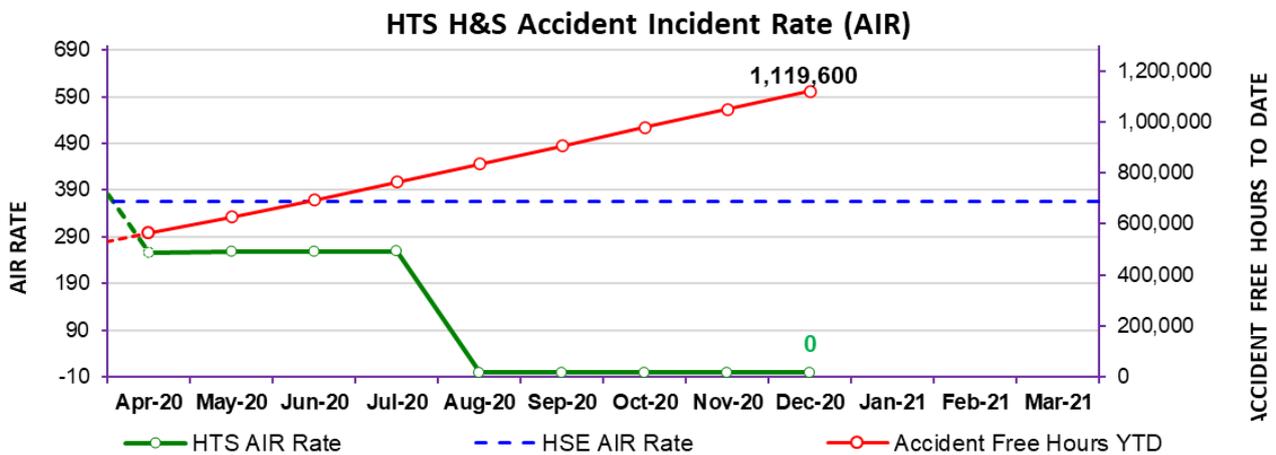


The performance success was most notable in Housing repairs which resulted in improvements across Emergencies, Urgent and standard jobs completions as well as maintaining 100% statutory gas compliance. The shortfall in KPI performance of street scene has already been addressed with an increase in the number of waves carried out post (Keep Britain Tidy) survey. The tree works Improvement plan has also made significant progress in increasing operation capacity and

completing a higher number of jobs compared to Q2. At current pace of activity, HTS expects to hit KPI target by end of Q1 2021.

Some other successes in performance include:

5. Voids works – **Excellent performance at 100% performance**
6. Average time (in hours) to remove fly tips – **Excellent performance at 1.47 hours per job to clear dumped rubbish against the target of 3.5 hours.**
7. Graffiti / Fly posting removal of racist or obscene nature - **Excellent performance maintained against target**
8. An exceptional **173 Plaudits** received in this quarter
9. Excellent HTS Health & Safety rating maintained at **“0” AIR** with over a **Million hours** of accident free operations. See chart below for a summary:



Section One: Key Considerations

The key issues relating to the Council's finances, performance, risks and corporate projects (excluding the HRA):

FINANCE

The forecast outturn position for 2020/21 is that the controllable General Fund revenue budget will overspend by £856,000 on its gross controllable costs. This represents an overspend of 1.49% of the Council's approved gross budget for the General Fund. Taking into consideration the budgets which are not controllable by services, there is an overall forecast underspend of £79,000 or -0.14%.

Key risks in relation to financial management are currently:

- The risks and volatility associated with the current Covid crisis and its impact on the council's budgets and the local economy over the next one to three years.
- The future impacts of council tax and business rates collection performance on 2021/22 and future years.
- The uncertainty regarding the future financial settlements, the impact Government policy relating to the recovery from the crisis and the state of national finances will have on public sector funding.

RISK

At end of Quarter 3 2020/21, there are no exceptional strategic risks (rated 20 or higher – high likelihood, high impact) recorded on the Council's Risk Register.

PERFORMANCE

The following indicators had poor performance in Quarter 3 2020/21:

- BV008 Invoices paid within 30 days (%)
- CS25Q Percentage of Customer Complaints responded to within target time
- HTS3.11d Tree Works carried out within 80 Working Days
- BV009 Council Tax collected (%)
- BV010 NNDR collected (%)

CORPORATE PLAN

As a result of a decision by Housing Services to report 23 of its Milestones within its Q3 HRA report, the Corporate Milestones have reduced from 176 to 153.

The position of the Corporate Milestones as at 31 December 2020 is broken down as follows:

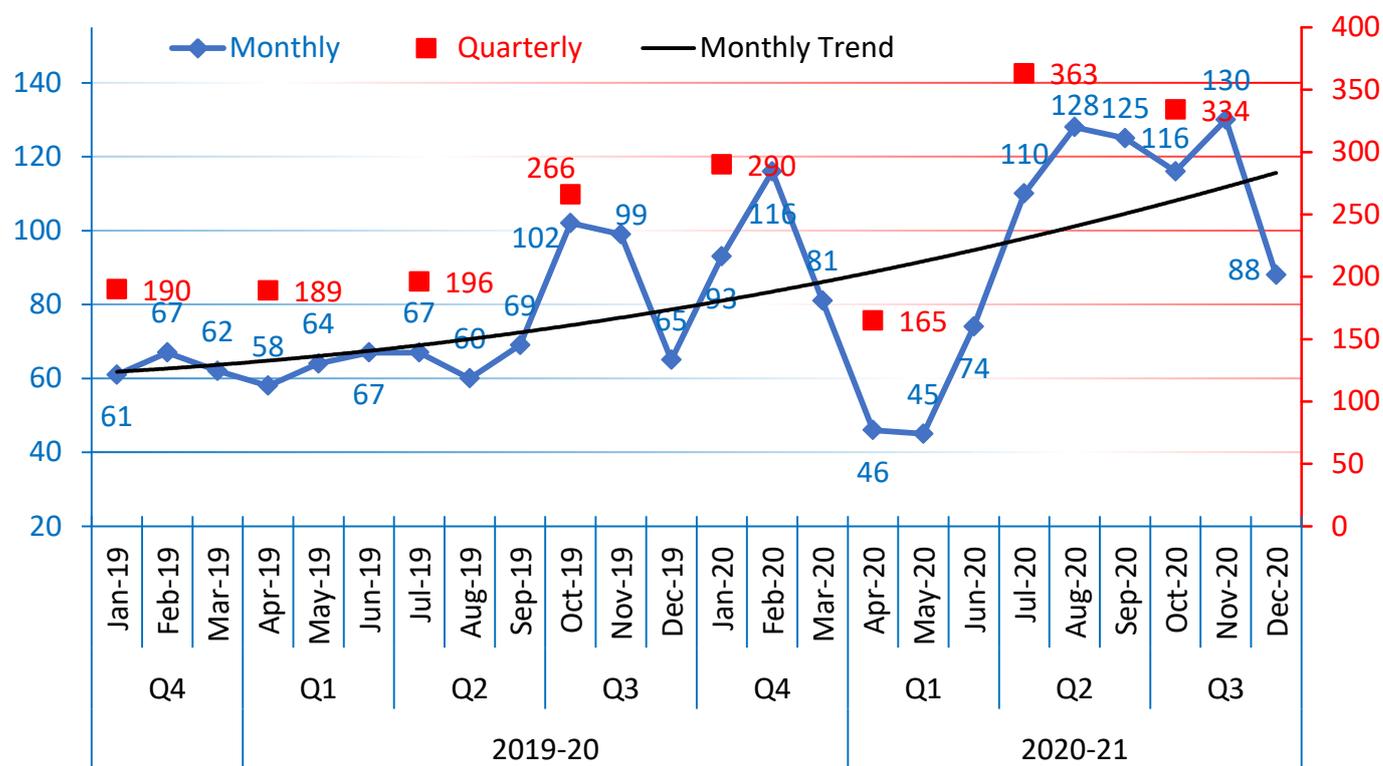
- 15.7% (24 out of 153) were successfully completed.
- 64.1% (98 out of 153) have started and are on track.
- 2.0% (3 out of 153) have not started as the due dates are in the future.
- 2.0% (3 out of 153) were significantly off track.
- 4.6% (7 out of 153) were slightly delayed due to Covid 19.
- 11.8% (18 out of 153) were cancelled due to Covid 19 or were suspended and moved to the new financial year 2021/22.

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

The Council provides and commissions a large number of services, to a population of around 87,100 residents (2019 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 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 (January 2019 to December 2020) by the monthly and quarterly figures, monthly is in blue and quarterly is in red.



When Quarter Three of 2020/21 is compared to the same quarter in 2019/20, there is a 25.6% increase in the number of complaints received. In the last twelve months (January 2020 to December 2020) there was an average of 96 complaints per month, whereas in the previous 12 months (January 2019 to December 2019), the monthly average was 70. The increase in this period, equates to 37.14%.

Due to the continued increase of complaints in Quarter Three, further work was undertaken to ascertain the reason (s) for the increase. It was found that:

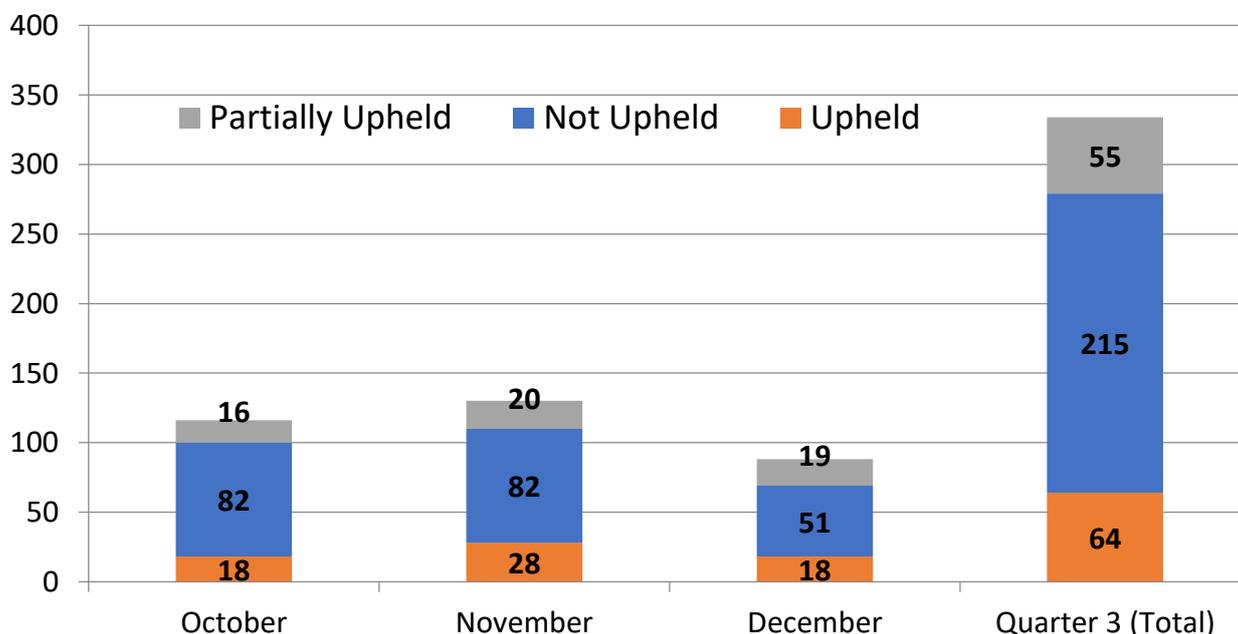
- **HTS (Property & Environment) Ltd** – A number of key themes were identified in the analysis of HTS complaints including customer contact, communication, and access issues. These themes continue to be monitored as part of the response to the Covid-19 implications and organisational priority requirements.
- **Housing** - Housing complaint totals for Quarter Three continued to mirror corporate increases when compared to the corresponding Quarter 2019/20. The largest increase was at Stage

One; however the percentage upheld continued to show a small reduction during the Quarter.

There has been little change in the key themes although difficulties in accessing accommodation continues to be mentioned in a number of the complaints received. Communication and responsiveness has again been highlighted and Officers have endeavoured to reduce these concerns by improving contact with complainants particularly whilst investigating and discussing issues raised directly with them at an early stage.

- Environment and Planning – Whilst the measures proposed by Veolia during Quarter Two to support smooth running of the operation were implemented, unfortunately an increase in the prevalence of COVID-19 with a further national “lock-down” has led to increased direct pressures on the availability of staff and the increased regulatory requirements have together impacted the Team’s capacity. This is reflected in the ongoing elevation of the number of complaints in this area. The Council continues to work closely with Veolia to ensure that practicable mitigations are put in place and that best use is made of the available resources.
- HTS (P&E) Ltd - Environment - The increase in complaints continues to relate mainly to Tree works. The appointment of an external contractor to clear the backlog of works is ongoing and work is being undertaken where able to do so within current lockdown restrictions

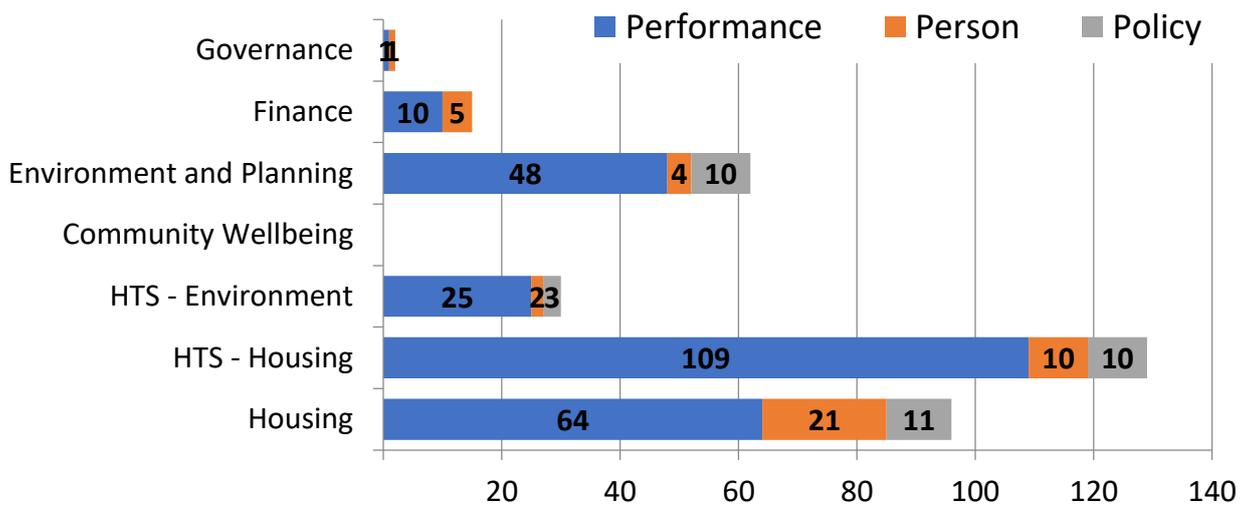
In Quarter Three of 2020/21, the Council received a total of 334 complaints. These complaints break down as 64 (19%) upheld, 215 (64%) not upheld and 55 (16%) partially upheld. The chart below shows the breakdown by classification for each month and the quarter total.



The table below shows the breakdown of complaints by the stage, for each month in Quarter Three. There were 80% of complaints resolved by Stage One, 14% of complaints were resolved by Stage Two and 6% of the complaints reached Stage Three.

Month	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
October	97	13	6
November	104	18	8
December	66	15	7
Quarter Three Total	267	46	21

The chart below shows a breakdown of the three complaint types and the number of complaints against the relevant service area. In Quarter Three there were 257 performance; 43 person and 34 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.

Section Three: The Latest Financial Performance

The impacts of the Covid crisis continue to impact the Council's overall financial position. As previously reported additional costs and more importantly the loss of income remain the key issues directly impacting the budget for the financial year.

As the Council moves in to the final quarter of the financial year work continues to assess the financial transactions and track the impacts of the changing national restrictions which will have impacts previously not anticipated as a result of a third and extended lockdown period effectively in place for the whole of the fourth quarter of the financial year.

As previously reported council tax and business rates income remains a concern with collection rates down by 3.1% and 5.9% respectively when compared to the same period in 2019/20. Deficit on the Collection Fund must be met through a charge against future years general fund resources although a new scheme to phase deficits over a three year period is being introduced by the Government to help deal with this and the effect of this scheme will be evaluated during the fourth quarter of the year and as part of the year end closure of accounts. Already the impact is being shown in the projected 2020/21 position for the Essex business rates pool. The major variations included within this report continues to assume that the fall in business rates collection will expose the Council to a reduction in anticipated benefits from the pool in 2020/21 with the impact also being a pressure in the 2021/22 budget setting process reported in January.

The position reported at quarter 3 should be viewed with some caution for the reasons set out above but at the time of preparing this report the forecast outturn for the councils General Fund is for an underspend of £79,000 for the year. This is a significant improvement when compared with the forecast of £345,000 overspend at quarter 2 but is likely to change further in the final quarter of the year.

Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Head of Finance and Property

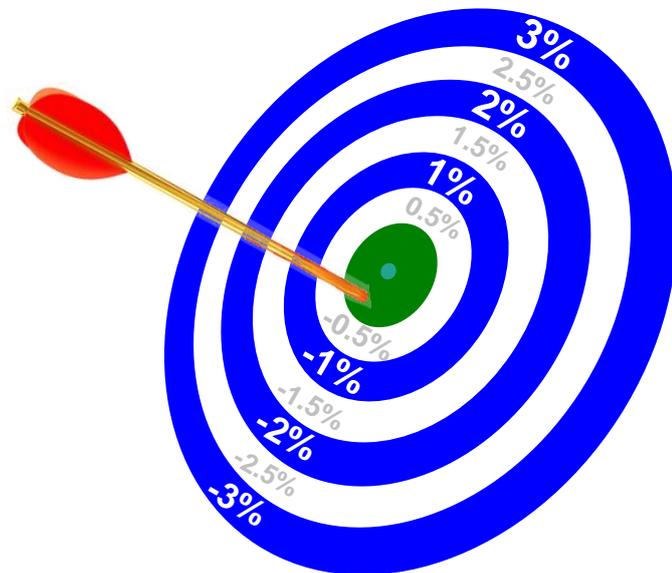
Movements in General Fund Balance in Quarter Three 2020/21

	<i>£millions*</i>
General Fund closing balance as at 30 March 2020	4.513
Variation resulting from previous Cabinet / Council decisions:	
• Carry forwards from 2019/20 to 2020/21 (Sept Cabinet)	(0.163)
Creation of Covid Reserve (sept Cabinet)	(0.150)
Effective General Fund closing balance as at 31 March 2019	4.200
Application of GF to meet 3year pension deficit payment (Jan Cabinet)	(1.605)
Current Variations	
• Service budget variations	(0.856)
• Other variations	0.935
Balance on General Fund at 31 March 2021 (Projected)	2.674

* Note: Figures in brackets () reduce the projected General Fund Balance.

2020/21 Forecast Outturn

The Council projects to underspend by a margin of **-0.14%** on its gross General Fund revenue budget.



Major Variances - Quarter 3 2020/21

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Finance and Property Services				
Accountancy	205		205	Staff vacancies offset by consultancy and advertisement costs.
Nexus	785		785	Assumed that no rental income will be received during 20/21 as a result of delays due to Covid-19 in addition to unbudgeted security costs.
Commercial Rental Income	79		79	Loss of rental income from commercial units as a result of Covid-19
Car Parks	811		811	Loss of income as a result of Covid-19.
Revenues and Benefits		(34)	(34)	Staff vacancies
ICT		(115)	(115)	Staff vacancies
Insurance		(380)	(380)	Reduction in insurance premiums following tendering exercise
Minor Service variances		(2)	(2)	
Total Finance and Property Services			1,349	
Chief Executive				
Chief Executive	3		3	
Housing GF				
Housing Options and Advice	44		44	Additional costs incurred relating to Temporary Accommodation and Grant payments as a result of Covid-19.
Total Housing General Fund			44	
Governance				
The Playhouse	0		0	Grant received from Arts Council will offset losses.
Legal		(203)	(203)	Staff vacancies - partly due to new structure not yet being implemented.
Human Resources / Payroll		(33)	(33)	Consultancy budget carried forward - not yet allocated
Electoral Services		(140)	(140)	Saving as a result of May 2020 election being postponed until 2021.
Other minor variances	14	(126)	(112)	
Total Governance Service			(488)	

Community Wellbeing				
Pets Corner	47		47	Reduction in income due to facility being closed for first 4 months of the year.
Paddling Pools		(60)	(60)	Reduced costs due to pools not being open
Events		(52)	(52)	Savings as a result of events (fireworks display and Harlow Carnival) not proceeding
Leah Manning Centre	108		108	Loss of income from April to December offset by reductions in cost
Community Safety	0		0	
Enterprise Zone	56		56	Additional costs relating to security and professional fees
Other Minor Variations		(4)	(4)	
Total Community Wellbeing			95	
Environment and Planning				
Refuse Collection	42		42	Additional expenditure on service delivery contracts
Recycling		(220)	(220)	Additional income from recycling credits
Taxi Licencing	40		40	Loss of income due to Covid-19.
Planning Services	85		85	Staff vacancies offset by agency costs
Cemetery and Crematorium		(60)	(60)	Additional income
Other minor variations		(34)	(34)	
Total Environment and Planning			(147)	
Service Specific Variations			856	Sub-total
Other				
Covid 19 Support Grant		(1,519)	(1,519)	Grant received from Central Government to offset additional costs incurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
Covid-19 income recovery grant		(776)	(776)	Estimated value of grant to be received to offset income lost between April and August as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
Additional bad debt provision	300		300	Likely increase in bad debts once enforcement action resumes.
Court Costs	310		310	No court action has been taken due to covid therefore no costs have been raised
Contribution to Covid Reserve	500		500	Contribution to support further Covid impacts in 2021/22.
Essex Pooling Impact	250		250	Anticipated Impact of reduced rating income on the Essex pool
Total Other Variations			(935)	Sub-total
Total General Fund Budget Variations			(79)	

Section Four: Performance

The number of Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has reduced from 49 to 46 following the decision by Housing Services to report 3 of its KPIs within its HRA Q3 report.

For Q3 2020/21, the Council performed on or above target for 40 out of 46 (87%) of its revised Covid-19 monthly and quarterly Key Performance Indicators. Housing have advised that there is no data for its remaining KPI until Q4 and five performance indicators performed below target, which resulted in Improvement Action Plans (IAPs).

Percentage of indicators within or better than target

Qtr. ended 31/12/19	Qtr. ended 31/03/20	Qtr. ended 30/06/20	Qtr. ended 30/09/20	Qtr. ended 30/12/20
98%	94%	N/A	84%	87%

Good Performance: Thirty one (67%) of the KPIs performed significantly better than their targets. Listed below are some of the KPIs that achieved better than their targets for Q3 2020/21 and have also improved on their performance in Q3 2019/20.

Key Performance Indicator	31/12/20 Actual	31/12/20 Target	31/12/19 Actual	31/12/19 Target
BV012 Average number of working days/shifts lost due to short term sickness absence – ALL	1.54	6.56	2.18	6.56
CS02b Percentage Lost Calls for Contact Harlow	3.92%	14.00%	11.06%	14.00%
CS50 Average waiting time of calls received by Contact Harlow (seconds)	19	40	42	40
BV082aii Household Waste Recycled (Tonnes)	6454.60	5400.00	5553.85	5400.00
BV082bii Household Waste Composted (Tonnes)	3115.62	2600.00	2584.33	2600.00
HTS2.10c The proportion of relevant public land and highways which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible	0.00%	1.00%	0.22%	1.00%
HTS3.12 Maintenance of existing Playgrounds & Hard Standing Areas	100.00%	99.50%	100.00%	99.50%
HTS4.24 Gas compliance (Contractor Activity only)	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
HTS 2.2 Street Cleansing (Hypodermic or other drug related paraphernalia)	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
HTS2.7 Routine Maintenance and Dual Use Bins	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Section Five: Improvement Action Plans

The performance of the Council's and HTS (Property & Environment) Ltd Key Performance Indicators for the Quarter ending 31 December 2020 were significantly impacted by the Covid 19 Alert 4 restrictions and a 3rd National Lockdown. This has resulted in KPIs being paused and the refocusing of resources to keep essential services running.

All Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which have been subject to an Improvement Action Plan (IAP) during the past 12 months are monitored. All KPIs are reported using the following symbols in line with the corporate performance monitoring framework.

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
		

The table below illustrates how the Key Performance Indicators subject to an IAP have performed over time.

Quarterly Performance Indicator	QTR ended 31/12/2019	QTR ended 31/03/2020	QTR ended 30/06/2020	QTR ended 30/09/2020	QTR ended 31/12/2020
CS50 Average waiting time of calls received by Contact Harlow			N/A		
CS25Q Percentage of Customer Complaints responded to within target time			N/A		
BV008 Invoices paid within 30 days (%)			N/A		
BV009 Council Tax collected (%)			N/A		
BV010 NNDR collected (%)			N/A		
HTS3.11d Tree works carried out within 80 working days					

Number of Red Quarterly Indicators	1	3	1	4	5
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The details on the Improvement Action Plans (IAP)s for the quarter ending 31 December 2020 are set out below.

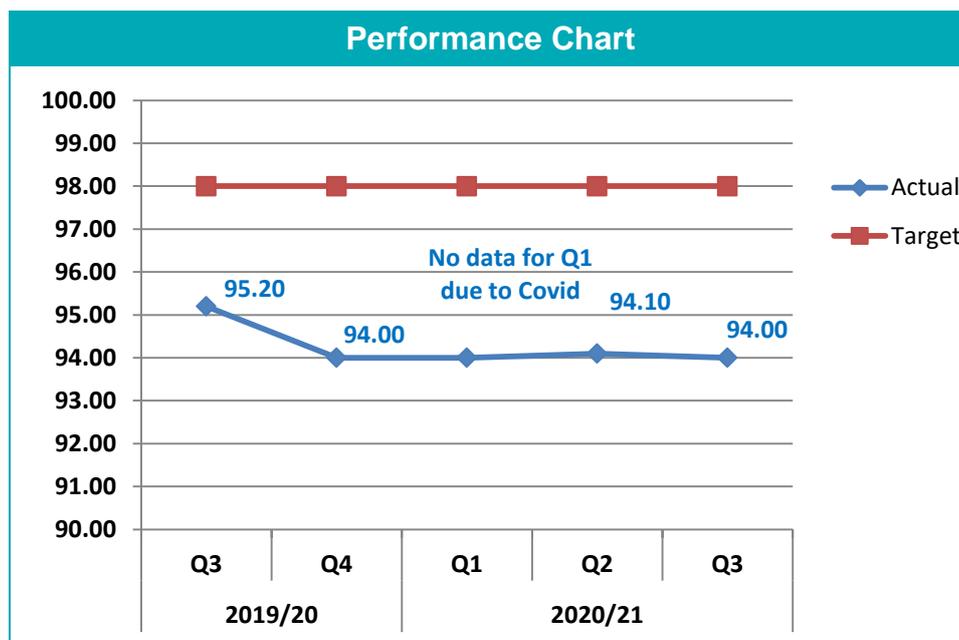
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/12/2020

KPI
BV008 Invoices paid within 30 days (%)

Performance					
Harlow	to 31/12/19	to 31/03/19	to 30/06/20	to 30/09/20	to 31/12/20
Actual	95.20	94.00	N/A	94.10	94.00
Target	98.00	98.00	N/A	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?

The three Covid national lockdowns and Covid Alert 4 in 2020/21, has significantly affected the performance of the KPI. During the last 12 months, Covid 19 has exacerbated the service ability to address issues such as training to strengthen and embed the requirements of the KPI. The lockdowns have resulted in the refocusing of resources to continue and maintain a service to comply with the requirements for homeworking.

On a positive note, Covid 19 has provided the opportunity for new ways of working to be explored and improvements to the KPI in the near future.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

It is not anticipated that the KPI performance will improve in the short to medium term due to the current national lockdown and the '4 step' road map out of the Pandemic recently announced by government.

It is not feasible to continue to report the KPI at this time, so it will be suspended and reviewed again in the new financial year 2021/22 as part of the Finance Service process review that is currently underway. As an interim measure all staff involved in the procurement and invoice payment process will be reminded of their financial responsibilities, and how their behaviour can have a positive impact on the KPI.

The service will continue to collect and publish the data required for the Transparency agenda.

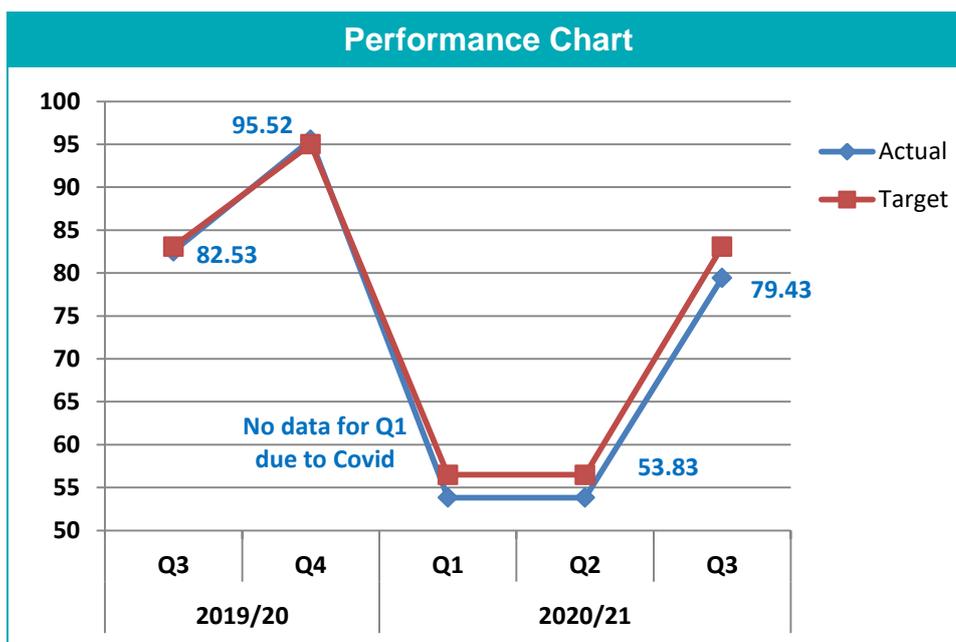
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/12/2020

KPI
BV009 Council Tax Collected (%)

Performance					
Harlow	to 31/12/19	to 31/03/20	to 30/06/20	to 30/09/20	to 31/12/20
Actual	82.53	95.52	N/A	53.83	79.43
Target	83.09	95.00	N/A	56.48	83.09

Description
The percentage of Council Tax collected



Direction of Travel

What is the performance situation?

Council Tax payment is affected by COVID 19.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

The Council's Revenues & Benefits service has taken all available steps to improve payment, but to date has been unable to instigate formal recovery action.

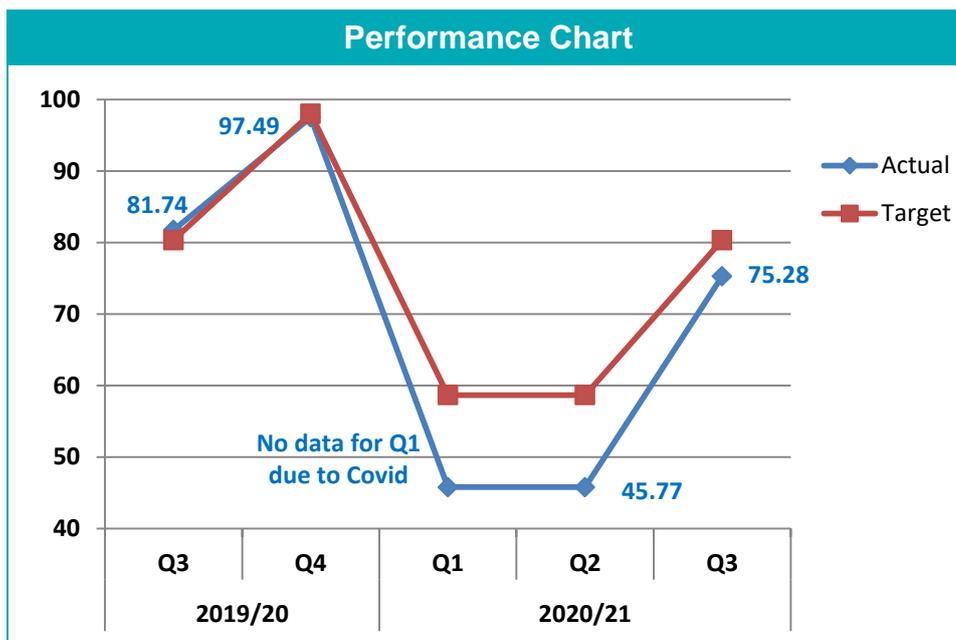
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/12/2020

KPI
BV010 NNDR Collected (%)

Performance					
Harlow	to 31/12/19	to 31/03/20	to 30/06/20	to 30/09/20	to 31/12/20
Actual	81.74	97.49	N/A	45.77	75.28
Target	80.32	98.00	N/A	58.66	80.32

Description
The percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the authority



Direction of Travel

What is the performance situation?

Non Domestic Rate payment is affected by COVID 19.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

The Council's Revenues & Benefits service has taken all available steps to improve payment, but to date has been unable to instigate formal recovery action.

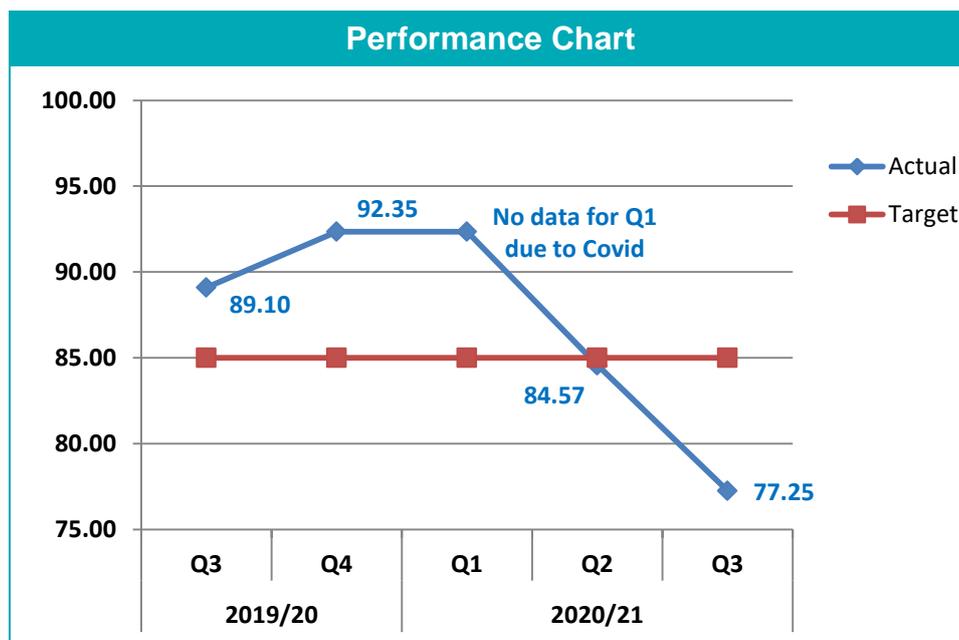
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/12/2020

KPI
CS25Q % of customer complaints responded to within target time

Performance					
Harlow	to 31/12/19	to 31/03/19	to 30/06/20	to 30/09/20	to 31/12/20
Actual	89.10	92.35	N/A	84.57	77.25
Target	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00

Description
The quarterly percentage of total customer complaints (posted, emailed or telephoned) that were responded to within the Council's target time.



Direction of Travel

What is the performance situation?

Disruption to service provision as a result of Covid-19 as well as increased demand has led to an increase in complaints.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

All complaint levels are being closely monitored with weekly reports being sent to Heads of Service outlining any issues so action can be taken as required.

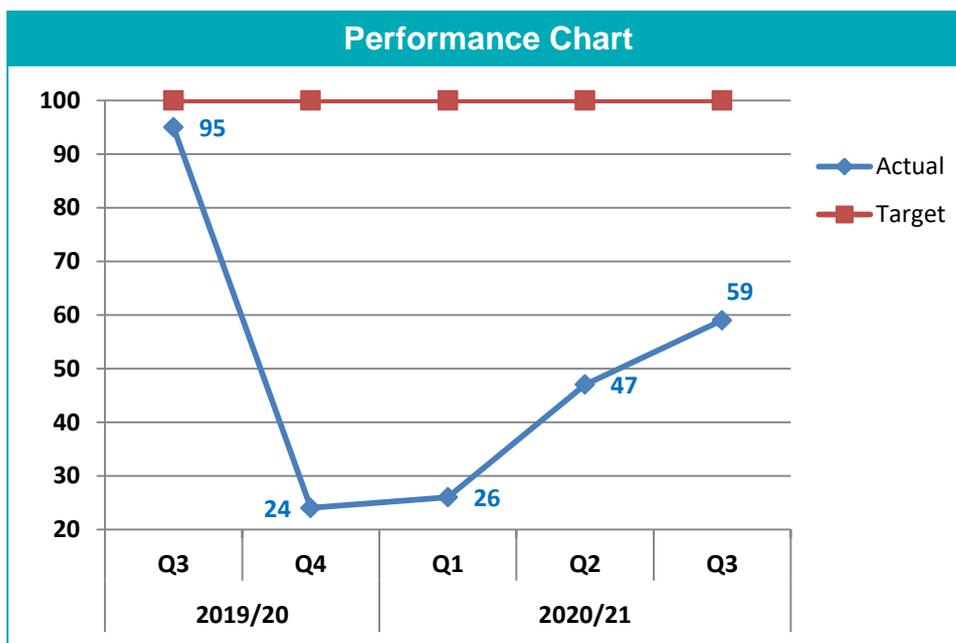
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/12/2020

KPI
HTS3.11d Tree Works carried out within 80 working days (%)

Performance					
Harlow	to 31/12/19	to 31/03/20	to 31/06/20	to 30/09/20	to 31/12/20
Actual	95	24	26	47	59
Target	100	100	100	100	100

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?

HTS performance dropped following the initial Covid-19 National lockdown in March 2020 due to restricted operations regarding non-essential works. This increased the backlog significantly in addition to the existing work in pipeline. When the lockdown was lifted in June 2020 HTS implemented an action plan, so a structured approach is adopted to prevent further decline and bring performance back on track.

The Arborists team initially increased activity as the restrictions were eased and working practices were revised to mitigate against Covid-19, resulting in an increase in performance throughout Quarter 2. This progress was however, delayed further with the imposition of 2nd National Lockdown in November 2020 lasting until December 2020 and then 3rd lockdown in January 2021 which is still in effect. The improvement in inspections by HTS resulted in an increase in the number of trees requiring further works affecting this KPI.

Whilst HTS performance saw some recovery in Quarter 3 from 47% to 59%, the continued inflow of work orders increasing backlog accompanied with restricted operations has hampered this recovery. This is reflected in HTS performance for Q3.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

HTS recognises the gravity of shortfall in performance and is therefore continually reviewing the tree works pipeline and looking at ways to increase productivity. This has resulted in HTS increasing its resources to include an additional sub-contractor to clear the outstanding orders.

Its impact was noticeable in performance improvement during Q3 when HTS completed 218 jobs which is the highest number in a quarter for 3 years.

There has also been an increase in budget allocation by HTS to authorise works for completion. The resultant progress will be evident in the next quarter's performance.

HTS expects an increase in productivity with the expected easing of lockdown during Q4. The current pace of tree works completion against the pipeline is expected to result in performance improvement to achieve target by end of Q1 of 2021.

In addition, HTS Environment team is in regular dialogue with Harlow Council Environment team to assess effectiveness of the current processes and identify areas of improvement to tackle this increase in demand for tree works.

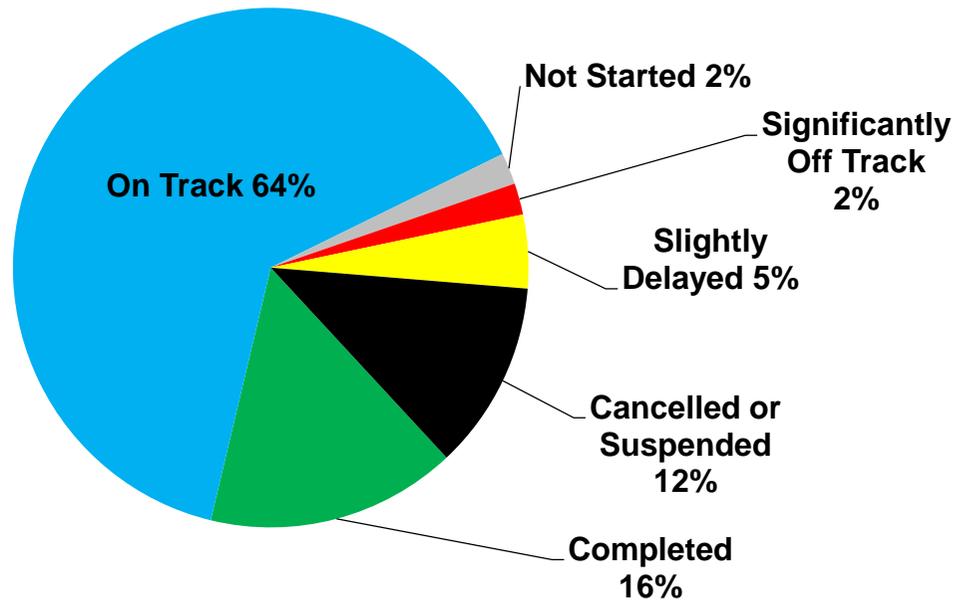
Section Six: Key Corporate and Financial Risks

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. As a result of a decision by Housing Services to report 23 of its Milestones in its Q3 HRA report, the Corporate Milestones have reduced from 176 to 153. Below is an update of how well the Council performed in Q3 (2020/12) in delivering its Corporate Plan.



The position of the Corporate Milestones as at 31 December 2020 is broken down as follows:

- 15.7% (24 out of 153) were successfully completed.
- 64.1% (98 out of 153) have started and are on track.
- 2.0% (3 out of 153) have not started as the due dates are in the future.
- 2.0% (3 out of 153) were significantly off track.
- 4.6% (7 out of 153) were slightly delayed due to Covid 19.
- 11.8% (18 out of 153) were cancelled due to Covid 19 or were suspended and moved to the new financial year 2021/22.

Service Actions	Service Milestones requiring Further Action	Due Date	Status	What is the performance situation?
FA01.3 Ensure the Council's Accounts are closed/audited/reported as per current guidance and regulations	FM01.3.2 Sign off and completion of the 2019/2020 audit process	31/12/20	▲	As a result of ongoing 2018/19 technical issues regarding Group accounts the 2019/20 audit has been delayed until the new year.

Service Actions	Service Milestones requiring Further Action	Due Date	Status	What is the performance situation?
EA05.1 Working with Essex County Council and Residents to improve the Town Street Scene	EM05.1.1 Continue to promote and support the Keep Britain Tidy Spring Clean Campaign 2020/2021	31/03/21		Participation in the annual Keep Britain Tidy Group's Spring Clean campaign appears impracticable in 2020/21 due to essential COVID-19 restrictions.
EA06.2 Continuing to promote and enhance residents' participation in the wider waste minimisation and recycling issues	EM06.2.1 Work with Essex Waste Management Partnership to deliver a communications campaign emphasising the importance of proper use of the full range of waste and recycling services available	31/03/21		The Council has supported agreed communications initiatives to further the aims of the Partnership however the communication work of Partnership has been restricted by the need to divert resources across Essex to combat the COVID-19 emergency.
EA06.1 Working with Veolia to ensure a smooth roll-out of a new contract with enhancement to the domestic waste collection service	EM06.1.1 Review roll out to ensure contract compliance	31/03/21		Progress has been slightly delayed due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 emergency. The Council continues to work with Veolia to ensure that available resources are directed to priority tasks and strengthen aspects of the shared information management system to enhance communication and ensure speedy resolution of any collection issues that may arise.
FA01.8 Develop Risk Management within the Council	FM01.8.1 Undertake a Corporate Risk Maturity Assessment	31/03/21		Resourcing issues have prevented this work developing as far as intended so far in 2020/21.
CA08.1 Continue to roll out the J9 domestic abuse initiative Town wide	CM08.1.1 Deliver two J9 Training Sessions	31/03/21		Training delayed due to COVID-19
	CM08.1.2 Establish two further J9 Venues	31/03/21		New venues dependent on training being delivered.
GA04.3 Continue to encourage staff to participate in the Council's volunteering scheme	GM04.3.1 Continue to raise awareness of the benefits of the Council volunteering scheme	31/03/21		Internal volunteering by staff took place to support the Covid 19 Council Hub during Quarter 3.

Service Actions	Service Milestones requiring Further Action	Due Date	Status	What is the performance situation?
GA08.3 Supporting Apprenticeships	GM08.3.1 Facilitate and Increase the number of apprentices the Council employs	31/03/21		Recruitment for apprenticeship has not been forthcoming from Services. HR resources not in position to review the apprenticeship programme due to the level of work involved in the build for the new HR system. This remains ongoing.
GA09.1 The Procurement Framework is maintained and monitored	GM09.1.2 Deliver no less than two corporate services frameworks to drive efficiencies	31/12/20		Legal Services Panel Framework on the Forward Plan for Cabinet March 2021, with commencement date for framework partners 1 April 2021. Dynamic Purchasing System for Consultancy works identified and joined. Roll out/adoption commencing April 2021.
EA03.1 Adopted the Town Centre Action Plan (TCAPP)	EM03.1.1 Ensure Regulation 19 (Consultation) is published	31/03/21		A supplementary planning document to be created via the production of a Town Centre Masterplan (currently underway), rather than an Area Action Plan. A new milestone (s) will be created for this work in 2021/22.
CA20.2 Ensure that our facilities are accessible and inclusive to all sections of the community.	CM20.2.1 Develop the Day Care Opportunities at the Leah Manning Centre	31/03/21		Development of the service on hold for now due to COVID-19. The Leah Manning Centre is currently closed until further notice.
GA02.4 Undertake a full printing review covering the whole council	GM02.4.1 Review current printing arrangements and establish baseline data	31/08/20		Whilst some baseline data has been collated. The current Covid restrictions on staff using the Civic Centre has meant that undertaking an accurate review of requirements has not been possible. A review will be undertaken when it is practical to do so.
	GM02.4.2 Ascertain corporate requirements	30/09/20		
	GM02.4.3 Full report with options and recommendations to SMB	31/10/20		
	GM02.4.4 Implement review	31/03/21		

Service Actions	Service Milestones requiring Further Action	Due Date	Status	What is the performance situation?
GA02.5 Review face to face service delivery in Civic Centre including cash office facilities	GM02.5.1 Review current arrangements and establish baseline data	31/10/20	■	The current Covid restrictions have resulted in the Civic Centre being closed to the general public. Whilst some baseline data has been collated between lockdowns, it is not possible to do a review at this time. A review will be undertaken when it is practical to do so.
	GM02.5.2 Ascertain corporate requirements	30/11/20		
	GM02.5.3 Full report with options and recommendations to SMB	31/12/20		
	GM02.5.4 Implement review	31/03/21		
GA10.1 Obtain Member Support and Implement Business Plan	GM10.1.1 Produce final version of Business Plan for Presentation	30/09/20	■	Suspended until New Municipal Year.
GA11.1 Review previous Theatre Redevelopment studies to account for Harlow's future and growth	GM11.1.3 Produce and Present Options Appraisal based on findings from above studies	30/09/20	■	Suspended until New Financial Year 2021/22.
GA12.1 Review of Harlow Times	GM12.1.1 Review current arrangements and establish baseline data	31/10/20	■	Covid-19 pressures have meant that reactive communications had to be prioritised. At this time, a review has been put on hold until there is a more stable environment.
	GM12.1.2 Ascertain corporate requirements	30/11/20		
	GM12.1.3 Full report with options and recommendations to SMB	31/12/20		
	GM12.1.4 Implement review	31/03/21		

Service Actions	Service Milestones requiring Further Action	Due Date	Status	What is the performance situation?
GA14.1 Work with Harlow residents and partner organisations to improve the Town Street Scene	GM14.1.1 Maintain the 'Town's' Spring Clean	31/03/21	■	Due to the current Covid restrictions, the Great British Spring Clean 2021 has been scheduled to take place between 28 May - 13 June 2021. However, this is subject to the changing situation of the current Covid restrictions.
CA22.1 Develop and facilitate Harlow's Cultural Leaders Group	CM22.1.2 Recruit a Cultural Partnerships Officer	31/03/21	■	The post is currently being evaluated and it is expected to be filled in the summer 2021. The milestone will be added to milestones for the new financial year (2021/22).