

**Harlow Council**  
**2015/16 Q2: Joint Finance and Performance**  
**Report for the period ending**  
**30 September 2015**

**The Council's aim for 2015-16 –  
“to improve Harlow for residents, businesses  
and visitors”**

**The Council's priorities:**

1. More and better housing



2. Regeneration and a thriving economy



3. Wellbeing and social inclusion



4. A clean and green environment



5. Successful children and young people





## How to use this report

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

### Questions which the reader may wish to consider:





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

### Other areas for consideration could include:

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






### Performance Symbols:

Harlow Council uses the below symbols when reporting performance.

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

### Direction of Travel (DOT) Symbols:

The direction of travel is from the same quarter in the previous year.

Going up and getting better e.g. % of rent collected	Going down and getting better e.g. crime levels	Exactly the same as previous year	Going up and getting worse e.g. levels of litter	Going down and getting worse e.g. income generated
				



## Section One: Key considerations for Quarter Two

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

FINANCE	<p>The outturn position for Quarter two 2015/16 is that the controllable General Fund revenue budget is forecast to under-spend by £382,000 which represents <b>-0.55%</b> of the Council's approved gross budget for the General Fund. More detail is provided in section three of this report.</p> <p>Key risks in relation to financial management continue to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to meet the annual income targets set for services.</li> <li>• The ongoing austerity measures set by the Government.</li> <li>• The impacts of localised Council Tax Support and Business Rates.</li> </ul>	<p>Six performance indicators did not meet their performance target, these include:</p> <p><b>Community Wellbeing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CS25 % of customer complaints responded to within target time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BV012 Average number of working days / shifts lost to sickness and absence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Finance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BF005 Average days to process new claims.</li> <li>• BF006 Average days to process change events.</li> </ul> <p><b>Place:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BV082ai Household waste recycled (%).</li> <li>• BV082bi Household waste composted (%).</li> </ul>	PERFORMANCE
RISK	<p><b>Exceptional risks</b> (rated as high likelihood, high impact):</p> <p>One risk has been highlighted as exceptional at Quarter Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ongoing threat of <b>austerity measures</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>The Council is on target to meet ninety per cent of its Corporate Plan milestones with 61 out of 68 key corporate milestones completed for the period July to September 2015.</p>	CORPORATE PLAN

## Section Two: What our customers are telling us (complaints)

### Summary:

The Council provides and commissions a large number of services to a population of over 84,000 residents. In its role as a Housing Provider with over nine thousand properties, each year it undertakes in excess of 600,000 housing transactions, deals with hundreds of thousands of enquiries at Contact Harlow and provides Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support administration for a caseload of over nine thousand benefit claimants.

The Council takes all complaints seriously and aims to respond to and resolve all stage one and stage two complaints within ten working days and stage three complaints within 15 working days.

The trend line on the chart below shows that the overall number of complaints logged has slightly increased since 2012, mainly due to the significant amount of work being done as part of the Housing Modern Homes programme since 2013 and the additional correspondence that it has generated although in the current year, complaint levels have fallen and remain fairly static, this has been as a result of improved processes and information to deal with the requests.



In quarter two (July to September 2015) there were 26 **policy** related complaints, 173 **performance** related complaints and 39 **person** related complaints. The main areas of complaint were 34% Housing Services and 47% Kier Housing. Detailed information is fed back to service managers to ensure that lessons can be learned and improvements made where required.

## Kier Harlow Complaints Comparison 2014/2015

The table below shows the comparison between complaints received each month of 2015-2016 compared to the same period in 2014-2015 and the percentage difference.

<b>Kier Housing</b>	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14
	52	30	36	39	38	<b>50</b>
	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15
	36	26	26	36	40	<b>34</b>
Percentage difference	<b>-30.77%</b>	<b>-13.33%</b>	<b>-27.78%</b>	<b>-7.69%</b>	<b>5.26%</b>	<b>-32.00%</b>

<b>Kier Environment</b>	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14
	5	13	10	6	12	<b>13</b>
	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15
	4	5	7	4	4	<b>2</b>
Percentage difference	<b>-20.00%</b>	<b>-61.54%</b>	<b>-30.00%</b>	<b>-33.33%</b>	<b>-66.67%</b>	<b>-84.62%</b>



## Section Three: Latest Financial Performance

The Council continues to face extreme financial challenges as identified within its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It faces budget reductions of over £3.4million over the MTFS period representing more than a 40% reduction against its overall net General Fund budget.

The contents of this report highlight the extremely tight financial control being placed upon existing budgets and the degree to which services are looking ahead and planning to manage to lower funding levels before the reductions actually take effect in future years.

Services are currently forecasting underspends on their controllable budgets for 2015/16 of £585,000 or 0.85% of controllable budget, offset in part by reduced contributions from HRA of £93,000. The total net forecast underspend is £382,000 or 0.55% of controllable budget. The underspends are largely accounted for by the success of the Sports Trust, additional income and staffing vacancies across a number of service areas.

The Council has been determined to continue to deliver key services to and for the benefit of Harlow residents despite unprecedented Government funding cuts.

Contributions have been made to support some key discretionary services to be delivered into the future. This provides confidence that Council's services continue to strive to manage with ever reducing funding levels wherever possible.

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance

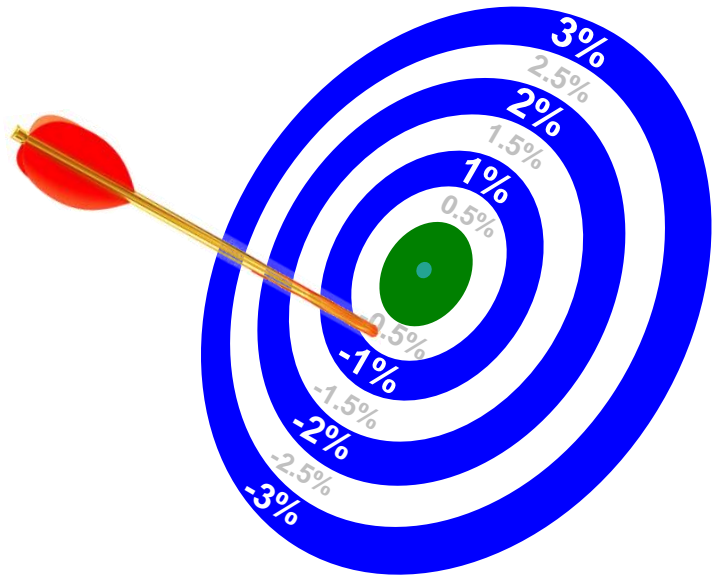
### Movements in General Fund Balance in Quarter Two 2015/16

	<i>£millions</i> *
<b>General Fund opening balance as at 1 Apr 2015</b>	4,376
• Service budget variations (favourable)	585
• Budget carry over from 2014/15 into 2015/16 (approved Cabinet 23/7/15)	(224)
• Transfer to Early retirement Underfunding Reserve (approved Cabinet 23/7/15)	(10)
• Transfer JVCo income to Discretionary Services Reserve (approved Cabinet 23/7/15)	(450)
• Transfer to New Burdens Grant Reserve (approved Cabinet 23/7/15)	(186)
• Transfer to Insurance Reserve (approved Cabinet 23/7/15)	(85)
<b>Sub-total before proposed movements to / from earmarked reserves</b>	<b>4,006</b>
<b>Other variations</b>	
Variation on Corporation Costs (adverse)	(93)
<b>Balance on General Fund at 31 March 2016 (Projected)</b>	<b>3,913</b>
<b>Proposed movements to / from earmarked reserves:</b>	
Housing Options and Advice	(23)
Regeneration	(28)
Place	(59)
<b>Closing General Fund Balance as at 31 March 2016 (Projected)</b>	<b>3,803</b>

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

## 2015/16 Projected Outturn

The Council projects to underspend by a margin of - **0.55%** on its gross controllable General Fund revenue budget.



## Latest Financial Performance (Budget Variations / Exceptions):

### Major Variances – Quarter two 2015/16:

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
<b>Community Wellbeing</b>				
Regeneration Team		(130)	(130)	The year-end variation reflects a vacancy in the regeneration team (£52k), the Council's share of the last year's profit from Harlow Hub (£52k) and external contributions of £28k to be transferred to an earmarked grant reserve at the end of the year. See Transfers to Reserves section (below).
Playhouse	78		78	This reflects increased production costs, and reduced income from the Easter and Summer productions. Also the cost of cover for maternity leave and for sickness absence.
Sport Partnership		(143)	(143)	This reflects the better than expected performance of Harlow sports trust, who have confirmed that they require no further contribution from the Council this year.
Other variations	19	(43)	(24)	Minor variations, including savings on Pets Corner (£5k) and Sam's Place (£5k), sponsored roundabouts income (£10k), backfilling a vacancy by Youth and Citizenship (£13k). These savings are partially offset by minor overspends including the increased cost of statutory advertising (£9k).
Total Community Wellbeing & Regeneration Services			(219)	
<b>Place</b>				
The Stow Shopping centre		(31)	(31)	Reduced business rates and increased rental income.
Latton Bush Centre		(51)	(51)	The Centre has received an increase in rental and service charge income.
Highways		(59)	(59)	The agreement to retain street lighting after midnight came into effect at the end of October, rather than 1 April as originally budgeted for. This is to be contributed to a reserve.(see Transfers to Reserve section (below)

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Northgate House	33		33	Unforeseen building cleaning costs.
Planning Services	50		50	The overspend reflects increased staffing costs, offset in part by increased income.
Other Minor Service Variances	140	(111)	29	Net of all other variances across the service, including underspends of £14k on building control staff, and £15k on domestic refuse collection, £18k car park income, £18k property and facilities. These are offset by overspends on Redstone House £23k not achieving building cleaning savings, £21k Hackney carriage and £22k un-adopted highways. Plus a number of other smaller variations.
Total Place Service			(29)	
<b>Housing (General Fund)</b>				
Housing Options and Advice	38		38	Forecasted demand for temporary accommodation has increased by 25%. Increased costs are being met by efficiencies in temporary accommodation procurement and increased income. Social Housing Mobility grant (£23k), to be carried forward into 2016/17. See Transfer to Reserves section (below).
Supporting People		(49)	(49)	This reflects contractual arrangements in respect of the Supporting People grant received from ECC.
Other Variances	20		20	Includes £13k amenity cleaning due to increased cost of Kier Contract, the remainder being landscaping.
Total Housing (General Fund) Service			9	
<b>Finance</b>				
Benefits Unit	191	(246)	(55)	This includes £191k forecast overspend on salaries, to be funded from savings, this is offset by benefits expenditure identified as unlikely to be incurred and by a favourable variance from contributions from external parties for fraud initiatives.
ICT		(53)	(53)	Underspend from staff vacancies All posts have been filled in Period 7 and 8
Finance Miscellaneous		(40)	(40)	Savings in Audit Fee

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Housing Benefits		(33)	(33)	Savings identified as a result of revised Benefit Calculation.
Council Tax & NNDR Recovery		(27)	(27)	Savings as a result of vacancies in the service.
Other Minor Service Variances		(37)	(37)	These are the net other savings across the service, the main ones being staff savings, across accountancy (£6k), Appeals (£20k) and Council Tax (£19k). These were partially offset by agency staff and the award of honoraria.
Total Finance Service			(245)	
<b>Governance</b>				
Policy and Performance		(72)	(72)	Staff vacancies
Head of Governance		(27)	(27)	Post currently occupied part time.
Legal	41		41	Increase in Court Costs (18k) and additional staff hours (£23k).
Other Minor Service Variances		(49)	(49)	Underspends from Chairman's allowance (£6k), local elections and electoral services (£12k), Freedom of Information vacancy (£16k), HR staff underspend (£6k) and additional land charge income (£9k). Partly offset by small overspends.
Total Governance Service			(107)	
<b>Corporate</b>				
Other Minor Service Variances	6		6	
Total Corporate Services			6	
<b>Service Specific Variations</b>			(585)	Sub-total
<b>Proposed transfers to reserves</b>				
Council Tax Benefit localisation grant		(187)	(187)	Grant income received for service.
Council Tax Benefit localisation grant reserve	187		187	Transfer of grant income received to a reserve ahead of plans to spend.
Housing Options and Advice	23		23	Transfer of planned underspend on Social Housing Mobility grant, to be used in 2016/17.
Regeneration	28		28	Transfer of external contributions received for regeneration, to a reserve to be used in 2016/17.

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Street Lighting Reserve	59		59	Transfer to new Street Lighting Reserve from 2015/16 underspend due to implementation of all night lighting being delayed until October.
<b>Other</b>				
Costs chargeable to/from the HRA	93		93	This reflects the adjustment required to the HRA for the actual spends as shown above.
<b>Total General Fund Budget Variations</b>			<b>(382)</b>	

*Exception level: £25k*

## **Service Based Analysis**

### **Community Wellbeing, Jane Greer:**

Overall, financial control is good with a net underspend partly contributed to vacancy savings and a reduced contributions required for Harlow Sports Trust. However, poor bookings at the Playhouse during Easter and September have had a negative impact on income and has contributed towards an overspend of the Playhouse budget, which continues to be monitored closely.

### **Place, Graeme Bloomer:**

Financial control for the first two quarters has been good and there are no indications from this quarter's results that would point towards areas of concern. The cost rise in Planning reflects an increase of one post to deal with major planning applications and is partially offset by an increase in application fees.

### **Housing, Andrew Murray:**

Resources for Housing Need continue to reduce with the need to prioritise and target resources accordingly to assess and support increased demand. There is an indication of future increases in the demand for temporary accommodation.

Efficiencies continue being realised from the ongoing re-procurement of temporary accommodation. This together with continuing to prioritise homelessness prevention initiatives reduce the cost of housing need and homelessness, thereby reducing the Council's statutory provision and overall costs.

New Supporting People commissioning arrangements has reduced the level of funding which will require the passing on of support charges to recipients, and or a reduction in the services provided.

### **Governance, Brian Keane:**

Good financial control continues to be maintained during the second quarter of the 2015/16 financial year with no major variations to be reported at this stage of the year. Issues which may arise will generally be staffing related, through unfilled vacancies or the occurrence of vacancy savings currently built in to the service budget. Income from Land Charges will be monitored closely as this will be largely determined by the housing market locally. The national increase in court costs is also an extra pressure for the service

### **Finance, Corporate Services and other items, Simon Freeman:**

The current forecast for the Finance Service is that it will underspend by £245,000 in 2015/16. The underspend is largely attributable to the high level of vacancies within the Revenues and Benefits and ICT services during the first 6 months of the financial year. Recruitment has now been successful in the ICT Service and with the restructure in Revenues and Benefits largely complete further recruitment is currently underway.



## Section Four: Performance



Harlow Council performed on target or above target for 40 out of 47 (85 per cent) of performance indicators. Sixty seven per cent of indicators have been maintained or improved compared to Quarter Two 2014/15.

Type	2014/15 Q1	2014/15 Q2	2014/15 Q3	2014/15 Q4	2015/16 Q1	2015/16 Q2
Percentage of indicators within or better than target ●★	84%	83%	86%	90%	84.4%	87%
Percentage of indicators improving or unchanged from the same period last year ✓↑✓↓➔	68%	63%	65%	69%	64%	67%



### Good Performance:



Harlow Council continues to improve performance in a number of areas. 22 out of 47 (47 per cent) performance indicators performed significantly above their target. Listed below is a selection of KPIs which are contributing towards the achievement of the Council's priorities.



(1) BV204 % Planning appeals allowed		2014/15 Q2 Actual	2015/16 Q2 Actual
 	When the Council refuses planning consent the applicant has a right of appeal to The Planning Inspectorate which is an independent authority. Harlow Council has exceeded its target for success at appeal. This demonstrates that The Planning Inspectorate is agreeing with Officers judgement and dismissing the majority of planning appeals.	0	40
		2014/15 Q2 Target	2015/16 Q2 Target
		-	66.6



(2) CS02b % Lost calls for Contact Harlow		2014/15 Q2 Actual	2015/16 Q2 Actual
 	Fluctuations in demand and staffing levels over Q2 have meant that the figure has slightly increased compared to quarter one although remain significantly better than 2014/15.	31.48	6.08
		2014/15 Q2 Target	2015/16 Q2 Target
		15	15



<b>(3) CS50 Average waiting time of calls received by Contact Harlow</b>		<b>2014/15 Q2 Actual</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Actual</b>
 	This links to CS02 and although the waiting time has increased, again is substantially better than comparative quarters in 2014/15. Both this and CS02 are likely to be a similar level in quarter three.	00:02:36	00:00:24
		<b>2014/15 Q2 Target</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Target</b>
		-	00:00:45

<b>(4) JVC 300 Emergency Housing repairs within 2 hours</b>		<b>2014/15 Q2 Actual</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Actual</b>
 	Increased performance. This indicator is continuously monitored at monthly operations meetings.	99.7	99.74
		<b>2014/15 Q2 Target</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Target</b>
		99	99

<b>(5) LHI SO26 Annual Leasehold Service Charge Collection</b>		<b>2014/15 Q2 Actual</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Actual</b>
 	The annual leasehold service charge collection is 8.9% above the target for this quarter and has improved by 1.23% compared to second quarter 2014/15.	56.66	58.18
		<b>2014/15 Q2 Target</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Target</b>
		49	49.25

<b>(6) NI195b Street &amp; Environmental Cleanliness (% land assessed having unacceptable levels of detritus)</b>		<b>2014/15 Q2 Actual</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Actual</b>
 	Detritus accumulation is closely related to leaf fall, which is seasonal. The KPI target is constant throughout the year, so performance above the KPI may be expected in summer weather provided that effective street sweeping is maintained.	12	3.64
		<b>2014/15 Q2 Target</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Target</b>
		2	8

<b>NI157a processing of major applications within 13 weeks.</b>	<b>2014/15 Q2 Actual</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Actual</b>
<p>★ → Harlow Council has achieved 100% on determining Major applications in this and previous four quarters. This is testament to the hard work, diligence and expertise of Officers. Central Government closely monitor Local Planning Authorities (LPA) performance on Major applications. Performance on Major applications is particularly difficult as they often involve complex legal agreements that are negotiated during the course of an application and can delay the determination of an application.</p>	100	100
	<b>2014/15 Q2 Target</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2 Target</b>
	60	60

## Section Five: Improvement Action Plans

Harlow Council keeps track of any indicator which has been subjected to an Improvement Action Plan (IAP) during the past 12 months. The table below illustrates how each indicator subjected to an IAP has performed over time.

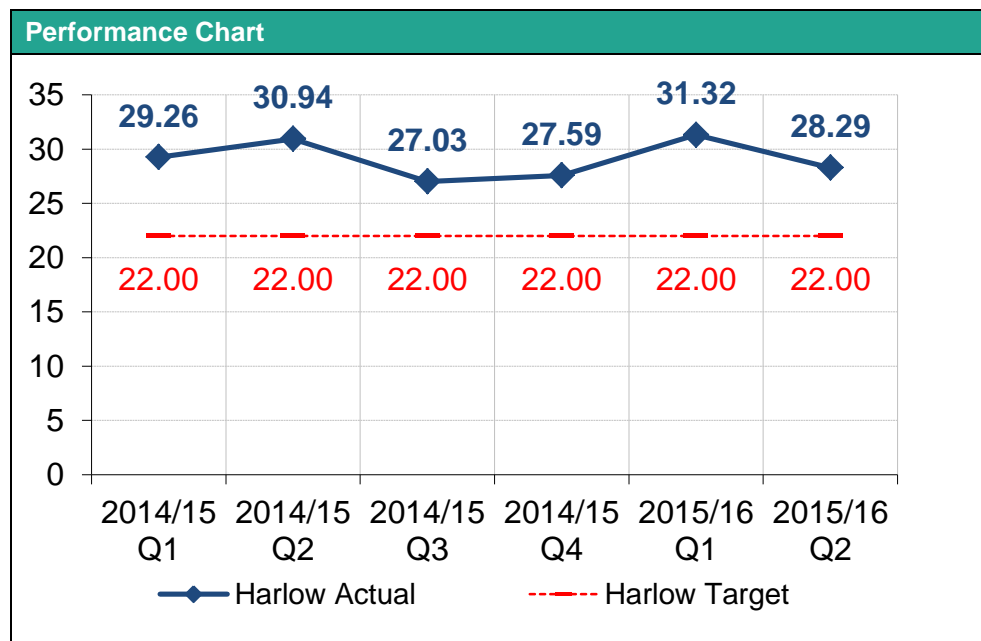
Performance Indicator		QTR 2 14/15	QTR 3 14/15	QTR 4 14/15	QTR 1 15/16	QTR 2 15/16
Street Scene	JVC 104 Customer satisfaction with Street Scene	★	★	●	▲	●
	NI195a Improved street and environmental cleanliness (litter)	▲	●	★	★	★
	NI195b Improved street and environmental cleanliness (detritus)	▲	▲	★	★	★
	NI195c Improved street and environmental cleanliness (graffiti)	●	●	●	▲	★
Grounds Maintenance	JVC 114 Litter bins not over flowing (2.15) (%)	●	▲	●	●	●
	JVC 207d Tree works carried out within 80 working days (four months) (3.14d) (per cent)	●	▲	●	●	●
Housing	BV202 People sleeping rough (numbers)	▲	★	▲	●	●
Waste & Recycling	BV082ai Household waste recycled (%)	●	●	●	▲	▲
	BV082bi Household waste composted (%)	●	●	▲	▲	▲
Contact Harlow	CS02b Per cent Lost calls for Contact Harlow (Quarter Cumulative)	▲	★	★	★	★
	CS25 Per cent of customer complaints responded to within target time	●	●	▲	▲	▲
	BF005 Average days to process new claims	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
	BF006 Average days to process change events	▲	▲	★	●	▲
	BV012 Average number of working days / shifts lost to sickness & absence	★	▲	▲	▲	▲
Number of under-performing indicators		6	6	5	7	6

## Improvement Action Plan

Performance Indicator	Reporting Period	Performance						
<b>BF005 Average days to process new claims</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2</b>	14/15 Q1	14/15 Q2	14/15 Q3	14/15 Q4	15/16 Q1	15/16 Q2	
		<b>Harlow Actual</b>	29.26	30.94	27.03	27.59	31.32	28.29
		<b>Harlow Target</b>	22.00	22.00	22.00	22.00	22.00	22.00

**Description**

The average time taken in calendar days to process new claims for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit



**Direction of Travel:**

✔ ↓

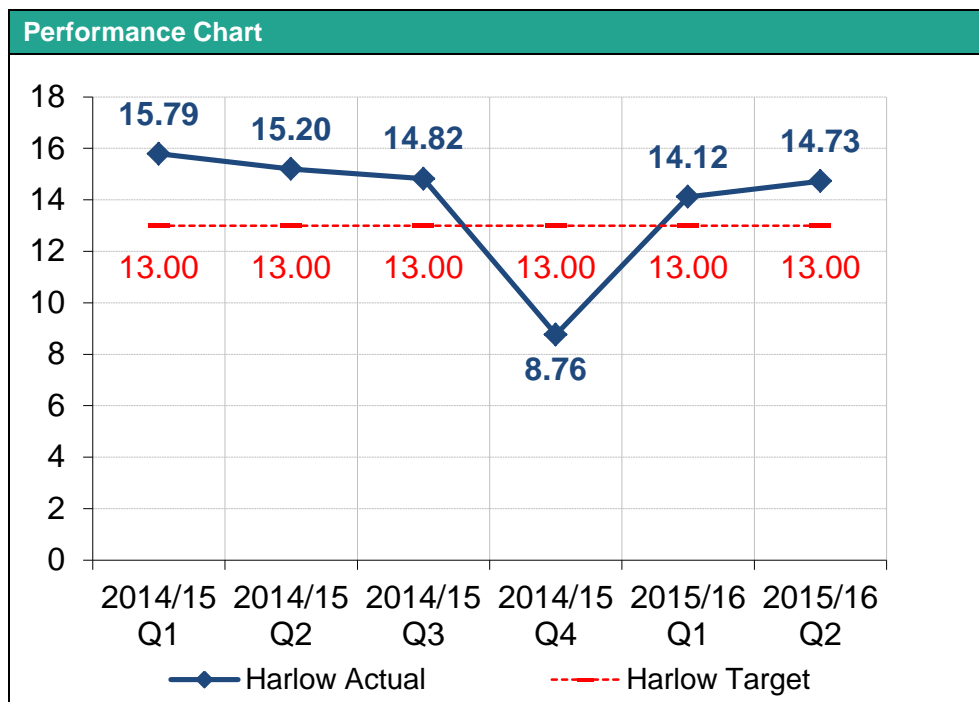
<b>What is the performance situation?</b>	All new claims received by the Revenues and Benefits service are being reviewed within 1 week of being received, and delays are in part caused by the time it takes to receive supporting evidence from applicants, with some claims being particularly complex, for example claims received from those who are self-employed or Directors of limited companies.
<b>What practical steps are being taken to improve?</b>	Additional resources were recruited in 2014-15, and the service has been working closely with Contact Harlow to enable the benefits team to maximise the resources available to process new claims and changes in circumstances. The outcomes and recommendations of a review of current processes are currently being considered, and once implemented should deliver improved performance.

## Improvement Action Plan

Performance Indicator	Reporting Period	Performance						
<b>BF006 Average days to process change events</b>	<b>2015/16 Q2</b>		14/15 Q1	14/15 Q2	14/15 Q3	14/15 Q4	15/16 Q1	15/16 Q2
		<b>Harlow Actual</b>	15.79	15.20	14.82	8.76	14.12	14.73
		<b>Harlow Target</b>	13.00	13.00	13.00	13.00	13.00	13.00

**Description**

The average time taken in calendar days to process change events for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefits



**Direction of Travel:**

<b>What is the performance situation?</b>	Delays are in part caused by the time it takes to receive supporting evidence from applicants. The service also receives large numbers of ATLAS notifications from the Department of Work & Pensions on a daily basis, which is affecting performance due to the volumes received.
<b>What practical steps are being taken to improve?</b>	The outcomes and recommendations of a review of current processes are currently being considered, and once implemented should deliver improved performance.  In addition, Harlow Council and other local authorities are currently exploring options for increasing the percentage of ATLAS notifications that can be automated.

## Improvement Action Plan

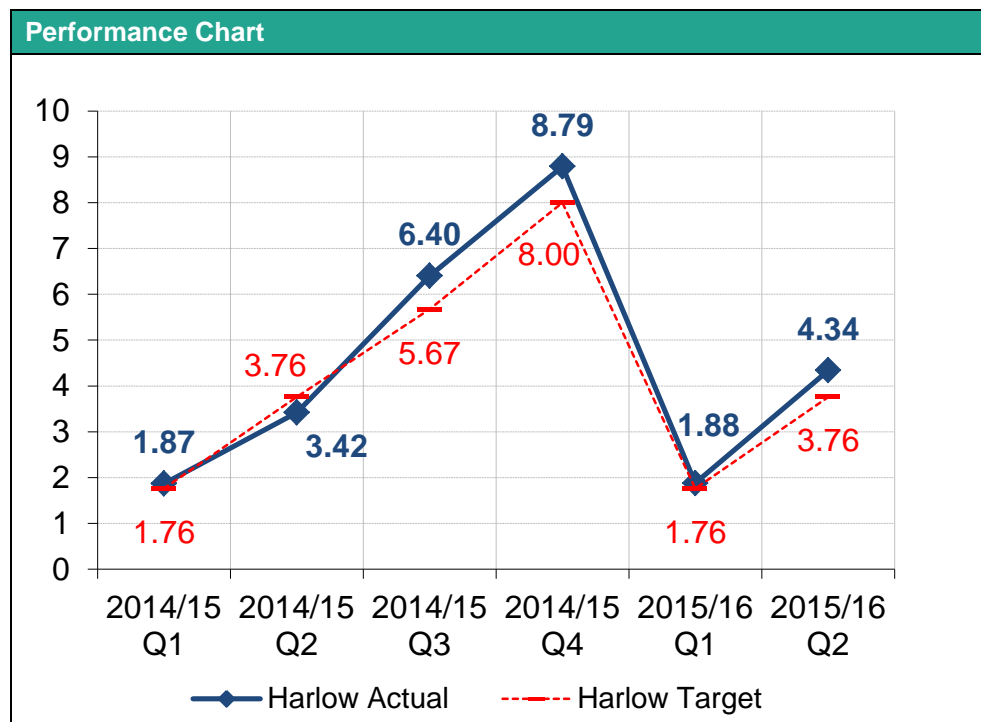
Performance Indicator	Reporting Period	Performance						
BV012 Average number of working days / shifts lost to sickness and absence	2015/16 Q2		14/15 Q1	14/15 Q2	14/15 Q3	14/15 Q4	15/16 Q1	15/16 Q2
		<b>Harlow Actual</b>	1.87	3.42	6.40	8.79	1.88	4.34
		<b>Harlow Target</b>	1.76	3.76	5.67	8.00	1.76	3.76

**Description**

The total number of working days lost due to sickness absence, including industrial injury, irrespective of whether this is self-certified, certified by a GP or long-term

**Direction of Travel:**

✘ ↑



**What is the performance situation?**

The number of total working days lost to sickness absence recorded within the Council has increased by 0.92 per FTE or 26.9% up to 4.34 FTE (Qtr 2) compared with 3.42 per FTE for the same period last year.

Sickness absence statistics are broken into short term (2.28 FTE 2015/16 compared with 2.08 FTE 2014/15) sickness absence and long term (i.e. 4 continuous weeks (20 days) 2.06 FTE 2015/16 compared with 1.34 FTE 2014/15).

The statistics demonstrate that the main reason for the increase in sickness absence as at quarter 2 is attributable to long term sickness. During 2014/2015 (Qtr 2) there were 8 employees whose absence was classified as long term within the Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy which equated to 421 days in total. For the same period 2015/16, 12 employees were long term sick which equates to 651 days in total. This is an increase of 230 days for long term sick for the same period (period 2).

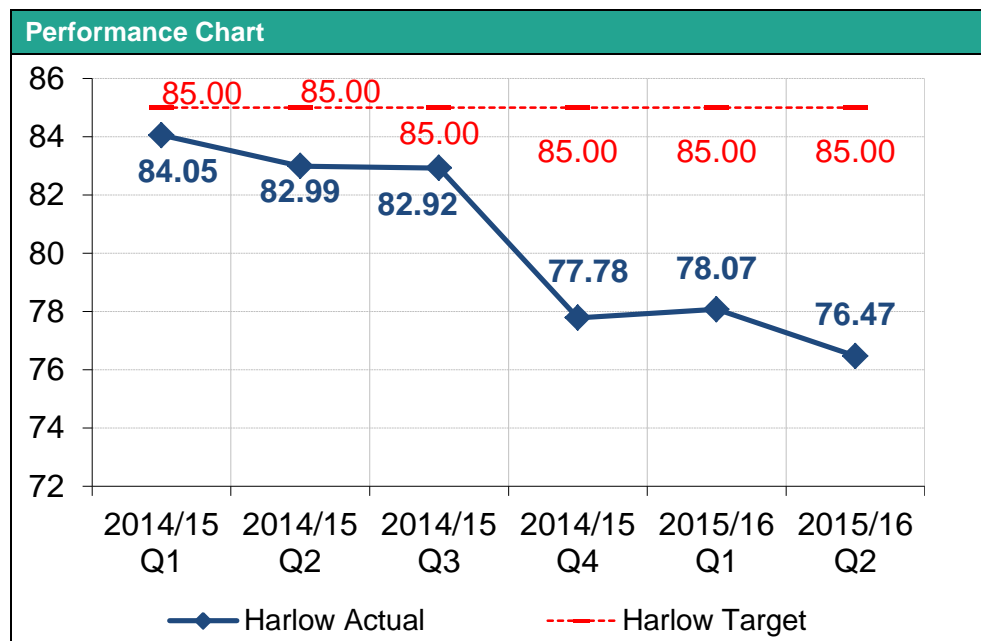
	<p>Of those employees, eight employees have subsequently successfully returned to work with various mechanisms of support i.e. Occupational Health, reasonable adjustments, workplace stress assessments and phased return etc.</p> <p>Whilst 8 of the 12 employees have subsequently returned to the workplace the impact on the recorded statistics will affect the PI's going forward for period 15/16 (Qtr 3).</p>
<p><b>What practical steps are being taken to improve?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has implemented a range of policies over the past few years including Special Leave, Flexible Working, Homeworking, Maternity, Shared Parental Leave, Paternity Leave, Sickness Absence Management, Adoption Leave, and Dignity at work.</li> <li>• Continue to use the absence management process to reduce the numbers of days lost.</li> <li>• Ongoing close management and support continues to be provided to line management by HR in long term sickness cases.</li> <li>• Encouraging/reminding management to complete return to work interviews.</li> <li>• Implement improvement action plans in accordance with the Sickness Absence Management Policy, where applicable.</li> <li>• Review the categorisation of sickness absence data which should enable improved analysis and comparison.</li> <li>• Review the Sickness Absence Management Policy.</li> </ul>

## Improvement Action Plan

Performance Indicator	Reporting Period	Performance						
CS25 Percentage of customer complaints responded to in time	2015/16 Q2		14/15 Q1	14/15 Q2	14/15 Q3	14/15 Q4	15/16 Q1	15/16 Q2
		Harlow Actual	84.05	82.99	82.92	77.78	78.07	76.47
		Harlow Target	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00

**Description**

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



**Direction of Travel:**

✘ ↓

<b>What is the performance situation?</b>	The volume of complaints has reduced from the same period last year, however complaint response times have also reduced as complaints become more complex.
<b>What practical steps are being taken to improve?</b>	Since the last Cabinet meeting, a new weekly reporting system has been implemented to ensure that those responsible for complaints are reminded of the current status and target for deadlines for each complaint received, and progress is monitored centrally.




## Improvement Action Plan

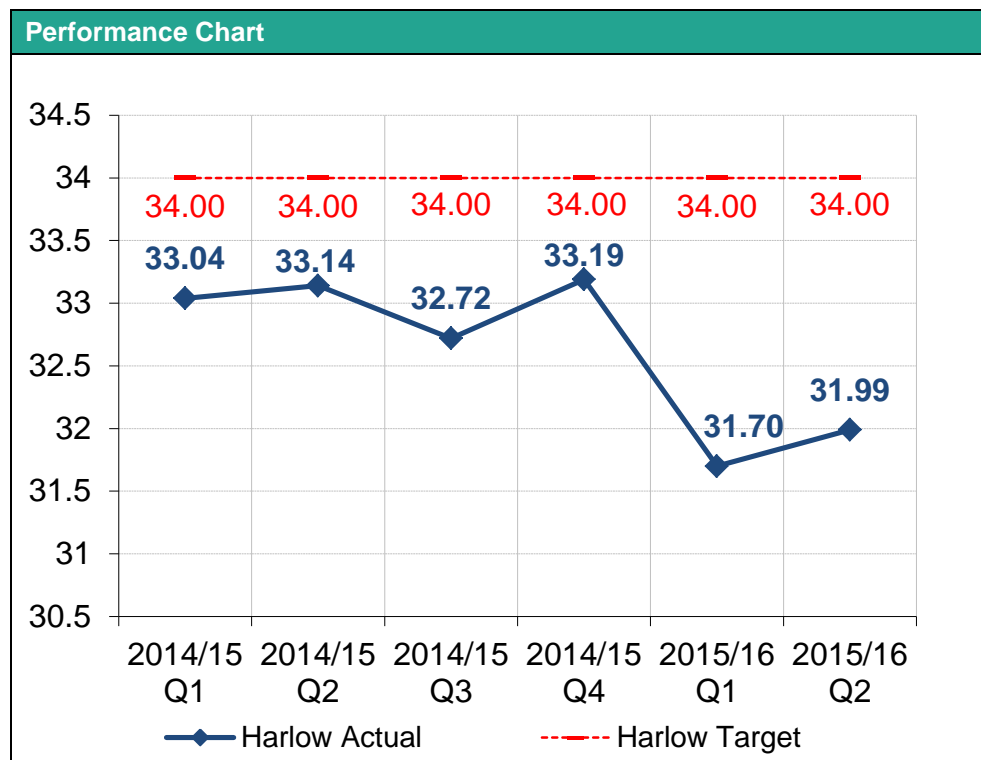
Performance Indicator	Reporting Period	Performance						
BV082ai Household Waste Recycled (%)	2015/16 Q2		14/15 Q1	14/15 Q2	14/15 Q3	14/15 Q4	15/16 Q1	15/16 Q2
		Harlow Actual	33.04	33.14	32.72	33.19	31.70	31.99
		Harlow Target	34.00	34.00	34.00	34.00	34.00	34.00

**Description**

% of Household Waste arisings which have been sent by the Authority for (recycling)

**Direction of Travel:**





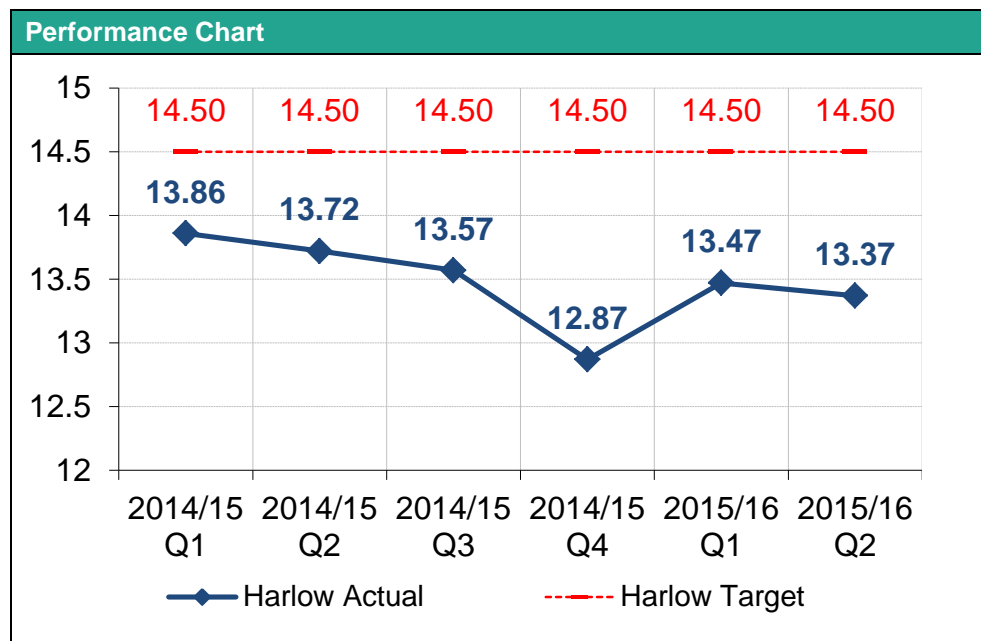
<b>What is the performance situation?</b>	There has been a national trend towards reduction in the volume of recycling collected, and a significant increase in the volume of residual waste collected this year. This is likely to be associated with perceived gradual recovery from recession. If the tonnage of recyclable material collected remains broadly constant while residual waste increases the percentage of total waste recycled will be depressed.
<b>What practical steps are being taken to improve?</b>	The Council promotes its recycling service in order to encourage residents to increase the amount of waste they recycle and reduce the amount of refuse, although resources are limited. The Council is working with Essex County Council on County wide waste minimisation communication campaign that will support its own minimisation messages.

## Improvement Action Plan

Performance Indicator	Reporting Period	Performance						
BV082bi Household Waste Composted (%)	2015/16 Q2		14/15 Q1	14/15 Q2	14/15 Q3	14/15 Q4	15/16 Q1	15/16 Q2
		Harlow Actual	13.86	13.72	13.57	12.87	13.47	13.37
		Harlow Target	14.50	14.50	14.50	14.50	14.50	14.50

**Description**

% of household waste sent by the Authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion



**Direction of Travel:**

✘ ↓

<b>What is the performance situation?</b>	The green waste service continues to be popular, and there are currently over 480 households subscribed to the premium service. There has been a slight reduction in the volume of food waste collected. Due to the town wide coverage of the food waste service and ongoing national publicity, some residents may be more mindful of food wastage and may have amended their purchasing habits accordingly. There has been a significant increase in the volume of household refuse collected this year. If the tonnage of compostable material collected remains broadly constant while residual waste increases the percentage of total waste recycled will be depressed. This appears to be the most significant factor affecting this indicator.
<b>What practical steps are being taken to improve?</b>	Roll out of the food waste service to flat blocks is almost complete and the Council continues to seek opportunities to extend the service to primary schools. The Council is promoting its subscription green waste collection service which continues to increase in popularity; use of the food waste collection service from flat blocks is being promoted to maximise collection, however resources are limited. The Council is working with Essex County Council on County wide waste minimisation communication campaign that will support its own messages on correctly segregating waste.

## Section Six: Key Corporate and Financial Risks

The following risk areas are assessed as 'exceptional', that is, scoring 20 or higher on a scale of 1-25, 1 = low likelihood, low impact, 25 = high likelihood, high impact. These risks are regularly reviewed through the Council's Risk Management Group and managed by the Council at senior management level and by relevant services.

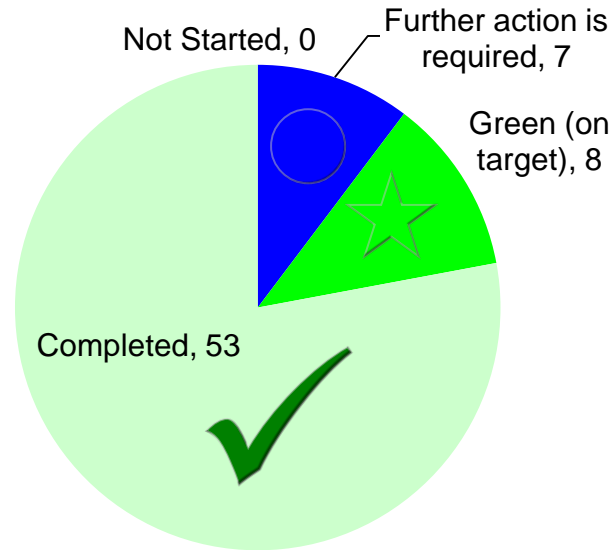
Risk Owner & Description	Likelihood	Impact	Control already in place	Additional actions to mitigate risk	Residual Risk score
<p><b>CMT – CR01</b> - The Government's fiscal policy in respect of deficit reduction reducing public sector funding combined with the Council's limited ability to raise income could result in the Council's financial resilience being at risk.</p>	<p>Options for increasing revenue to enable the Council to compensate for reduced Government Funding are becoming extremely limited. Raising Council tax to meet the shortfall beyond the levels already included within the MTFS is unlikely to be an option. Given the budget reductions already made further budget savings will be extremely challenging if services are to be protected. Impact of recent government announcements on General Fund and HRA budgets.</p>	<p>The impact of Significant budget cuts to enable a balanced budget to be delivered could have a major impact on delivery of the Council's corporate objectives. Impact on Council meeting statutory responsibilities and community aspirations in respect of discretionary services.</p>	<p>MTFS and detailed planning of future budgets undertaken early in the financial year. Budget Monitoring process. However, for the period of the MTFS there are substantial budget reductions required to meet the Governments funding cuts which may impact on this in the medium to long term forecasts.</p>	<p>The majority of issues relating to the Council's finances are dictated by Government. However, the Council's financial situation continues to be monitored at a high frequency. The Administration will continue to be provided with options concerning the work of the Council and will decide upon how these financial challenges can be faced. Scrutiny review of discretionary services (Playhouse and Pets Corner).</p>	<p>21</p>

Risk Owner & Description	Likelihood	Impact	Control already in place	Additional actions to mitigate risk	Residual Risk score
<p><b>Head of Place – CR03</b>            - The town requires a suitable housing mix to attract new and retain existing residents for an evolving and sustainable community. Supply must be balanced with demand and housing need, taking into account National Housing and Planning policies. As part of that mix, housing for local people that is genuinely affordable remains a high priority for the Council.</p>	<p>Lack of funding to build new homes. Lack of available land. Low land values. Lack of Local Plan (or non-approval due to failure to demonstrate Duty to Cooperate). Reluctance of housing developers to build out approved schemes will limit the supply of affordable housing as a proportion of private developments. Government policy in relation to social housing may limit the supply of affordable housing.</p>	<p>Lack of Local Plan could create lack of local control or direction, Lack of suitable housing may lead to people moving out of area. Inability to generate sufficient affordable housing. Impact on right population mix.</p>	<p>Duty to cooperate discussions. Housing studies including joint ones to support the Local Plan.</p>	<p>Implement Local Development Plan</p>	<p>21</p>

## Section Seven: Progress in delivering the Corporate Plan

### Corporate Priorities Milestone Tracker (Quarter Two 2015-16)

The Corporate Plan includes an Action Plan setting out the milestones the Council needs to complete in order to deliver its objectives. Below is a status update of how well the Council is doing in delivering its Plan as at 30 September 2015.



Ninety per cent (61 out of 68) of all Corporate Plan milestones are self-assessed as being complete or green (i.e. successfully delivered or are on track to be implemented in 2015/16) as at 30 September 2015.

Ten per cent (7 out of 68) of milestones have lapsed or require further action to ensure they are completed during 2015/16.

No milestones are significantly off target and will not be complete in 2015/16.

No milestones are currently in “not started” phase.

Milestone RAG Status		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Completed Milestones	53	78
On Track (Green) Milestones	8	12
Further action required to get back on track	7	10
Milestones which are significantly off target and where further action is needed (Red)	0	0
Not Started Milestones	0	0