

Appendix A

Harlow Council

**Year End 2020/21- Joint Finance and
Performance Report**

The Council's aim for 2020-21:-

"to improve Harlow for residents, businesses and visitors"

The Council's priorities:

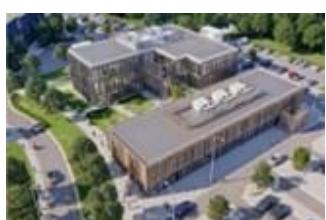
1. Resilience and Recovery



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



Foreword from the Chief Executive



Report Summary from Brian Keane, Chief Executive, Harlow Council

As I introduce this year-end financial and performance report I reflect back on what has happened over the last year.

I always say that our best asset is our people, and this last year has really put that into focus once again.

It has been a tough, and, at times, an emotional year all round for our residents, businesses, staff, and partner organisations. Harlow families have mourned the loss of loved ones, the council has mourned colleagues with the passing of staff and councillors and some of the organisations we work with have sadly lost people too.

As a council we have had to adapt to a new way of working while dealing with the uncertainty and anxiety the situation has created for us all. As a community leader we have put responding to the COVID pandemic and protecting the public as our top priority.

With the pandemic have come new operational and financial challenges, I am extremely proud at how our staff have all risen to the task of keeping our services going and focusing on supporting our residents and businesses.

Despite the difficult times, the resilience of our residents and businesses has shone through and they have been brilliant, and the resilience shown by staff has been equally impressive. We haven't been able to do all the normal things that we take for granted, like delivering services face-to face that make such a difference to people's lives, but we have adapted and found new, and in some cases, better ways of providing services and working with others to support people in a time of need. We can be proud of our achievements and be proud of how we have managed the financial challenges.

I believe that our resilience and the willingness to do the right thing for our town puts us in a good place to deal with the opportunities and challenges ahead as Harlow recovers from the pandemic. Team work and a team spirit, with councillors and staff working together, will see us through. While most of the year has been hard, there has been times when we can look to the future with positivity. We take some of the positivity with us now as we start to get back to a more normal way of life again.

I cannot be any more proud of this council or this town.

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?CId=299&Year=0>

Corporate Achievements for 2020/2021

In February 2020, we published our Corporate Plan to reaffirm our commitment to our Corporate Priorities, Principles and Goals for 2021-2022, whilst recognising and responding to changes to legislation, government priorities and opportunities to implement innovation.

To co-ordinate our response to the Covid 19 Pandemic a Cross Party Members Working Group was established. The Group also managed our new Corporate Priority ‘Resilience and Recovery’. The Council’s six corporate priorities and three principles are set out below.

Council Priorities

- Resilience and Recovery
- More and Better Housing
- Regeneration and A Thriving Economy
- Wellbeing and Social Inclusion
- A Clean and Green Environment
- Successful Children and Young People

Council Principles

- Being the Community Leader
- Sound Resource Management
- Equalities and Fairness

The table below illustrates some of our achievements for each of the above Priorities and Principles in the financial year 2020/21.

Resilience and Recovery

Staff have adapted to a more flexible working approach in order to keep delivering services, with many staff working from home. The council has continued to provide essential services during the pandemic as well as set up new ones to help residents affected by coronavirus.

From March 2020 to March 2021, we:

- Paid out a total of £174,000 to 348 residents who were told to self-isolate between October 2020 and March 2021
- Paid out up to £40m in government grants and reliefs to local businesses
- Paid out £866,729 in additional Council Tax support to over 6,000 households
- Dealt with over 150,000 enquiries (calls, emails, online forms, applications, and social media messages)
- Published over 3,000 social media posts to keep residents informed
- Received 387,154 views, with 85,741 views of coronavirus support pages, on the council’s website
- Bin crews collected 12,196 tonnes of non-recycling, 6,566 tonnes of recycling and 2,439 tonnes of food waste, with services remaining largely uninterrupted.

Being the Community Leader

Cross-party working on Harlow's response and recovery from the pandemic including regular joint statements and messages from political leaders on measures residents need to take and support expressed for the efforts of key workers, volunteers and local organisations and businesses .

To support vulnerable residents impacted by the pandemic the council took on the running of the Harlow Community Hub working in partnership with Rainbow Services: The hub has:

- Answered over 4,500 calls from residents
- Made over 9,300 welfare calls to vulnerable residents to see how they're doing
- Answered 500 calls from residents who needed advice, were lonely or concerned about the welfare of someone else
- Supported 1,700 residents by referring them to other partner agencies for help
- Helped with 773 general food enquiries and 875 requests from people who needed help with collecting essential food shopping
- Collected 664 prescriptions for those unable to collect them with 356 referrals made to Goodsam for prescriptions.

The council has successfully moved all its public council meetings online which are streamed live leading to increased public engagement and improvements in making decision making more open and transparent.

Led the remembrance for 'D' Day, Armed Forces Day, and other events.

More and Better Housing

- Accommodated and supported 64 rough sleepers through the Covid pandemic with options, advice, and where required, facilitated "moving on" to settled housing in line with the "Everyone In" Government initiative.
- Added to the supply of Council Housing with the purchase of 45 homes on the open market to be allocated to the Council's Housing Needs Register for much needed homes.
- Enhanced our resident access routes with the enhancement of Housing's online digital tenancy platform enabling tenants, leaseholders, and housing applicants to make housing applications on- line, view and manage their housing and garage rent accounts, providing 24/7 access along with repairs requests.
- Enhanced our Decent Homes programme by completing Covid secure major external refurbishments to flat blocks including roof and window renewals, external insulation, external decoration, fencing and landscaping.
- Provided additional support/contact throughout the Covid pandemic and supported tenants and leaseholders with their payment schemes, provided support to vulnerable tenants and leaseholders along with signposting other services and support.
- Maintained income levels and reduced the number of upheld complaints.

Regeneration and a Thriving Economy (Economic Growth)

- The council's Local Development Plan, which sets out the framework to guide and shape development in Harlow to 2033, was officially adopted.
- In March Global business Renesas signed the first lease at the Nexus building in Harlow Innovation Park.
- Successful introduction more Article 4 Directions to protect business areas from unwelcome permitted developments.

Regeneration and a Thriving Economy (Regeneration)

- Secured initial funding from the Towns Fund for regeneration of the town centre, which is being used to refurbish East Gate.
- Supported businesses to become COVID-secure and introduced measures in the town centre and neighbourhood shopping centres to support the safe reopening of shops and services.
- Distributed up to £40m in government grants to support local businesses to March 2021.
- Working with partners as part of the Harlow Growth Board, the council coordinated and submitted a multi-million pound bid to government to support projects which will help make Harlow a better place to live, work, visit and learn.
- The council is working with partners to establish the £50m Harlow Investment Fund to drive forward the regeneration of the town centre. The council has allocated £5m to this fund and secured £5m from Essex County Council.

Wellbeing & Social Inclusion

- Up to £10,000 was donated from the fireworks display fund to Harlow Foodbank helping to feed 400 children during school holidays.
- The council actively supported the rolling out of COVID testing sites around the town including the site within the Civic Centre, Mead Park Depot and at the football and rugby clubs.
- The council helped set up the large vaccination centre at Harlow Leisurezone.
- The council joined the Sunflower hidden disability scheme – wearing the sunflower discreetly tells staff that you need additional support, help or a little more time.
- To help promote healthy lifestyles during the pandemic repairs to council-owned cycle tracks were carried out to complement a programme of works by Essex County Council to the cycle tracks they maintain in the town.

- During the pandemic, the Leah Manning Centre staff continued to help support their customers by providing a vital outreach service, spending hours every day preparing and delivering care packages for their customers, as well as making daily welfare calls. The team also liaised with key services including social workers and supported housing teams to be able to signpost their customers when needed.
- The council promoted a range of available health and wellbeing services on social media, Harlow Council website and Harlow Times including Social.Active.Strong. We also shared an ECC campaign on getting fit for Winter and NHS Better Health campaign.
- Advice for those suffering domestic abuse during lockdown.
- In September 2020, a major police operation supported by the council took place with raids on 18 addresses in the town. Nineteen people were arrested on suspicion of being involved in a criminal network in the town which has included supplying cocaine to county lines gangs.

A Clean and Green Environment

- More than £3,500 raised for charity from Christmas tree recycling collections booked by residents.
- Following the introduction of a new garden waste service, premium subscriptions increased from 1122 to 3261 and more than 810 tonnes of garden waste was collected and sent for composting compared with 469 tonnes the previous year.
- Green Flag awards for the 5th time for Town Park, the 12th time for Parndon Wood and the first ever for Harlow Museum and Walled Garden.
- The Town Park became a Grade II listed site and Pets' Corner achieved a TripAdvisor Travellers Choice award, placing it in the top 10% places to visit worldwide.
- Construction of a new access path linking Todd Brook and Nettewell Pond has recently been completed to create a safer and more pleasant route. The work is part of a larger project involving accessibility improvements at the beauty spot.
- Figures published in July 2020 showed that the council had achieved its target to reduce its emissions by 25% by 2021 a year early.
- External funding of £418,297 has been secured to help support the town's climate change pledges, reduce public building running costs and reduce the council's carbon use. The funding from Salix via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme will be used for Solar PV Panels, LED Lighting, and replacement energy efficient hand dryers.
- Around 800 trees were planted by the 'Green Team' Volunteers completing the first stage of hedgerow restoration project at Parndon Lock Meadows. This was the sixth consecutive year of the project which has seen an ancient hedgerow restored by coppicing and

additional planting with 3,500 new trees.

- The council agreed to a year's trial with NES to provide environmental enforcement services in the town. A team of environmental crime officers are targeting those antisocial people who don't dispose of their litter in a responsible way, fail to pick up after their dogs or dump waste.

Successful Children and Young People

- A Facebook group was created to promote school readiness sessions, share information, and create an online community for parents with young children in Harlow. The group currently has 128 members.
- Harlow Youth Councillors have continued to work closely with each other virtually throughout the pandemic. The young people have worked on a number of projects and activities, including; a knife crime awareness campaign, stay safe during pandemic posters for schools, and environmental posters to promote the positive things that young people can do to help protect their local environment.

Sound Resource Management

- Through careful financial management the council has ensured that it has had the right resources in the right places to maintain its services provision throughout the pandemic without the need to set an emergency budget.
- Harlow Playhouse was successful in three bids to Arts Council England totalling £829,956 to help develop our audience and cover budget costs whilst closed to the public.

Equalities and Fairness

- The council continued working on the Equality and Diversity Policy and following close work with the Audit and Standards committee, the Policy and associated documents including the action plan will be taken to the Cabinet meeting in June 2021 for approval.
- The council continued to promote inclusive events in Harlow by using social media and by live streaming events such as Harlow Pride, Black History Month Event and Holocaust Memorial Day 2021.

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 Year Ending 31 March 2021 (Quarter 4 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

The CWB Service milestones for 2020/21 are completed or on track despite difficult circumstances.

During the last year some of the CWB services adapted to provide a service to resident in other ways, and as such we continued to provide support at home to vulnerable elderly residents who would normally attend Leah Manning Centre, provided services for young people and more vulnerable children online, and adapted our museum service and Pets' Corner so that it could be delivered in a different way.

A bid to enable further development at the Enterprise Zone was made to the Get Britain Building fund was submitted and was successful. Harlow Growth Board was established, and a Town Investment Fund was developed and submitted to Government, with the announcement expected early in the 2021/2022 municipal year.

The CWB Team, along with other Council teams provided support to the Community Hub, which supported (and continues to support) residents of Harlow requiring support due to effect and implications of Covid 19 were "paused" due to lockdown and other restrictions.

Environment and Planning, Andrew Bramidge

Performance on tree works in the fourth quarter has maintained its steady improvement in the previous two quarters following the cessation of services in the first Covid lockdown. The performance target was not reached during the year however due to the extent of the backlog to be managed. Given the gradual improvement in the service in recent months, performance targets should be reached by the mid-year point.

Monitoring in Quarter 4 by the Keep Britain Tidy Group showed that performance on measures such as littering "compared favourably to national and regional benchmarks". However, both littering and detritus on roads showed increases in the year despite still remaining below national benchmarks.

Waste collection services were generally maintained during the quarter despite ongoing Covid related absences at the contractor. Food waste collections were suspended for a four week period to enable capacity for refuse and recycling collections to be maintained.

The fourth quarter saw all of the Government's Planning Performance targets being exceeded

for 2020/21 as the Development Management team maintained their strong performance the year.

With the adoption of the Local Plan being completed in Q3, the Forward Planning team began work on the next stage of implementation, bringing forward a Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable and Specialist Housing as well as commencing work on an update to the Harlow Design Guide – both forecast to be adopted in 2021/22.

Housing, Andrew Murray

Demand for housing has continued to increase in 2020/21.

Increased responsibilities as a result of the Covid 19 (Everyone in) Government Initiative has meant a major increase in accommodating rough sleepers, taking vulnerable individuals off the street, and finding suitable settled accommodation.

The numbers in T/A have increased from 251 in Q4 2019/20 to 284 this quarter. It is expected for there to be an increase of over 20% in the numbers in temporary accommodation with increased resources being required to tackle housing need. Prioritisation continues against resources available; officers are reporting that due to acute housing need growing, the numbers in accommodation is likely to increase by 20% in the next two years. It is expected there will be an increase in the use of emergency accommodation (B&B). The service continues to focus on the prevention of homelessness as well as other types of housing related support.

In addition, Covid 19 restrictions has meant a reduction in income in 2020-21 for housing support (Telecare installations) which has meant a need to realign budget estimates for 2021-22.

Governance, Simon Hill

Operational Performance:

As a result of Covid-19, the way that we have dealt with customers has significantly changed. Contact Harlow has continued to deliver services throughout the pandemic from the Civic Centre through the call centre and between lock downs provided a face to face service to those that needed it most.

A drive towards encouraging our customers to use online services has meant that a significant amount of pressure has been taken away from back office services and allowed them to concentrate on delivering key services to those that need it most. Visitors to the website have been at an all-time high with the information on how we are providing services in the pandemic the most popular pages.

The Community Hub, staffed by Governance staff amongst others, has ensured that our most vulnerable residents have had access to information and assistance with food and prescriptions collection.

Through our social media channels and Harlow Times, we have ensured that residents have been kept up to date on the assistance available to them and allowed us to monitor issues as they arrive so that they can be dealt with.

Despite the Playhouse being closed for the majority of the year, it has successfully been awarded grant funding which has meant that it has underspent against budget.

The new HR system has meant smoother processes for dealing with sickness and absence management resulting in a more efficient service.

Financial Outturn:

The Governance Service, at year end, shows a significant underspend which reflects the challenging year and also difficulties with understaffing. A significant element of the underspending also reflects the cancellation of elections scheduled for May 2020.

Finance and Property, Simon Freeman

The service has performed 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 towns car parks and
- Secondly the extremely difficult market conditions that have been created in terms of letting the new council owned Nexus building at the Science Park.

Whilst it was not possible to rectify these issues through corrective management action during the year the income compensation scheme and other government funding provided to support the Council (shown in the non-service variations in the variations table) totalling £1.5m has been provided to help local authorities deal with these and other direct Covid impacts.

Good progress is being made with the Nexus building with two tenants due to take up occupation during Q1 and Q2 2021/22 and a third tenant in active discussions to lease another large part of the building. If all negotiations are successful the building is expected to be over 80% occupied during the next financial year.

Section One: Key Considerations

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

FINANCE

The outturn position for 2020/21 is that the controllable General Fund revenue budget has overspent by £635,000 on its gross controllable costs. This represents an overspend of 1.11% 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 £129,000 or 0.22%.

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 the end of Quarter 4 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 4 2020/21:

- CS25Q Percentage of Customer Complaints responded to within target time
- HTS3.11d Tree works carried out within 80 working days
- BV010 NNDR collected (%)

CORPORATE PLAN

The position of the Corporate Milestones as at the 31 March 2021 is broken down as follows:

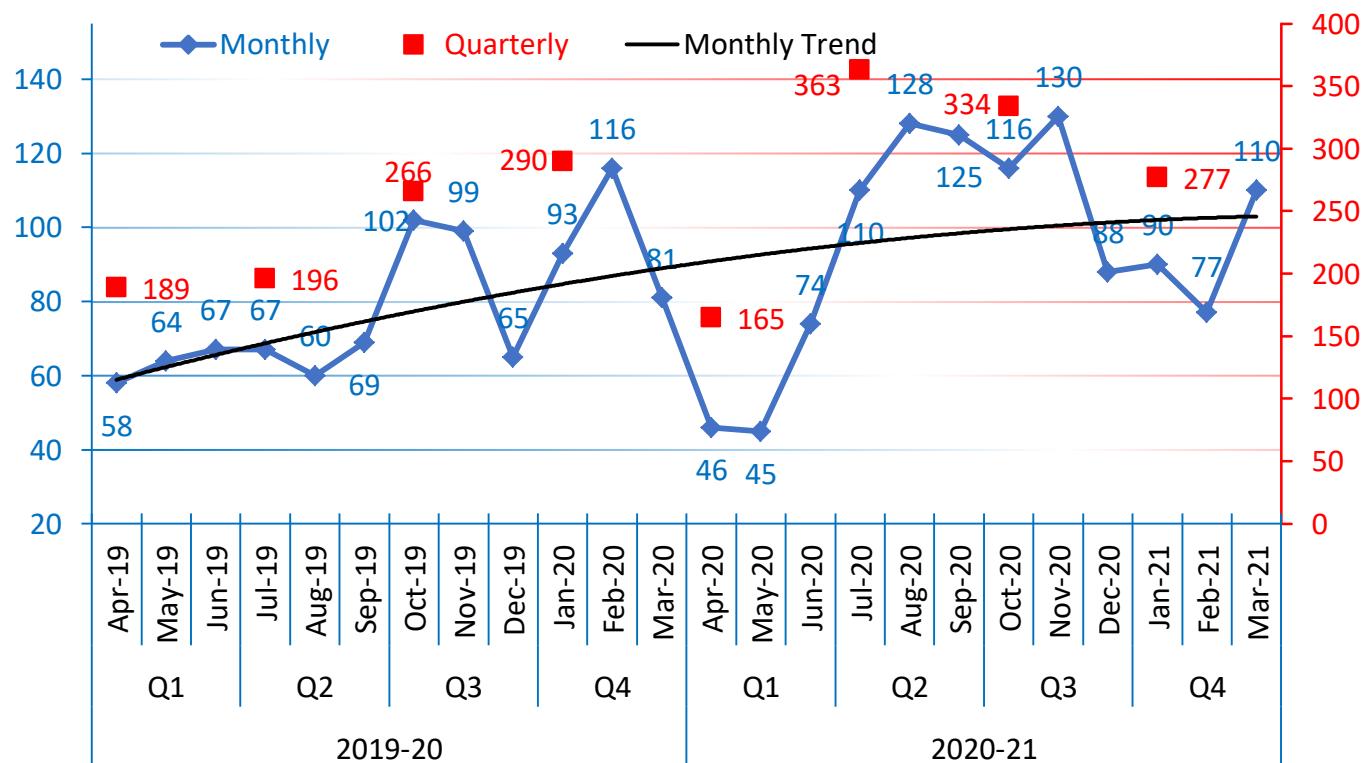
- 72% (111 out of 153) were successfully completed.
- 1% (1 out of 153) was significantly off track.
- 3% (4 out of 153) were slightly delayed due to Covid 19.
- 16% (24 out of 153) were cancelled due to Covid 19 or suspended and moved to the new financial year 2021/22.
- 8% (13 out of 153) will be carried over into 2021/22 as ongoing milestones.

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 (April 2019 to March 2021) by the monthly and quarterly figures, monthly is in blue and quarterly is in red.



When quarter four of 2020/21 is compared to the same quarter in 2019/20, there is a reduction of 4.5% in the number of complaints received. In the last twelve months (April 2020 to March 2021) there was an average of 95 complaints per month, whereas in the previous 12 months (April 2019 to March 2020), the monthly average was 78. The increase in this period, equates to 21.79%

The level of complaints has slightly reduced in quarter four although work was undertaken to ascertain the trends. It was found that:

HTS (Property & Environment) Ltd - There were a number of key themes 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 four were consistent across each month however the cumulative total received has reduced significantly when compared to Q4 2020/21 and is now lower than Q4 2019/20.

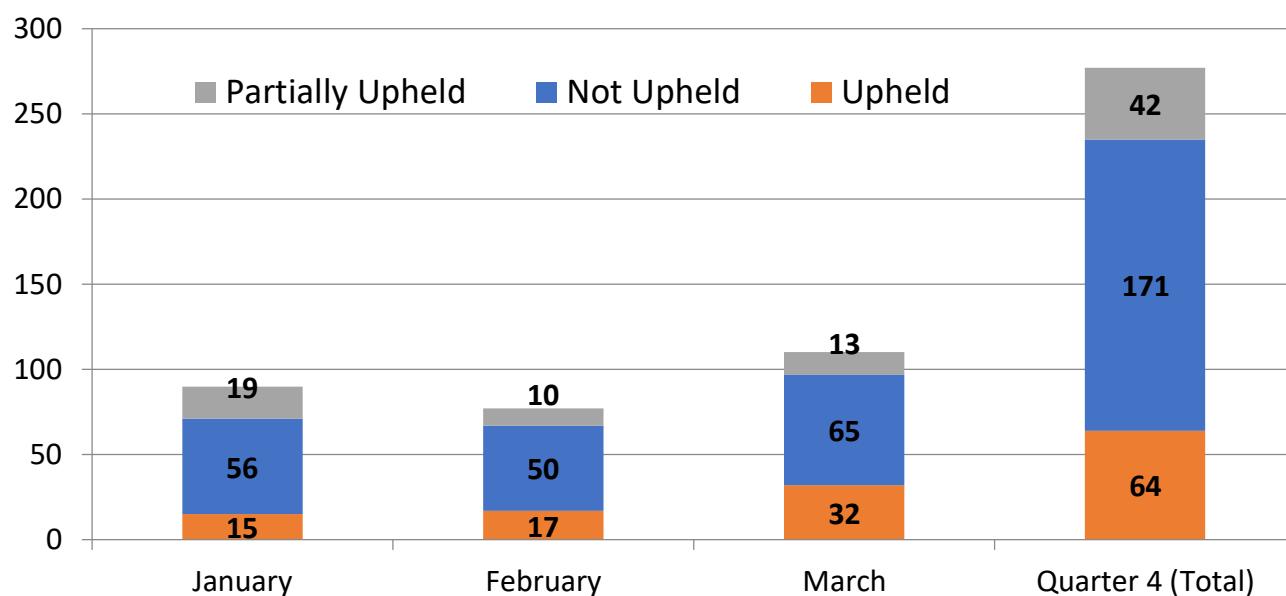
Analysis of the formal responses indicated that over 80% of the complaints received were not upheld.

There has been a continuation in the key themes predominately relating to accessing accommodation and there were also a considerable proportion of dampness/condensation issues reported which is consistent for this time of year. Officers are currently reviewing existing processes for dealing with these cases however it should be noted that the lack of suitable accommodation has resulted in increased occupation levels in flat accommodation causing higher incidences of severe condensation.

Environment and Planning – The complaints raised continue to exclusively be in relation to refuse collections. There has continued to be direct pressures on the availability of staff by Veolia and increased regulatory requirements which together impacted the team's capacity.

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.

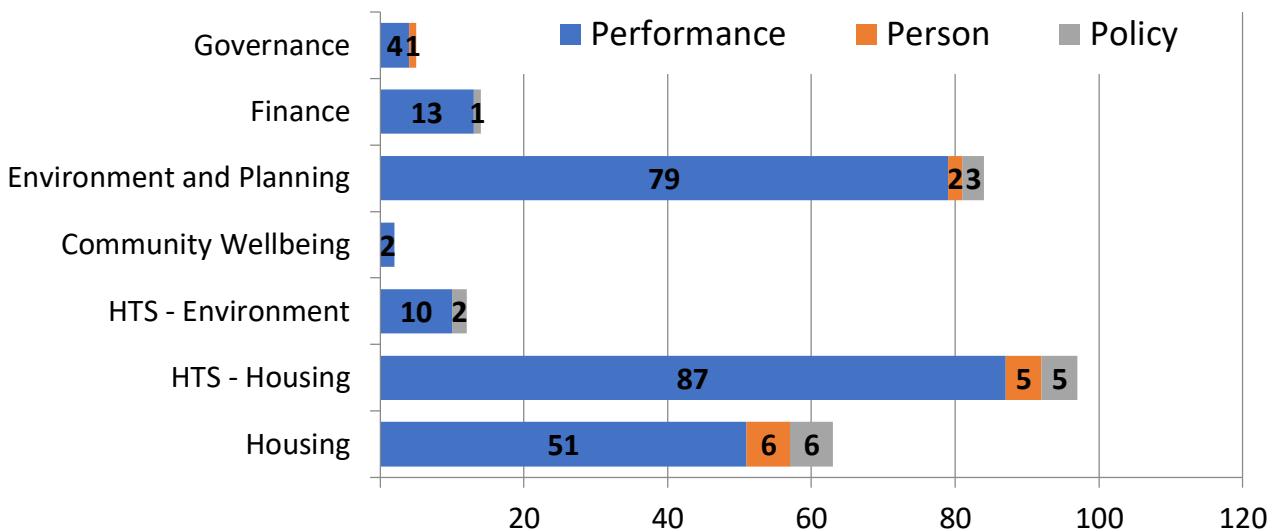
In quarter four of 2020/21, the council received a total of 277 complaints. These complaints break down as 64 (23%) upheld, 171 (62%) not upheld and 42 (15%) partially upheld. The chart below shows the breakdown by classification for each month and the quarter total.



The table below shows the breakdown of complaints by the stage, for each month in Quarter Four. There were 81% of complaints resolved by stage one, 14% of complaints were resolved by stage two and 5% of the complaints reached stage three.

Month	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
January	75	10	5
February	61	14	2
March	88	15	7
Quarter Four Total	224	39	14

The chart below shows a breakdown of the three complaint types and the number of complaints against the relevant service area. In quarter four there were 246 performance; 14 person and 17 policy related complaints.



Additional information is collected on all closed complaint 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 have influenced the Council's overall financial position in 2020/21. As previously reported additional costs and more importantly the loss of income have been the key issues directly impacting the budget for the financial year.

During the year, regular returns have been made to the Government in relation to the financial impacts affecting the Council and in total £1.5m of financial support has been received as reflected in this report. Most of the final quarter of the year was impacted by the further national restrictions placed on the country by the Government.

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. A new scheme Local Tax Income Guarantee Scheme (TIG) has been launched by the Government to help support losses from Council Tax and Business Rates income and this is combined with the extension of the Sales Fees and Charges (SFC) scheme for the first quarter of 2021/22.

The variations included within this report reflects the impact that the fall in business rates collection will have on the Council as a direct result of a reduction in anticipated benefits from the Essex Business Rates Pool in 2020/21. This was also reported as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process reported in January and reflected as a pressure in the 2021/22 financial year as well.

The outturn position being reported presents a positive outcome for the Council and is a reflection of the good financial management being exercised across all service areas. Whilst some significant pressures have manifested themselves during the financial year they have been managed in the wider context of the council's budget and in line with the financial support made available by the Government to help with Covid specific pressures.

The outturn remains aligned with information previously presented to Cabinet throughout the year and this further supports the good financial control being exercised by the Council, its officers and Cabinet.

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

[Movement in General Fund \(Q4 2020_21\); The Major Variances \(Q4 2020_21\); Carry Forward Requests for 2020/21; Transfer to Reserves](#)

Movements in General Fund Balance in Quarter Four 2020/21

	£millions*
General Fund closing balance as at 30 March 2020	4.511
Variation resulting from previous Cabinet / Council decisions:	
• Carry forwards from 2019/20 to 2020/21 (Sept Cabinet)	(0.163)
Application of GF to meet 3year pension deficit payment (Jan Cabinet)	(1.605)
Effective General Fund closing balance as at 31 March 2019	2.743
Current Variations	
• Service budget variations	(0.635)
• Other variations	1.156
Creation of Covid Reserve (Sept Cabinet)	(0.150)
2020/21 Carry Overs	(0.242)
Balance on General Fund at 31 March 2021 (Projected)	2,872

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

2020/21 Forecast Outturn

The Council projects to underspend by a margin of 0.22% on its gross General Fund revenue budget.



Appendix 3A - Major Variances - Quarter Four 2020/21

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Finance and Property Services				
Accountancy	193		193	Staff vacancies offset by consultancy and advertisement costs.
Nexus	842		842	Loss of rental income during 20/21 as a result of delays due to Covid-19 in addition to unbudgeted security costs.
Commercial Rental Income	75		75	Loss of rental income from commercial units as a result of Covid-19
Car Parks	938	(60)	938	Loss of income as a result of Covid-19.
Civic Centre		(105)	(105)	Reduced overtime and building related costs
Garages				Reduced RCCO
Housing Benefits	144	(35)	144	Overpaid rent allowances
Revenues and Benefits		(38)	(38)	Staff vacancies
ICT		(349)	(349)	Staff vacancies and funding of staff secondment
Insurance		(31)	(31)	Reduction in insurance premiums following tendering exercise
Minor Service variances				
Total Finance and Property Services			1,574	
Chief Executive				
Chief Executive	6		6	
Housing GF				
Housing Options and Advice		(62)	(62)	Increased cost of Temporary Accommodation offset by vacancies, grant income and other running expenses
Minor Service variances	2		2	
Total Housing General Fund			(60)	
Governance				
The Playhouse		(62)	(62)	Grant received from Arts Council
Legal		(177)	(177)	Staff vacancies - new structure not yet being implemented.
Relationship & Commissioning		(85)	(85)	Staff vacancies - new structure not yet being implemented.
Human Resources / Payroll		(34)	(34)	Staff vacancies and underspent consultancy budget subject to carry forward request.
Electoral Services		(142)	(142)	Saving resulting from postponement of May 2020 district elections.
Other minor variances		(36)	(36)	
Total Governance Service			(536)	

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Community Wellbeing				
Pets Corner	40	(62)	40	Reduction in income due to facility being closed
Paddling Pools		(53)	(62)	Reduced costs due to pools not being open
Events		(38)	(53)	Savings as a result of events (fireworks display and Harlow Carnival) not proceeding
Leah Manning Centre	97	(83)	97	Loss of income partially offset by reductions in cost
Community Safety		(49)	(38)	Vacancy savings
Enterprise Zone	98		98	Additional costs relating to security and professional fees
Museum			(83)	Reduced costs due to Museum not being open
Other Minor variances			(49)	
Total Community Wellbeing			(50)	
Environment and Planning				
Refuse Collection	31	(239)	31	Additional expenditure on service delivery contracts
Recycling			(239)	Additional income from recycling credits
Taxi Licencing	36		36	Loss of income due to Covid-19.
Planning Services	25		25	Staff vacancies offset by agency costs
Cemetery and Crematorium		(60)	(60)	Additional income
Environmental Health		(67)	(67)	Staff vacancies
Other minor variations		(23)	(23)	
Total Environment and Planning			(297)	
Service Specific Variations			635	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.
Covid-19 Hardship grant net of expenditure		(67)	(67)	Covid 19 hardship grant net of expenditure
Transfer to reserve	67		67	Transfer unspent Covid 19 Hardship Grant to reserves
Covid-19 expenditure	210		210	Directly related Covid-19 expenditure

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Additional bad debt provision	77		77	Increase in bad debts once enforcement action resumes.
HTS Profit Share		(195)	(195)	Increase in HTS profit share
Interest payments		(704)	(704)	Reduced PWLB loan interest payments.
Interest income	59		59	Interest lower than anticipated.
EZ Loan Interest	450		450	
Court Costs	310		310	Covid restrictions have prevented any court action so no costs
P14 HRA recharges	17		17	Effect of period 14 HRA recharges
19/20 carry overs	163		163	19/20 approved carry overs
Use of reserves		(50)	(50)	Net use of reserves
Section 31 grant		(8,168)	(8,168)	Additional section 31 grant income
Transfer to reserve	8,772		8,772	Transfer 100% of section 31 grant income to specific reserve
Council Tax / NNDR		(2,616)	(2,616)	Additional income from EZ Business Rates and technical adjustments
Transfer to EZ Regeneration Reserve			2,616	Transfer of additional income to the EZ Regeneration Reserve
Other	18		18	Other net minor variations
Contribution to Covid Reserve	150		150	Contribution to support further Covid impacts in 2021/22.
2020/21 budget carry overs	242		242	As detailed in Appendix B
Essex Pooling Impact	180		180	Anticipated Impact of reduced rating income on the Essex pool
Total Other Variations			(764)	Sub-total
Total General Fund Budget Variations			(129)	

Appendix 3B - Carry Forward Requests for 2020/21

REVENUE CARRYOVER REQUEST FORM 2020/21							
SERVICE/COST CENTRE	EXPENDITURE CODE	AMOUNT £	Description and reason for underspend	Contractually Committed (Y/N)	Will the carry-over be spent for its original purpose (Y/N)	If different - Justification	Consequence if carry over not approved.
Members 3310	11458	2,000	Councillor Training, due to Covid, we have had less training with Councillors this year	N	Y		I would like to have a greater budget for Training as we need to work on some specific online training this year.
Members 3310	14587	1,100	Subsistence Claims, due to Covid, we have had less training and conferences with Councillors this year	N	Y		This goes hand in hand with both Training and conferences
Members 3310	14471	1,500	Conference Expenses, due to Covid, Councillors have not been attending as many conferences this year	N	Y		I would like to have a greater budget for councillors to attend conferences this year to help them deal with post pandemic issues.
Elections 3318	14350	7,100	Canvasser	N	Y		Due to a change in the electoral canvassing process, we need to purchase new software and equipment to make the process of canvassing more effective.
Elections 3318	14510	1,000	Publicity	N	Y		Due to a change in the electoral canvassing process, we need to carry over the costs to ensure that we are able to publicise the ongoing changes to ensure that the canvassing is more effective.
Elections 3318	14351	1,800	PI Refresh	N	Y		Due to a change in the electoral canvassing process, we need to carry over the costs to ensure that we are able to publicise the ongoing changes to ensure that the canvassing is more effective.
Elections 3318	14401	700	Postage	N	Y		Higher than normal postage costs as the Canvassing process has changed so this money will be vital for helping with the potential costs for the 2021/22 canvass

REVENUE CARRYOVER REQUEST FORM 2020/21

SERVICE/COST CENTRE	EXPENDITURE CODE	AMOUNT £	Description and reason for underspend	Contractually Committed (Y/N)	Will the carry-over be spent for its original purpose (Y/N)	If different - Justification	Consequence if carry over not approved.
Elections 3318	14577	22,000	Development Work. However much is left in this income pot MUST be taken forward as it is government funded monies for the purpose of IER and has been allocated for purchase of hardware and all costs associated with IER	N	Y		Pressure on HDC to fund the statutory requirement to carry out the full IER function
Land Charges 3160	14438 3160	16,300	Work in progress for data cleansing of the Land Charges Register in readiness for the Land Registry transfer.	Y	Y		Data cleansing not completed therefore will not be ready for migration.
Legal Services 3164	14577 3164	6,000	Continued requirements for VF development (Carried over from 19/20)	Y	Y		Ongoing client demands being reviewed - GDPR requirements also reflected in revised brief
Legal Services 3164	14431 3164	35,000	VF Software Upgrade and development works. Required in readiness for Office 365 and to support continued agile working for both legal and procurement processes	Y (in part)	Y		Reports functionality and GDPR cleansing processes all require upgrading to meet statutory requirements and best practice for Lexcel accreditation
Legal Services 3164	11000-11250 3164 virement to 14310 3164	5,000	Agency fees - talent search/grad searches	N	Y		Vacancies may not be filled as quickly or by appropriately skilled personnel
Legal Services 3164	11000-11250 3164 virement to 11460 3164	2,000	Corporate Training for Equalities and GDPR	N	Y		Ongoing demand for training following audit reports and review of services via CGG and IGG will not be met - i-learn to be implemented
Legal Services 2790	11000-11250 2790 virement to 14313 2790	500	GDPR cleansing/data destruction	N	Y		Need for paper data cleanse for historical files at Civic and Mead Park depot may not be completed
Legal Services 2790	11000-11250 2790 virement to 11460 2790	1,500	Corporate training for CSO's and Procurement	N	Y		Ongoing demand for training following audit reports and review of services via CGG and IGG will not be met - use of i-learn to support requirement

REVENUE CARRYOVER REQUEST FORM 2020/21

SERVICE/COST CENTRE	EXPENDITURE CODE	AMOUNT £	Description and reason for underspend	Contractually Committed (Y/N)	Will the carry-over be spent for its original purpose (Y/N)	If different - Justification	Consequence if carry over not approved.
Relationship & Commissioning (Policy & Performance) / 2797	19006	8,100	Further Payment from the DCLG for the Transparency Code new burdens. The Council received this payment on 26 March 2021	Y	Y		The payment to be ring-fenced for the new burdens to the Transparency Code in 2021/22. If not, the Council will have to cover the costs of these changes.
Relationship & Commissioning (Policy & Performance) / 2797	14577	16,100	Payments from DCLG for the Transparency Code new burdens carried over from 2019/20. Due to the Covid 19 and the national lockdown requirements.	Y	Y		The payments to be ring-fenced in order to further implement the new burdens of the Transparency Code. If not, the Council will have to cover the costs of these changes.
Relationship & Commissioning (Policy & Performance) / 2797	19006	8,000	IDEA Grant (2020/21) for Strategic Lead in the LGA Procurement Programme: Strategic Supplier Management Project. Due to the Covid 19 and the national lockdown requirements.	Y	Y		The Grant to be ring-fenced and used in accordance with contract agreement
Human Resources	11000-11250 2820 (2020/21) to 14310 2820 (2021/22)	12,900	Revenue underspend required as a carryover to support addressing skills shortage in HR following turnover and Covid-19 impacts on ability to recruit in the pandemic.	Y	Y		It was not possible to book the training in light of the pandemic with so many variables that were unknown including when it would be possible to run face to face training/ if this would need to change in light of the necessity to socially distance/and if it would be entirely possible (although it was hoped it could be undertaken in 20/21) to risk this expiring with MHR, therefore the request has been made to carry over.

REVENUE CARRYOVER REQUEST FORM 2020/21

SERVICE/COST CENTRE	EXPENDITURE CODE	AMOUNT £	Description and reason for underspend	Contractually Committed (Y/N)	Will the carry-over be spent for its original purpose (Y/N)	If different - Justification	Consequence if carry over not approved.
Human Resources	14310 2820	10,200	Revenue underspend required as a carryover to provide specialist knowledge/advice/training on iTrent HR and Payroll system.	Y	Y		It was not possible to book the training in light of the pandemic with so many variables that were unknown including when it would be possible to run face to face training/ if this would need to change in light of the necessity to socially distance/and if it would be entirely possible (although it was hoped it could be undertaken in 20/21) to risk this expiring with MHR, therefore the request has been made to carry over.
Human Resources Training	11458/1146 2824	20,800	Revenue underspend required as a carryover to provide increased training opportunities for staff post Covid-19 pandemic impact and to provide further corporate training to staff as changing/ evolving systems identify this.	N	Y		It was not possible to book a number of training courses in light of the pandemic with so many variables that were unknown including when it would be possible to run face to face training/ if this would need to change in light of the necessity to socially distance/and if it would be entirely possible (although it was hoped it could be undertaken in 20/21). To meet possible additional demand in 2021/22 the request has been made for this carry over.
12091	2187	2,336	25 Archers. Contractor was unable to get the works completed and invoiced before deadline due to staffing issues.	N	Y		Highways Strategy would not be actioned and the defective area will still be present.
12091	2187	828	7 Rectory Field. Contractor was unable to get the works completed and invoiced before deadline due to staffing issues.	N	Y		Highways Strategy would not be actioned and the defective area will still be present.
12091	2187	1,740	110 Purford Green road and footpath works. Contractor was unable to get the works completed and invoiced before deadline due to staffing issues.	N	Y		Highways Strategy would not be actioned and the defective area will still be present.

REVENUE CARRYOVER REQUEST FORM 2020/21

SERVICE/COST CENTRE	EXPENDITURE CODE	AMOUNT £	Description and reason for underspend	Contractually Committed (Y/N)	Will the carry-over be spent for its original purpose (Y/N)	If different - Justification	Consequence if carry over not approved.
2026	12300	1,706	Bus Station. Contractor was unable to get the works completed and invoiced before deadline due to staffing issues.	N	Y		Highways Strategy would not be actioned and the defective area will still be present.
12306	2187	559	265 Millwards. Contractor was unable to get the works completed and invoiced before deadline due to staffing issues.	N	Y		Highways Strategy would not be actioned and the defective area will still be present.
12306	2187	668	271 Millwards. Contractor was unable to get the works completed and invoiced before deadline due to staffing issues.	N	Y		Highways Strategy would not be actioned and the defective area will still be present.
12091	2187	4,884	Church Langley playing field. Knee rail fencing to be replaced, deadline missed due to staffing issues.	N	Y		Highways Strategy would not be actioned and the defective area will still be present. Contractor to complete works for payment.

REVENUE CARRYOVER REQUEST FORM 2020/21

SERVICE/COST CENTRE	EXPENDITURE CODE	AMOUNT £	Description and reason for underspend	Contractually Committed (Y/N)	Will the carry-over be spent for its original purpose (Y/N)	If different - Justification	Consequence if carry over not approved.
1592 - Harlow Museum Revenue Budget	N/A	50,000	The Covid19 Pandemic has resulted in the closure of the museum for the past 12 months. This has resulted in delays to progression of projects and planned upgrades to the museum, that had been planned for the 2020/21 financial year.	N	Y	N/A	<p>Projects and upgrades to the museum will need to be funded through the 2021/22 budget. This will result in some planned works and projects being reviewed and decisions taken as to the sequencing of any works. There may also be budget overspends in 2021/22 if works from the last financial year are required to be funded from the new year's budget.</p> <p>Planned upgrades/projects funding will assist with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist preparations for submission of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for funding to reconstruct the front yard stepped access, to ensure it enables DDA compliance or to purchase a new ramp system 2. Replacement of the front gates 3. Installation of CCTV to address external security surveillance of gardens to ensure safety and meet with Listed building compliance 4. Development and delivery of a new museum website 5. Purchase of outside structures to enable more space for school visits, carried out in Covid secure way 6. Feasibility and drawing proposals for potential extension to the building, meeting listed building compliance 7. Feasibility and drawing proposals for refurbishment of the 'Scout Hut' at the rear of the site to enable space for a cafe
Total		242,321					

Appendix 3C - 2020/21 General Fund Transfer to Reserves

Earmarked Reserves	2020/21			Comments
	Transfers Out £000's	Transfers In £000's	NET £000's	
GENERAL FUND RESERVES				
Perpetuity Reserves	(6)	4	(2)	Routine property maintenance funding obligations. Interest is added each year to prolong balances.
Covid 19 Reserve	(41)	300	259	Set up to enable the Council to have direct access to financial resources to aid and support the work associated with Covid 19
Debt Financing Reserve		238	238	Set aside for debt financing costs and to support anticipated non-housing capital programme needs.
Discretionary Services Fund	(438)	1,066	628	Drawn down to cover cost of discretionary services, net of NHB grant.
Environment Reserve (previously Energy Fund)	(73)		(73)	Reserve replenishment programme and interest allocation.
Enterprise Zone Disregard Reserve	(1,176)		(1,176)	Retained business rates to offset capital investment costs
Environmental Urgent Works & Improvement Reserve	(36)		(36)	To facilitate urgent works and improvements across the whole town and targeted at initiatives and issues that will make Harlow look and feel like a better place to live, work and play.
The Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Funding Reserve	(66)		(66)	To support the delivery and achievement of the best outcomes from this significant development for the Town.
Insurance claims - GF	(43)	102	59	To meet any future costs resulting from the insolvency of the Council's previous insurer
Insurance Fund - GF	(36)	121	85	A self-insurance reserve to meet excess charges of various insurance policies.
Invest To Save & Improve Reserve		1	1	Utilised for JVCO demobilisation.
Planning Reserve	(36)		(36)	Applied for Local Development Framework
Regeneration Reserve	(304)	23	(281)	Financing of fixed-term brand and marketing budget.
Regeneration & Enterprise Reserve	(84)	2,616	2,532	Indicative NHB balances set aside for town development.
Risk Management Reserve		25	25	To finance future initiatives that mitigate risks and potential insurance claims against the Council
Splash Parks Reserve	(12)		(12)	To support project to replace the Town's remaining five paddling pools with new splash park facilities.
Totals	(2,352)	4,495	2,144	

Section Four: Performance of Key Contracts

HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd

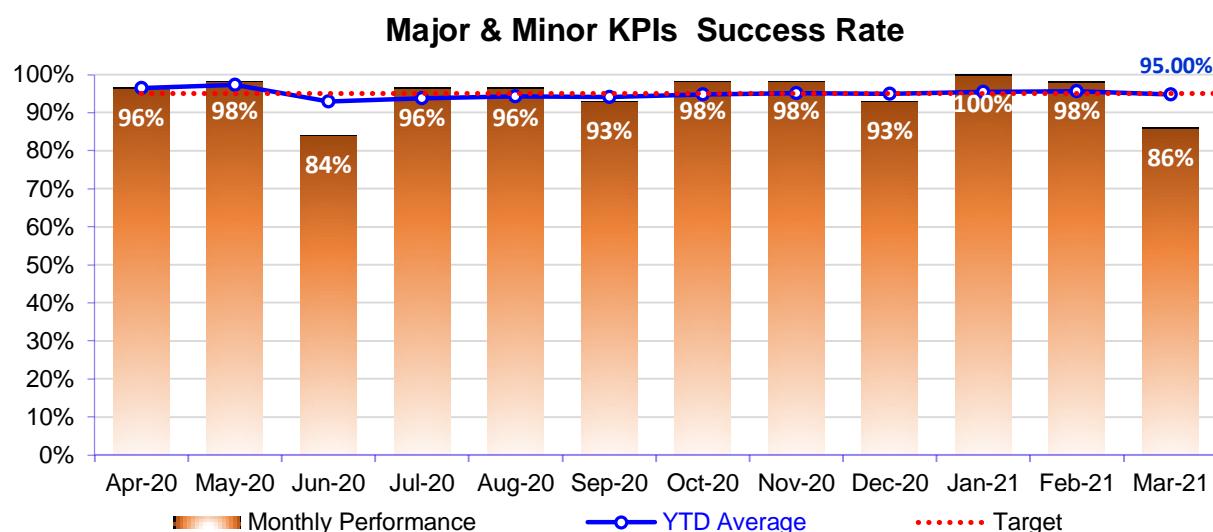


HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd. has been delivering housing repairs, maintenance, facilities management, environmental services, compliance, capital and planned works to residents, leaseholders, and organisations in the community since 2017.

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 fourth year (2020/21) of operation with an average performance of 95% against full suite of Major and Minor KPIs that govern the contract across all work streams.



Covid Impact on services:

HTS initially normalised services with some restrictions and revised working practices following the 1st lockdown in Q1 and made significant progress in working through the backlog. However, following the 2nd and 3rd lockdown in November and December 2020, HTS had to once again reduce services to comply with Government guidelines and to protect its staff and the residents. This had an impact on HTS performance as illustrated in chart above.

Notable highlights in performance include:

Housing:

- 100% compliance for Gas Compliance (annual servicing completed).

- 99% of emergencies attended within 2 hours and completed within 24 hours.
- 99% of appointments attended to within time allocated.
- 100% performance against target for tenants' satisfaction from questionnaires feedback.

Street Scene:

- Achieving an average time of 1 hour and 52 minutes to remove dumped rubbish.
- 99% of offensive and non-offensive graffiti removed within 24 hours.
- 100% of damaged bins repaired or replaced within 2 working days.
- 100% performance against target for Customer Satisfaction with Street Cleaning service

Grounds Maintenance:

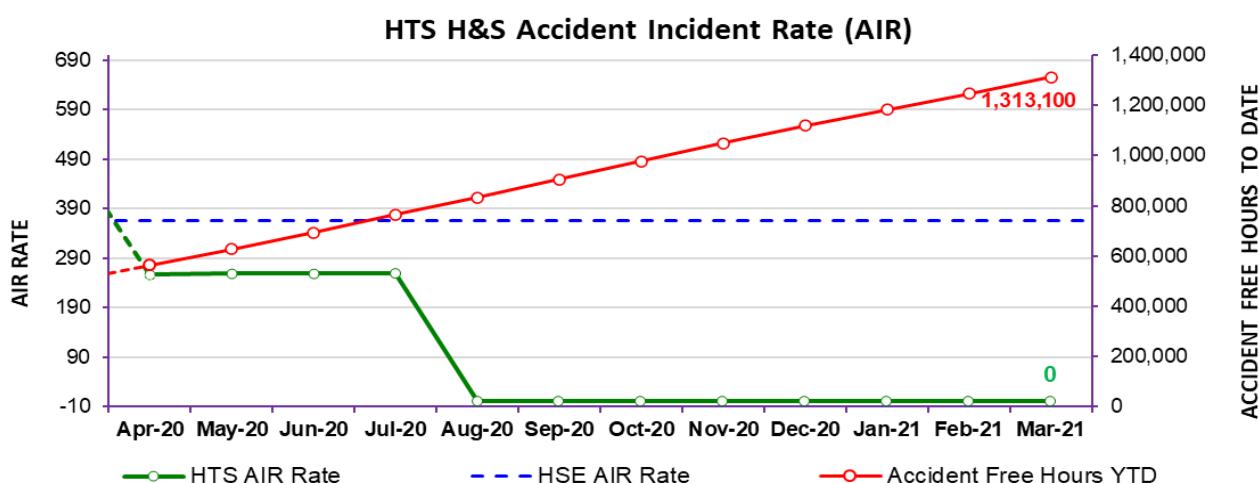
- 100% compliance with Prevention of dangerous trees reported, inspected, and made temporarily safe within 24 hours
- 100% performance against target for Maintenance of existing playgrounds and hard standing areas.
- 100% performance against target for Customer Satisfaction with Grounds Maintenance service.

Non-Housing:

- 100% compliance with carrying out cleaning requests.
- 100% performance against target for Customer Satisfaction with Non-Housing Repairs service.

Safety Health Environment & Compliance (SHEC)

- Continued Zero Accident Incident Rate and over 1.3 million RIDDOR free hours working
- British Safety Council award notification showing HTS attained a Distinction, with a high grading!
- Rapid testing continuing and working alongside operational teams to support return to full working hours and activities, plus preparing for the return of those shielding.



Veolia: Waste and Recycling Services



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

The Veolia Team has worked closely with the Council's Client and Communications Teams to maintain priority services safely through necessary restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic to minimise service disruption due to staff shortages, adverse weather, bank holidays and similar events.

The residual household waste per head of population remains low, and customer numbers for the recently introduced revised green waste collection service have continued to build.

Veolia has proposed revised collection rounds to address an imbalance that has recently emerged with growing numbers of new build properties allocated to rounds early in the week, leading to some rounds not completing on time and a knock-on effect through the rest of the week. Pending approval and implementation of round changes, Veolia has provided additional collection resources to clear backlogs at its own expense.

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 continued to perform well in 2020/21 rising to the challenges imposed by COVID-19 restrictions with minimum avoidable business disruption.

Section Five: Performance

For Q4 2020/21, the Council performed on or above target for 46 out of 49 (94%) of its revised Covid-19 monthly, quarterly, and annual Key Performance Indicators. Three (6%) performance indicators performed below target, which resulted in Improvement Action Plans (IAPs).

Percentage of indicators within or better than target	Qtr. ended 31/03/20	Qtr. ended 30/06/20	Qtr. ended 30/09/20	Qtr. ended 31/12/20	Qtr. ended 31/03/21
	94%	N/A	84%	87%	94%

Good Performance: Thirty three (67%) of the KPIs performed significantly better than their targets. Listed below are some of the KPIs that achieved better than their targets for Q4 2020/21 and have also improved on their performance in Q4 2019/20.

Key Performance Indicator	31/03/21 Actual	31/03/21 Target	31/03/20 Actual	31/03/20 Target
BV082aii Household Waste Recycled (Tonnes)	8626.14	7200.00	7642.46	7200.00
BV082bii Household Waste Composted (Tonnes)	3878.29	3200.00	3410.17	3200.00
CS02b Percentage Lost Calls for Contact Harlow	6.54	14.00	10.11	14.00
NI157a Processing of major applications within 13 weeks or agreed timescale (%)	100.00	60.00	100.00	60.00
NI185 CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations	39.48	25.00	38.55	20.00
HTS2.4 Average time (in hours) to remove fly tips	1.52	3.50	1.35	3.50
HTS2.10c The proportion of relevant public land and highways which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible	0.22	1.00	0.44	1.00
HTS3.1a Ground Maintenance (Grass Cutting)	97.60	93.50	90.90	93.50
HTS3.1b Grounds Maintenance (Shrub Maintenance)	97.60	93.50	90.90	93.50
HTS4.11 Attending site to make safe within 2 hours following a report by a tenant or other stakeholders	99.61	99.50	98.90	99.50
HTS4.24 Gas compliance (Contractor Activity only)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
HTS4.15 Appointments Response Repairs for which appointments made and kept	99.66	99.00	98.50	99.00
HTS2.7 Routine Maintenance and Dual Use Bins	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
HTS2.11 Removal of all reported graffiti or fly posting of a racialist or obscene nature removed within 24 hours	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Section Six: Improvement Actions Plans

The performance of the Council's and HTS (Property & Environment) Ltd Key Performance Indicators for the quarter ending 31 March 2021 were significantly impacted by the Covid 19 Alert 4 restrictions and National Lockdown(s). 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 31/03/2020	QTR ended 30/06/2020	QTR ended 30/09/2020	QTR ended 31/12/2020	QTR ended 31/03/2021
BV008 Invoices paid within 30 days (%)	▲	N/A	▲	▲	N/A
BV009 Council Tax collected (%)	●	N/A	▲	▲	●
BV010 NNDR collected (%)	●	N/A	▲	▲	▲
CS50 Average waiting time of calls received by Contact Harlow	▲	N/A	●	★	●
CS25Q Percentage of Customer Complaints responded to within target time	★	N/A	●	▲	▲
HTS3.11d Tree works carried out within 80 working days	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

Number of Red Quarterly Indicators	3	1	4	5	3
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NB: It was not feasible to continue to report the KPI 'BV008' due to the current national lockdown and the '4 step' road map. The KPI will be reviewed again in the new financial year 2021/22 as part of the Finance Service process review. All staff involved in the procurement and invoice payment process will be reminded of their financial responsibilities. The service will continue to collect and publish the data required for the Transparency agenda.

Details of the Improvement Action Plans (IAPs) for the quarter ending 31 March 2021 are set out below.

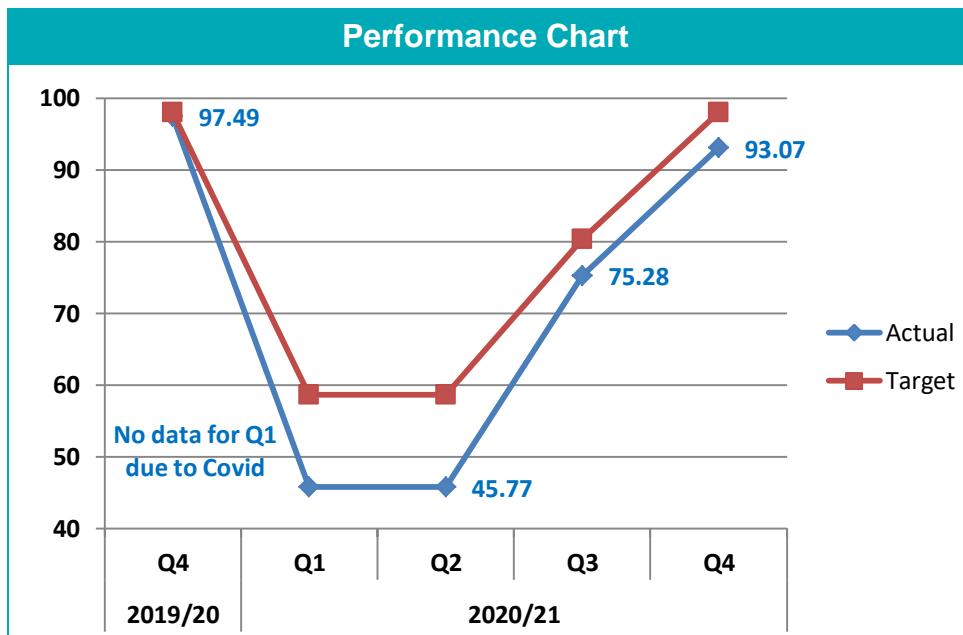
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2021

KPI
BV010 NNDR Collected (%)

Harlow	Performance				
	to 31/03/20	to 30/06/20	to 30/09/20	to 31/12/20	to 31/03/21
Actual	97.49	N/A	45.77	75.28	93.07
Target	98.00	N/A	58.66	80.32	98.00

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?
Formal recovery procedures and enforcement action for unpaid rates was halted during 20-21 to Covid and the unavailability of court dates.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?
Action will now be taken to take formal recovery & enforcement action to collect outstanding debt for 20-21, and action will then commence for the current financial year (21-22) but will also be delayed due to Covid.

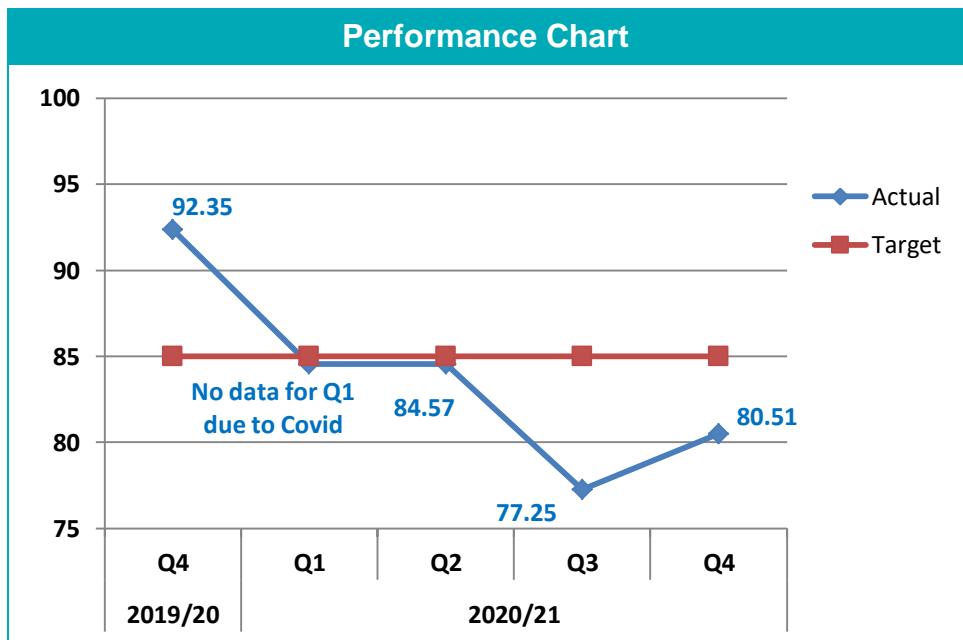
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2021

KPI	
CS25Q % of customer complaints responded to within target time	

Harlow	Performance				
	to 31/03/20	to 30/06/20	to 30/09/20	to 31/12/20	to 31/03/21
Actual	92.35	N/A	84.57	77.25	80.51
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. Has been improving month on month but increase in amount of complaints has led to delays during pandemic.

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. As we recover from the pandemic, it is anticipated that overall response rates will improve.

Improvement Action Plan

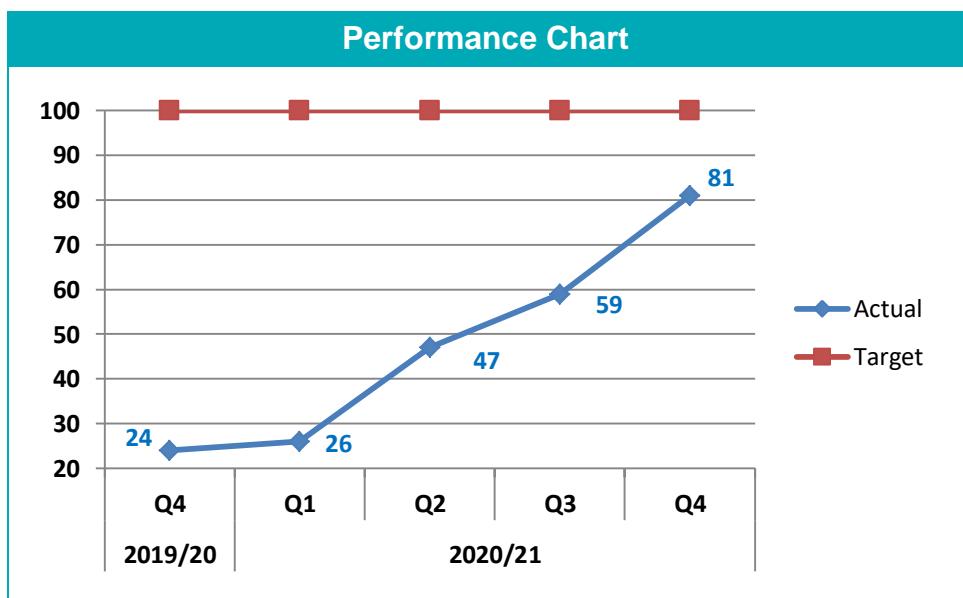
Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2021

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

Harlow	Performance				
	to 31/03/20	to 30/06/20	to 30/09/20	to 31/12/20	to 31/03/21
Actual	24%	26%	47%	59%	81%
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 continues to work through its Tree Improvement Action Plan. The performance has experienced further recovery in Quarter 4 from 59% to 81%. This KPI is reported quarterly however the HTS Improvement Action Plan is reviewed and updated monthly until complete recovery of performance. HTS response to Tree emergencies has remained at 100% performance since the implementation of the Action Plan.

Backlog of Arb Works:

HTS has been completing on average of 16 trees from the backlog every month in order of priority. At present the backlog accounts for 65 trees in addition to the current work in progress as at end of March 2021 (Q4). Please see below a summary:

Planned Activity	Jobs Outstanding	No. completed Enquiries.	% Completed	Remaining Jobs	COMMENTS
Completed in Jan-Mar 2021:	114	49	43%	65	<i>out of priority target</i>
YTD Progress	518	453	87%	65	

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

Covid Impact:

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, reduced with the loss of HTS Arborist Manager as the tree works pipeline increased further.

The additional imposition of 2nd National Lockdown in November 2020 lasting until December 2020 and then 3rd lockdown in January 2021 which is still in effect albeit with some ease of restrictions has slowed performance recovery but not to the same extent as the initial lockdown in March 2020.

Remedial Action taken:

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.

There has also been an increase in budget allocation by HTS to authorise works for completion. The resultant progress is evident in this quarter's performance with further recovery projected in Q1 of 2021.

HTS expects continued increase in productivity as lockdown restrictions are removed during the next quarter. The current pace of tree works completion against the pipeline is expected to result in performance improvement to achieve target by end of Q2 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.

HTS is also in the process of recruiting a qualified Arborist Manager, so any progress made is sustained going forward.

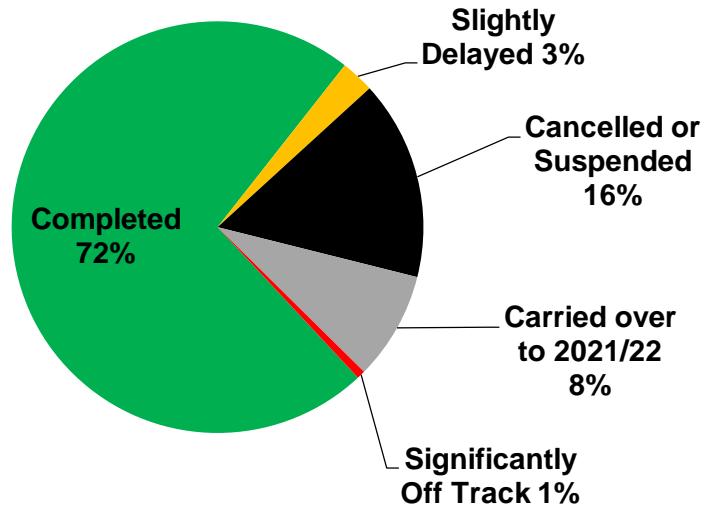
Section Seven: Key Corporate and Financial Risk

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 Eight: 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. Below is an update of how well the Council performed in Q4 (2020/21) in delivering its Corporate Plan.



The position of the Corporate Milestones as at 31 March 2021 is broken down as follows:

- 72% (111 out of 153) were successfully completed.
- 1% (1 out of 153) was significantly off track.
- 3% (4 out of 153) were slightly delayed due to Covid 19.
- 16% (24 out of 153) were cancelled due to Covid 19 or suspended and moved to the new financial year 2021/22.
- 8% (13 out of 153) were carried over to the new financial year 2021/22 as ongoing milestones.

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	▲	Audit due to commence 5 July 2021 and audit report presented to November Audit and Standards Committee, 2018/19 issues and audit resourcing have impacted the process.
FA01.8 Develop Risk Management within the Council	FM01.8.1 Undertake a Corporate Risk Maturity Assessment	31/03/21	■	Resourcing issues have prevented the work being developed in 2020/2021. This will now be taken forward to 2021/2022.

Service Actions	Service Milestones requiring Further Action	Due Date	Status	What is the performance situation?
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.
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		The Council was unable to participate in the annual Keep Britain Tidy Group's Spring Clean campaign due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The Great British Spring Clean has been revised to the late Spring/early Summer 2021, which the Council aims to support. The milestone will be carried over into the new financial year 2021/22.
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.
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 the 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. The milestone will be carried over into the new financial year 2021/22.
CA08.1 Continue to roll out the J9 domestic abuse initiative Town wide	CM08.1.1 Deliver two J9 Training Sessions	31/03/21		Suspended until 21/22 due to Covid 19. Alternative Domestic Abuse training has been delivered via the Safer Harlow Partnership to over 100 Harlow professionals.

Service Actions	Service Milestones requiring Further Action	Due Date	Status	What is the performance situation?
CA08.1 Continue to roll out the J9 domestic abuse initiative Town wide	CM08.1.2 Establish two further J9 Venues	31/03/21	In Progress	Suspended until 21/22 due to Covid 19.
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	In Progress	Development of the service is on hold due to COVID-19. The Centre is currently closed until further notice.
CA22.1 Develop and facilitate Harlow's Cultural Leaders Group	CM22.1.2 Recruit a Cultural Partnerships Officer	31/03/21	In Progress	The post is currently being evaluated. It is expected that the post will be filled in the summer 2021. The milestone will be carried over to the new financial year (2021/22).
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	On Hold	Some baseline data has been collated. However, due to 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		
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		Volunteering was limited in 2020/21 due to the pandemic and the lockdown requirements. However, part of the Council's pandemic response was coordinated centrally with some officers being seconded to this service directly. Some Council employees may have provided services directly in their own time but data was not forthcoming during the pandemic.
GA05.2 Publish information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are employees and people affected by the Council's policies and procedures	GM05.2.1 Review the Legislative requirements for publishing information related to protected characteristics	31/03/21		Data not available to publish - access provided to all staff to ensure they can update their employee profiles in the new iTrent HR/Payroll system however this information is voluntary and employees cannot be required to provide these details.
GA08.3 Supporting Apprenticeships	GM08.3.1 Facilitate an Increase the number of apprentices the Council employs	31/03/21		Apprenticeships that were already in place continued in 2020/21 - however where participant employees found study requirements were too onerous against their work requirements due to Covid, support was provided to allow these employees to place their apprenticeships on hold. This occurred in 3 cases. More generally recruitment generally across the Authority was impacted by COVID in 2020/21, more apprenticeships are planned for 2021/22.

Service Actions	Service Milestones requiring Further Action	Due Date	Status	What is the performance situation?
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 the 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 the 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, the 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		
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	■	The Great British Spring Clean 2021 new date is 28 May - 13 June 2021