

Harlow Council

**Joint Finance and Performance Report for the
period ending**

31/03/2017

Foreword from the Leader of the Council



**Report Summary from Jon Clempner,
Leader of the Council**

“This report highlights the key successes and actions of the Council during 2016/17.

This year, Harlow is celebrating its 70th Anniversary of the designation of Harlow as a New Town. In addition to supporting many community led events celebrating its rich history and the great community spirit, it has also been looking forward to a bright future over the next 70 years and beyond.

Against a backdrop of continuing Government cuts to Local Government funding, the Council continues to stand up for Harlow, protect services, and make sure that they are sustainable into the future, not just in the short term.

We continue to focus on driving down costs, but also investing in the future. The creation of a Council owned company, HTS (Property & Environment) Ltd, to maintain council housing and our environment, will enable us to reinvest in services that matter to Harlow, and to provide the necessary flexibility in uncertain times. The Council is investing significantly in the further development of the Enterprise Zone, which will provide much needed jobs, as well as providing a source of income independent of Central Government.

The Council was successful in securing an extension to the injunction preventing unauthorised encampments, and continues to fight for investment in infrastructure, in our Hospital, and affordable housing for Harlow people.

As you will see from this report, the Council has continued to review and improve its services and to work effectively with other organisations to ensure Harlow Council continues to ‘Working together for Harlow’. You can find out more about the Council’s Plans and how its performing on the website, www.harlow.gov.uk/performance.

Over the coming year we will bring forward plans to tackle anti-social behaviour, secure much loved services such as Pets Corner, the Playhouse, and the Paddling pools, as well as exploring options for building new council houses, improving the maintenance of Harlow’s many green spaces, and putting Harlow residents and businesses at the heart of all it does.

The Council is committed to doing all that it can to make a positive and visible difference, to make the best of the great potential of Harlow, and to ensure that Harlow continues to be a great place, fit for the next 70 years.”

Councillor Jon Clempner
July 2017

Overview of performance from the Chief Executive



**Report Summary from Malcolm Morley OBE,
Chief Executive, Harlow Council**

“Each year brings its own challenges and opportunities for the Council. These challenges and opportunities have to be seen within the context of the on-going significant reduction in resources imposed upon the Council. Indeed, over the last ten years the Council has saved £19.1 million.

Despite these financial challenges the Council’s ambition for the community of Harlow and for itself has remained high. I am extremely proud of all of the staff of the Council who, through their dedication and unremitting commitment over the past year, have ensured that the Council has continued to maintain and to improve its high performance in a number of important areas. Indeed, I’m delighted that the Council remains amongst the highest of performers nationally in a number of key areas.

A total of 90 per cent of project milestones were met, 95 per cent of targets were hit, and the Council’s General Fund budget was managed within a margin of less than one per cent. Huge challenges in relation to the Council’s role as a major landlord have had to be coped with as the financial rules have changed. Customer satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance services has remained high and the investment in new kitchens, bathrooms etc. has continued to deliver real results and improvements to the quality of life and well-being of many tenants.

It is important to recognise that this is not a ‘one-off’ performance but a continuance of the track record of performance that the Council has delivered over many years. It illustrates that the Council continues to challenge itself on how to fulfil its roles as community leader, service commissioner and service provider. It has continued to be at the forefront of innovation and to respond positively to the many financial and operational challenges it faces, whilst always seeking to look forward and to understand the evolving strategic context within which it has, and will have, to work.

The Council has sought to create and to take opportunities for the community it serves. The Enterprise Zone saw real progress in attracting and retaining jobs in Harlow. The Council successfully obtained a three year extension to the Injunction preventing the creation of unauthorised encampments in Harlow. This was a first nationally and illustrates both the ambition of the Council and its focus to address the issues impacting the communities of Harlow. The Council is not a typical District Council having been consistently recognised as ‘punching above its weight’. Council colleagues continue to do all that they can to ensure that opportunities are taken whilst ensuring that performance is maintained as illustrated in this report.

The Council, as part of its culture, not only celebrates its success but, in the context of continuous improvement, recognises the few areas where it has not performed to meet its aspirations. The report sets out these areas along with clear plans for improvement. The Council will continue to strive to perform to meet the objectives and priorities for Harlow.

It is often the case that perceptions do not always reflect the facts. This regrettably is frequently the case in relation to Councils and other public sector organisations. The Council will continue to challenge and change sometimes negative perceptions about Harlow and the Council by communicating more effectively. I hope that this report contributes to this process.

I would like to thank all of those colleagues who have, with their unremitting commitment and effort, enabled the Council to continue to improve and to so positively respond to the challenges faced by the community they serve. I know that we will all continue to respond positively to the challenges of the future and to create and take opportunities to ensure that the Council makes the maximum contribution possible to Harlow's vitality and success."

Malcolm Morley OBE
July 2017

The Council's aim for 2016-17 –

“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:

Symbols used to measure performance.

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

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 Four

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

FINANCE	<p>The final outturn position for 2016/17 is that the controllable General Fund revenue budget has under-spent by £508,000 on its gross controllable costs after adjusting for carry forward request. This represents -0.81% of the Council's approved gross budget for the General Fund.</p> <p>Key risks in relation to financial management continue to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risks and volatility associated with the Government's localisation of council tax support and business rates. • Variations in income from fees and charges as public spending habits respond to the economic climate. • Continued long-term austerity measures placed upon local government by central government. 	<p>The following performance indicators did not meet their performance target:</p> <p>Housing Service: BV202 People sleeping rough (numbers)</p> <p>Housing Service: NI156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation</p> <p>Place Service: JVC 207d Tree works carried out within 80 working days (4 months) (3.14d) (%)</p>	PERFORMANCE
RISK	<p>The following exceptional residual risks (rated as high likelihood, high impact) have been highlighted for this quarter:</p> <p>CR01 – Financial resilience CR03 – Lack of Suitable Housing Mix</p>	<p>The Council met ninety per cent of its Corporate Plan milestones with 145 out of 169 key corporate milestones completed between April 2016 and March 2017.</p> <p>Two milestones were 'red' for quarter ended 31 March 2017.</p>	CORPORATE PLAN

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

Summary:

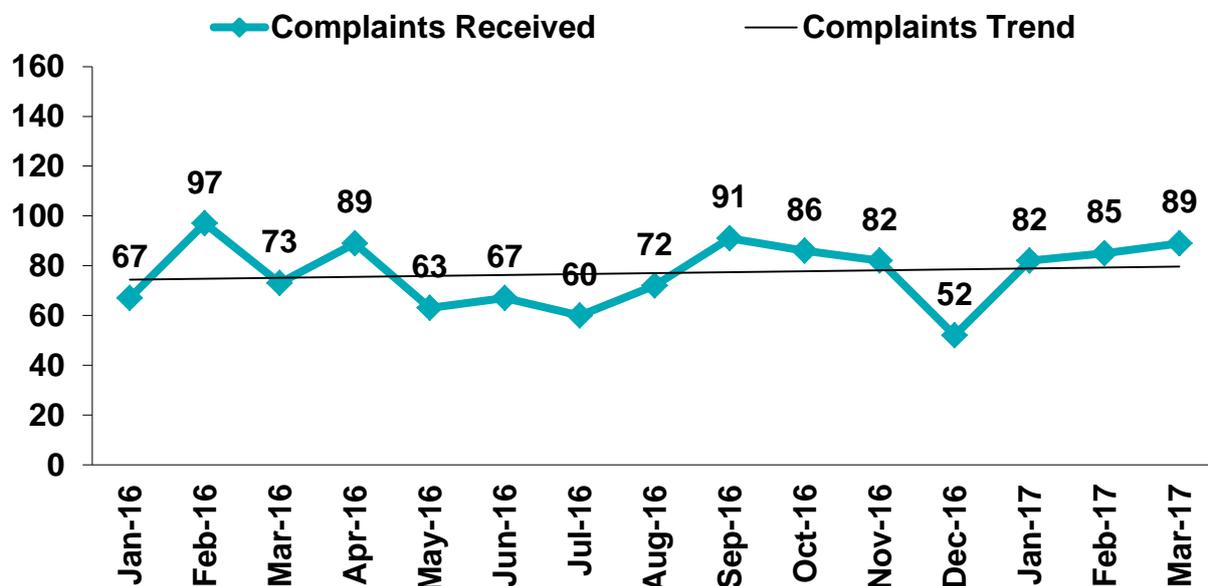
Harlow District Council provides and commissions a large number of services to a population of over 85,000 residents. In its role as a Housing Provider with over nine thousand properties, it undertakes in excess of 600,000 housing transactions each year.

The Council also provides Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support administration for a combined caseload of nearly nine thousand benefit claimants, administering over 2,000 new claims and 50,000 changes in entitlement annually.

Contact Harlow deals with hundreds of thousands of enquiries and complaints are taken seriously. The aim is to respond to and resolve all stage one and stage two complaints within 10 working days and stage three complaints within 15 working days.

The trend line on the chart below, shows that overall, the number of complaints has remained fairly static over the last year peaking in February 2016 and dipping in December 2016 to 52. There was a small increase in volumes during this quarter during the transfer period from Kier Harlow Ltd to HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd. There are no trends emerging with complaints tending to fluctuate month to month.

Eighty-two per cent of complaints were resolved by Stage One in Quarter Four, and eighty-three per cent in total for 2016/17.



In quarter four (January to March 2017) there were 201 performance related complaints, 22 person related complaints and 28 policy related complaints. The main areas of complaints were: 48 per cent Kier Harlow Ltd/HTS (P&E) Ltd – Housing (or 38.6 per cent Kier Harlow Ltd and 9.6 per cent HTS (P&E) Ltd) and 35 per cent Housing Services.

In total for 2016/17 there were 706 (77 per cent) performance, 109 (12 per cent) persons, 103(11 per cent) policy related complaints. The main areas of complaints were 43 per cent Kier Harlow Ltd/HTS (P&E) Ltd – Housing (or 40.5 per cent Kier Harlow Ltd and 2.6 per cent HTS (P&E) and 33 per cent Housing Services.

During 2016/17 the Council received a total 918 complaints. Of these complaints, 138 (15 per cent) were partially upheld, 279 (30 per cent) were upheld and 501 (55 per cent) were not upheld.

Detailed information is fed back to service managers to ensure that lessons can be learned and improvements made where required.

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 £660,000 over the MTFS period representing more than a 6 per cent reduction against its overall net General Fund budget requirement. Reforms imposed in recent years by Central Government, especially in relation to local government funding, have also introduced a new level of volatility into the financial resources of councils' budgets. Much of this volatility arises from external factors such as the collection of Business Rates, which is now directly impacted upon by local business growth and decline.

Meanwhile, the contents of this report highlight the extremely tight financial control and restraint being exercised within existing budgets in order to maintain balanced resources. Services are looking ahead and planning to manage lower funding levels before reductions actually take effect in future financial years.

The Service underspend on the controllable budgets in 2016/17 total £727,000 which is an underspend of -1.16 per cent of the Council's gross revenue budget. When this underspend is adjusted for the carry-forward requests of £219,300, this leaves a net controllable underspend of only £508,000, or -0.81 per cent of the Council's Gross Revenue Budget.

The Council has been determined to continue to deliver key services to and for the benefit of Harlow residents despite the unprecedented Government funding cuts. Resources have continued to be made available to support some key discretionary services to be delivered into the future. This provides confidence that the Council's services will strive to manage with ever-reducing funding levels, as far as it is possible to do so, whilst public services face enormous new uncertainties in the wake of the UK's recent Referendum result.

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance

Movements in General Fund Balance in 2016/17

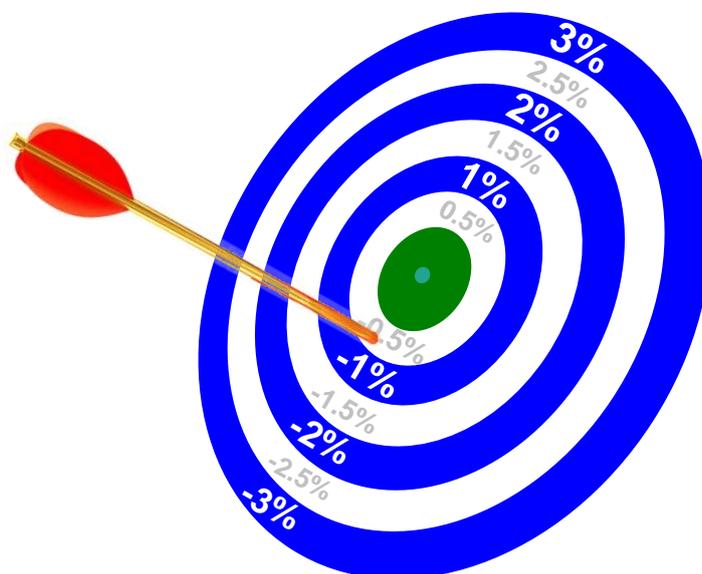
£000s	
General Fund opening balance as at 1 Apr 2016	3,888
• Service budget variations (favourable)	727
• Budget carry over from 2015/16 into 2016/17 (approved Cabinet 21/7/16)	(137)
• Transfer to Regeneration Reserve*	(500)
Sub-total before proposed movements to / from earmarked reserves	3,978
Other variations	
Net non-service variations (favourable)	1,483
In-year technical reserve movements	137
Proposed net transfers to reserves	(140)
Balance on General Fund at 31 March 2017	5,458
Additional transfer to reserve proposed (Planning)	(300)
Proposed application of 2016/17 underspend	(225)
Proposed carry forwards from 2016/17 to 2017/18	(219)
Effective Closing General Fund at 31 March 2017	4,714

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

*denotes transfer previously approved by Cabinet and Full Council

2016/17 Projected Outturn

The Council underspent by a margin of **-0.81%** on its gross controllable General Fund revenue budget.



Latest Financial Performance (Budget Variations/Exceptions):

Major Variances – Quarter 4 of 2016/17:

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Community Wellbeing				
The Playhouse	25		25	This overspend is due to a loss of income from hirers/room bookings, £9k, the non-achievement of the vacancy savings target, £19k and net production costs overspend of £8k. This is offset by lower than anticipated energy costs due to reduced prices (£11k).
Contact Harlow		(31)	(31)	Reduced employee costs due to vacancies and maternity leave. 65% of this has been shared with the HRA.
Regeneration Team		(45)	(45)	This variation reflects the Council's share of the 2015/16 HUB profits (£47k) offset by a net increase in running costs of £9k offset by a reduction in consultancy costs (£27k).
Other Minor Variations		(31)	(31)	
Total Community Wellbeing			(82)	
Place				
Latton Bush Centre		(75)	(75)	Increased service charges income as a result of full occupation of the Centre (£37k), increased income from room lettings (£23k) and reduced energy and running costs (£15k).
Unadopted Highways	30		30	This overspend is due to additional costs arising from the Highways Strategy to assist in mitigating against possible future insurance claims. 75% of this variance has been borne by the HRA.
Hackney Carriages and Private Hire	23		23	Increased employee costs due to the provision of cover for long term sickness.
Bus Terminus	32		32	This variance is due to the living wage increase in the cleaning contract plus reduced net income from bus departure fees following the withdrawal of operator licences for two bus operators.
Cemetery and Crematorium		(30)	(30)	Increased income from Westerleigh Plc who run these facilities on behalf of the Council.

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Housing Garages (General Fund)		(78)	(78)	The variation reflects the impact of this year's increase in weekly garage rents charges.
Commercial Properties		(43)	(43)	This reflects increased rental income.
The Stow Shopping Centre		(49)	(49)	The year-end variation reflects reduced business rates & increased rental income.
Water Gardens Car Park		(79)	(79)	Increased income from penalty charge notices.
Civic Centre	33		33	Increased expenditure on overtime and energy costs together with the uplift in the cleaning contract costs.
Building Control		(43)	(43)	Reduced employee costs as a result of a staff member retiring.
Structural Engineering		(29)	(29)	Reduced employee costs (£6k) and an increase in fee income (£23k).
Planning Services	136		136	The variance is the result of a reduction in employee costs due to vacancies and maternity leave (£19k) and the receipt of DCLG grant income of £35k. This is offset by a £115k reduction in income from planning applications, an overspend on consultants of £55k less reduced running expenses (£15k). In addition £21k has been contributed to the Self Build register earmarked reserve and nearly £15k to the Brown Field register earmarked reserve.
Car Parks		(88)	(88)	This favourable outturn position is due to an increase in income from the Pay & Display car parks.
Other Minor Variations	63		63	
Total Place			(197)	
Housing (General Fund)				
Supporting People		(136)	(136)	This forecast saving is due to staff vacancies and part year flexible retirement. In addition income from dispersed alarms is better than expected due to prudent assumptions made for the phasing of charges and the level of demand for alarms (note: the majority of the favourable underspend will be passed onto the HRA at year-end).

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Other Minor Variations	6		6	
Total Housing			(130)	
Finance				
Revenues and Benefits		(195)	(195)	Various grants received during the year. To be carried forward to 2017/18.
Other Minor Variations		(53)	(53)	
Total Finance			(248)	
Governance				
Legal		(25)	(25)	Underspends on apprentice costs, overtime and staff vacancies.
Other Minor Variations		(53)	(53)	Underspends due to vacancies savings, maternity leave, mobile phone costs underspends and Chairs Strategic Reserve.
Total Governance			(78)	
Corporate Management				
Minor Service variances	8		8	
Total Corporate Management			8	
Service Specific Variations			(727)	Subtotal
Other				
Costs chargeable to/from the HRA		(336)	(336)	This includes an underspend within Garages - General Fund of (£539k) against the revenue contribution to capital budget due to there being reduced expenditure on garages in the capital investment programme in 2016/17, and an £80k reduction in the recharge from the HRA for managing the garages which are offset by £96k of the underspend in the Supporting People cost centre noted above and a £23k overspend in the Unadopted Highways cost centre.
Contributions To / From Provisions	174	(32)	142	Provision for bad debts requires an increase of £174k, whilst Minimum Revenue Provision £32k drops below estimate.

Service	Adverse £000s	Favourable £000s	Net £000s	Main Contributing Factors to Variations
Additional Corporate grants and Income		(124)	(124)	This includes £103k of additional income from ECC 2nd homes discount.
Finance Miscellaneous		(195)	(195)	This underspend is mainly due to an underspend on insurance excess payments (£118k) and an underspend on External Audit fees (£47k).
Insurance		(83)	(83)	Policy excess underspend.
Early Retirement / Under Funding Pension Scheme		(59)	(59)	An underspend on Added Years Superannuation which is offset by financial strain payments.
Interest Payable and Receivable	53	(262)	(209)	Cost of internal borrowing increased above estimate due to higher interest rates, offset by additional yield derived from new property investment in CCLA.
Housing Benefit Subsidy		(381)	(381)	Housing Subsidy received from the DWP was higher than estimated.
Other Income		(238)	(238)	Windfall income over and above the amount budgeted in 2015/16 as a result of the good work carried out in Revenues and Benefits to target fraud and error on Council Tax accounts and a general reduction in the numbers of claimants receiving Localised Council Tax Support. The sum was adjusted in the July 2016 precept payment to ECC and therefore included in the Collection Fund at Quarter 2. It has now been transferred from the Collection Fund to the General Fund.
Total Other Variations			(1,483)	

Reserve Movements				
Earmarked Reserves (net movements to reserves)	640		640	Mar 2017 Cabinet approved additional transfer to Regeneration & Enterprise Reserve. Residual stems from minor variations
Total Reserve Variations			640	
Total General Fund Budget Variations			(1,570)	

****Note: Figures in () are credit e.g. income or underspend.**

Service based analysis

Community Wellbeing, Jane Greer

Overall, financial control is good with a net underspend partly contributed to vacancy savings. However, a loss of hirers fees at the Playhouse has had a negative impact on income and has contributed towards an overspend of the Playhouse budget, which is monitored closely.

Place Services, Graeme Bloomer

Overall the Place Services budget will have a net underspend this year. The Council's commercial estate portfolio had higher than expected rental returns this year due to a higher number of existing occupiers being retained than expected which resulted in very high occupancy rate. Car parking income in both the neighbourhoods and Watergardens car park had a better return this year due to higher usage and a mild winter so there were no days when the car parks could not be used. Although planning fee income increased considerable in the last quarter to reduce the previous downward adjustment, income was still lower than expected due to major development sites not coming forward as quickly as expected.

Housing, Andrew Murray

The amount of housing which is genuinely affordable continue to reduce with a corresponding growing housing need. The need to prioritise and target resources accordingly remains the priority, responding to new government regulation with the need to target resources to homelessness prevention, housing options, and support. Trends indicate there is a 35% increase in the ongoing 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.

Essex County Council (ECC) have now ceased funding for supported housing as part of their new commissioning arrangements. This has been reflected in Council budgets requiring 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 2016/17 financial year with no major variations to be reported. Issues which may arise will generally be staffing related, through the occurrence of vacancy savings currently built in to the service budget. Income from Land Charges continues to be monitored closely as this will be largely determined by the housing market locally.

Finance, Simon Freeman

The Finance Service has underspent by £248,000 in 2016/17 and only £53,000 when the request to carry forward grant income is adjusted for. This is in line with previous reporting to Cabinet during the year. Good control has been exercised across service budgets throughout the year and this will continue in to future years.

Section Four: Performance

Harlow Council performed on target or above target for 52 out of 55 (95 per cent) of performance indicators. Sixty per cent of indicators have been maintained or improved compared to Quarter Four 2015/16.

Percentage of indicators within or better than target	Qtr ended 31/03/2016	Qtr ended 30/06/2016	Qtr ended 30/09/2016	Qtr ended 31/12/2016	Qtr ended 31/03/2017
	93%	89%	90%	92%	95%
Percentage of indicators improving or unchanged from the same period last year	Qtr ended 31/03/2016	Qtr ended 30/06/2016	Qtr ended 30/09/2016	Qtr ended 31/12/2016	Qtr ended 31/03/2017
	66%	64%	60%	66%	60%

Good Performance:

Harlow Council continues to improve performance in a number of areas. Twenty out of 55 (36 per cent) performance indicators performed significantly above their target. Listed below is a selection of KPI's which are contributing towards the achievement of the Council's priorities.

		31/03/2016 Actual	31/03/2016 Target	31/03/2017 Actual	31/03/2017 Target
	NI154 Net additional homes provided	225	125	339	125
Housing completions continue to increase year on year. The Strategic Housing Site at Newhall is now well under way and makes up the bulk of the completions. Other sites coming forward which have planning permission and this trend should continue as developers are given more certainty with the anticipated progression of the Local Plan, which will allocate more sites for housing.					
	JVC 305 Housing appointments made and kept (4.12) (%)	99.18	98	99.98	98
Since the launch of the new company HTS, increased emphasis has been focused on the service delivery of the repairs team and resource has been reallocated within the existing call centre enabling ownership of emergencies to be prioritised.					
	JVC 300 Emergency Housing repairs within 2 hrs (4.7) (%)	100	99	99.1	99
Since the launch of the new company HTS, increased emphasis has been focused on the service delivery of the repairs team and resource has been reallocated within the existing call centre enabling ownership of emergencies to be prioritised.					

		31/03/2016 Actual	31/03/2016 Target	31/03/2017 Actual	31/03/2017 Target
➡	NI157a Processing of major applications within 13 weeks (%)	100	60	100	60
The planning department has continued to prioritise the determination of major applications to ensure that the most significant developments are brought forward without delay.					
⬆️*	CS50 Average waiting time of calls received by Contact Harlow	17	45	41	45
This is a reflection of the volume of calls received meaning that the more we receive, the longer it is likely that customers will wait as agents time is spent dealing with them. The target of 45 seconds is very low and it is important to ensure that there is a balance between providing quality customer service and resourcing it appropriately.					
⬆️*	NI195a Street & Environmental Cleanliness (% land assessed having unacceptable levels of litter)	1.78	4	2.44	4
This KPI measures whether the amount of litter in the surveyed transects is at acceptable levels. The lower the figure the better the result. The result reflects good performance.					

Kier Harlow (JVCo):

Housing and Commercial Repairs, Street Cleaning, and Grounds Maintenance



For the period April 2016 to January 2017 Kier Harlow Ltd met 97% of its 59 major and minor targets. The four key areas performed as follows:

- Housing: 99% success rate for 18 indicators.
- Street Scene: 97% success rate for 15 indicators.
- Grounds Maintenance: 100% success rate for 12 indicators.
- Non Housing: 88% success rate for 8 indicators.

Housing: One of the key performance indicators that continually perform above the target is *“Attending site to make safe within 2 hours following a report by a tenant or other stakeholder”*.

Street Scene: Kier Harlow Ltd maintained a high level of compliance in dealing with graffiti, dumped rubbish, and abandoned vehicles.

Grounds Maintenance: Compliance with Landscape Maintenance and with Playground Maintenance requirements remained above their targets.

Non-Housing: Kier Harlow Ltd achieved 100% compliance with the key performance indicator – *“Attending site to make safe within 2 hours following a report by a tenant or other stakeholder and issues resolved by next day”* Customer Satisfaction with the Non-Housing Repairs service averaged 98% for the year.

HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd

The newly formed company set up by Harlow Council to serve Harlow residents with their housing repairs and maintenance needs as well as look after the town’s environment went live 1 February 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

For the months February and March 2017 HTS met 90% of its 21 monthly targets. A complete quarters performance for HTS (P&E) Ltd will be included in the report for Quarter One 17/18.

Notable highlights in performance included:

- 100% compliance with Playground Maintenance requirements
- 100% compliance with urgent requests for service (attend within 5 days)
- 98% compliance with standard requests for service (attend within 20 days)
- 100% for Gas Compliance (annual servicing completed) for contractor activity only
- 100% compliance with removing hypodermic or other drug related paraphernalia within 8 working hours of the report
- 100% compliance with emptying full and overflowing litter and dual use bins within 3.5 hours of the report being received

The Council and HTS (P&E) Ltd have together reviewed delivery of litter bin emptying services to enhance provision and make it more responsive to high demand in priority areas. Together it will be undertaking a review of performance measures in environmental service areas to ensure that they provide sufficient sensitivity to identify and drive performance for issues such as areas of grass that do not meet target sward length standards.

**Veolia:
Waste and Recycling services**



Veolia Environmental Services collect domestic recycling and food waste, and residual (black bag) waste town-wide; ancillary services includes bulky, green and nappy/incontinence waste. The Veolia team works closely with the Council's client and communications teams to ensure consistent service delivery, and to minimise service disruption due to adverse weather, bank holidays and similar events. Veolia has established a flexible and adaptable approach to changes in requirements. The collection methodology introduced in the current contract continues to ensure high rates of diversion of waste from landfill.

**Westerleigh:
Crematorium**



Westerleigh Group leases the Cemetery and Crematorium site from the Council and take 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 enabled much needed investment into the site infrastructure with a wide ranging upgrade to the customer experience. Customer response has continued to be overwhelming positive during 2016/17, and business continues to perform well with a corresponding benefit of rental income for the Council.

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 4 15/16	QTR 1 16/17	QTR 2 16/17	QTR 3 16/17	QTR 4 16/17
CS25q % 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 and absence	▲	★	★	★	●
BV202 People sleeping rough (numbers)	●	●	●	★	▲
JVC 302 Urgent Housing Requests within 5 days	●	▲	●	●	★
NI156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	●	●	▲	▲	▲
BV082ai Household waste recycled	▲	●	●	●	●
BV082bi Household waste composted	▲	●	●	●	●
JVC 114 Litter bins not overflowing	●	●	▲	▲	●
JVC 207d Tree works carried out within 80 working days (4 months)	●	●	●	●	▲
JVC 402 % standard Non Housing repairs within 20 days	●	▲	●	●	●
JVC 403 % Non Housing Property statutory tests before due date	●	▲	●	●	●
NI195c Improved street and environmental cleanliness (graffiti)	▲	▲	▲	★	★
Number of under-performing indicators	4	5	5	4	3

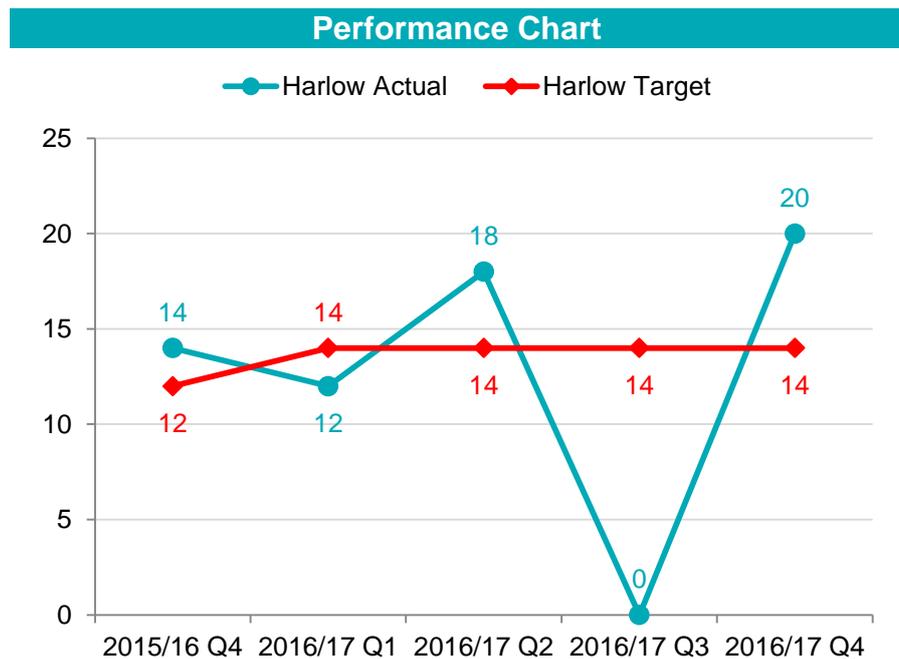
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2017

Performance Indicator
BV202 People sleeping rough (numbers)

Performance					
	to 31/03/16	to 30/06/16	to 30/09/16	to 31/12/16	to 31/03/17
Harlow Actual	14	12	18	0	20
Harlow Target	12	14	14	14	14

Description
People sleeping rough' should include people sleeping or bedded down in the open air, or in buildings or other places not designed for habitation



Direction of Travel


What is the performance situation?

The performance indicator is a snapshot of those people that are rough sleeping. The data is submitted by local partners for monitoring purposes and the Council annually submit rough sleeping estimates to the DCLG that are verified via homeless link. The last submission Autumn 2016 verified 20 rough sleepers. This data is used to provide context to local homelessness trends.

Because of the nature of the indicator, the Council works together with partner agencies and organisations with the aim of preventing people sleeping rough including those that are housed but are at risk of sleeping rough and where the Council may not have a statutory duty to house under the Homelessness legislation.

In Quarter Four 2015/16 there were 14 people surveyed as sleeping rough. In comparison Quarter Four 2016/17 it was 20 people. An increase of 2 from Quarter Two 2016/17. The figure decreased as expected in Quarter Three to 0 due to Hope4Harlow who provided a Christmas shelter through this period and Severe Weather Emergency protocols in place till February 2017.

The Autumn rough sleeping statistics (DCLG) following the Autumn submission showed the total number of rough sleepers counted and estimated was at 4,134 nationally. An increase of 565 (16 per cent) from Autumn 2015 at 3,569. The number of rough sleepers has increased by 21 per cent in England (excludes London). The top ten local authority areas were not in Essex with Westminster (260), Brighton and Hove (144) and Cornwall (99) considered in the top three.

Harlow in comparison to other authorities in Essex are similar in the number of rough sleepers, with the exception of Southend on Sea:

- Southend on Sea (44)
- Colchester (20)
- Basildon (17)

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

The Council will continue to focus on the prevention/relief of homelessness for rough sleepers. To enable this, the Council will continue to work with partner agencies and organisations that form part of Harlow Homelessness Partnership (HHP).

The Council will continue to provide financial support for “Severe Weather” arrangements delivered by local agencies. Provide financial support to Hope4Harlow offering more opportunities for shelter, and signposting to specialists supporting this area of activity. Grant funding the charity ‘Streets2Homes’ to provide a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme for both those that are at risk of sleeping rough and are sleeping rough.

Work in partnership through the local Harlow Homelessness Partnership (HHP) that targets partnership resources through the Homeless Prevention Action Group. This was formed to enable agencies to build stronger relations, share information and work together to provide consistent responses that will enable those referred to access the appropriate support and suitable housing.

The Council is also considering the potential impact/opportunities from the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which is increasing the statutory role of the Council to prevent homelessness.

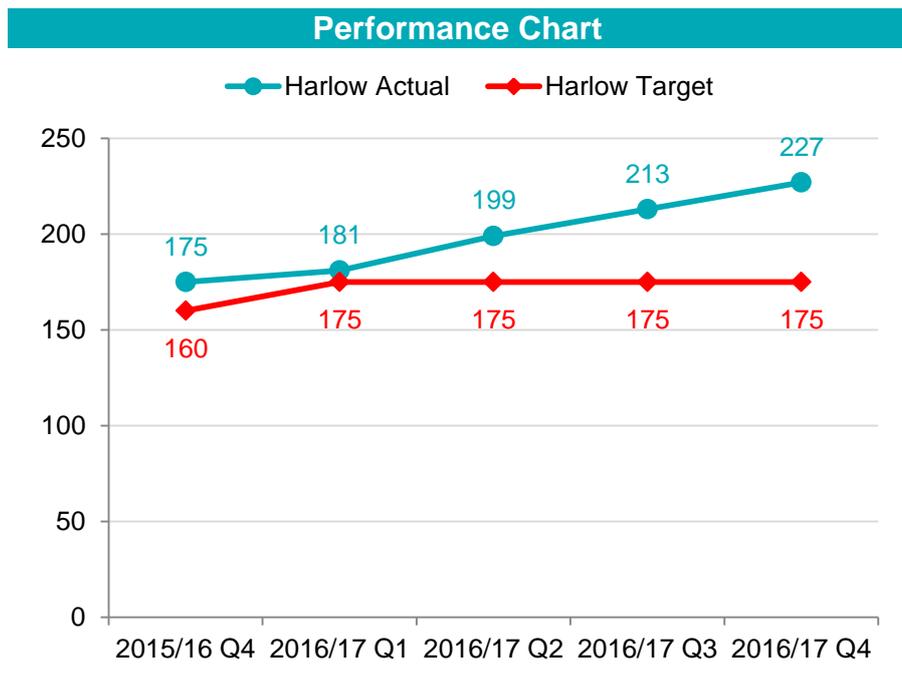
Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2017

Performance Indicator
NI156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation

Performance					
	to 31/03/16	to 30/06/16	to 30/09/16	to 31/12/16	to 31/03/17
Harlow Actual	175	181	199	213	227
Harlow Target	160	175	175	175	175

Description
This indicator measures the numbers of households living in temporary accommodation provided under the homelessness legislation



Direction of Travel
↑ x

What is the performance situation?

The Council has a statutory duty to assist those people that are homeless. They are accommodated in emergency temporary accommodation pending a formal homeless decision.

The Improvement Action Plan Quarter Two 2016/17 outlined the predicted increase for the remaining two quarters of 2016/17 and forecasted an increase was likely to be over 30 per cent by the end of Quarter Four.

The Performance Indicator is a snapshot of the total number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) at the end of each quarter. Quarter Four data has increased by 29.71 per cent compared to Quarter Four 2015/16, close to the predicted level of 30 per cent.

Nationally, data shows that England (excluding London Boroughs) continues to see an increase of 50 per cent in TA placements for the period 31 March 2012 up to 31 December 2016.

Homelessness due to the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy continues to be the

largest factor in new cases of homelessness.

Temporary accommodation costs impact on both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account expenditure.

There has been a slight decrease of 6 per cent in the number of formal applications since March 2016 to March 2017.

The last twelve months has also seen the closure of Occasio House and the relocations associated with Phase 2 and 3 of the redevelopment of The Briars, Aylets Field and Copshall Close. This has significantly impacted on the number of family sized TA: reducing the number of units available to applicants that require temporary accommodation. In addition welfare reforms have impacted following the introduction of the benefits cap.

It is expected the number of homelessness cases will continue to rise throughout the next twelve months and the trend will also impact on the length of time applicants spend in temporary accommodation due to the shortage of social housing and the increase in demand via the Housing Needs Register.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

The Council will continue to focus its resources on the prevention/relief of homelessness. To enable this, Housing Services pre-assess those that are homeless or threatened with homelessness by providing a separate housing advice and assistance service (including those that approach for general housing advice). This provides an early opportunity to signpost, suggest or provide other housing solutions available. This approach has been successful and is seen to save costs in the long run, and prevent the actual incidence of homelessness by early intervention.

The Council continues to manage the increase in expenditure between the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund (GF). The Council are using more of its own stock of available studio flats, reviewing procurement opportunities for securing properties making use of derelict Council land therefore reducing the reliance on private sector accommodation and associated costs.

The Council is also considering the potential impact/opportunities from the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which is increasing the statutory role and introducing new measures for the Council to prevent homelessness. It is expected to this will come into force on 1 April 2018.

Improvement Action Plan

Reporting Period Ended: 31/03/2017

Performance Indicator

JVC 207d Tree works carried out within 80 working days (4 months) (3.14d) (%)

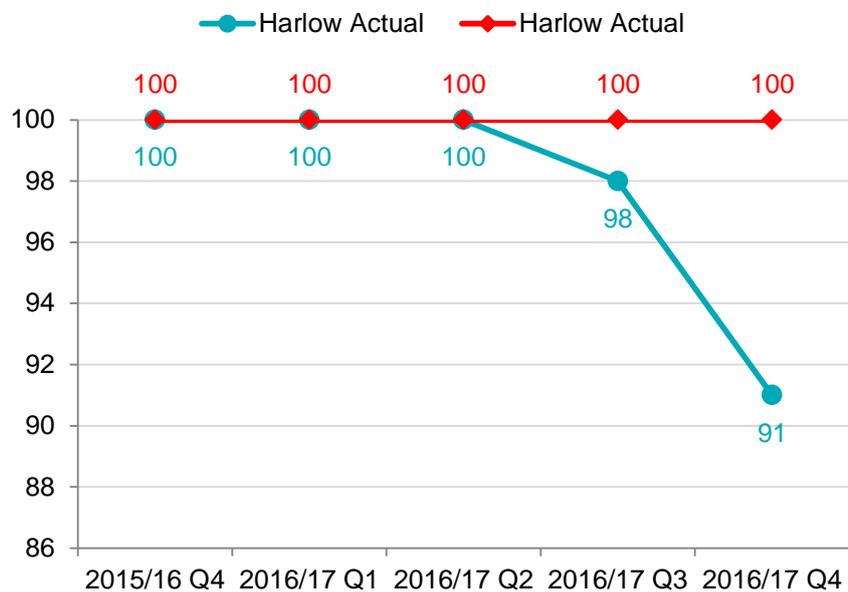
Performance

	to 31/03/16	to 30/06/16	to 30/09/16	to 31/12/16	to 31/03/17
Harlow Actual	100	100	100	98	91
Harlow Target	100	100	100	100	100

Description

Tree Works – Percentage of work carried out within 80 working days (four months)

Performance Chart



Direction of Travel



What is the performance situation?

Due to the need to deal with emergency tree works arising from an adverse weather event on 23 February 2017 (Storm Doris) fourteen trees reported as requiring attention within 80 working days were not attended to in that timescale.

What practical steps are being taken to improve?

Works to seven trees is scheduled to be completed by July 2017. Of the remainder, two are plane trees, to which works will be done when they are out of leaf, and five hosted nesting birds to which works will be done after the nesting season, in accord with appropriate arboricultural and conservation requirements. HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd will advise the Council's Client team of any future adverse weather event that may have an impact on resources available for routine tree works. The Council and HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd will agree an individual action plan for each such event identifying how additional resources in the form of additional work hours and or subcontracted specialists are to be deployed to counteract any potential effect on this indicator.

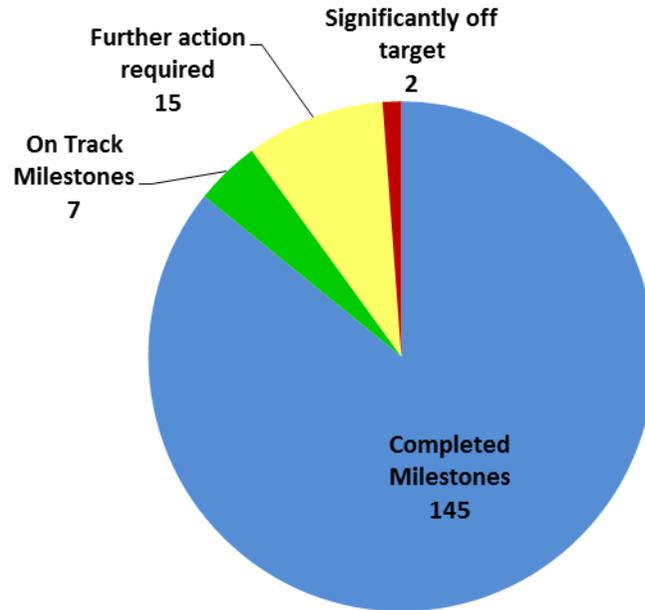
Section Six: Key Corporate and Financial Risks

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
CR01 - Financial resilience													
IF : If a sustainable budget is not secured													
THEN : Then the Council will lack financial resilience													
BACKGROUND : 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.													
Freeman, Simon	Likely (4)	Major (4)	Development of the Council's MTFS and the detailed planning of future budgets is now undertaken early in the financial year and is an ongoing process rather than an annual review and is linked with the monthly Budget Monitoring process. Whilst savings are still required over the three year financial period covered by the current MTFS the overall target is significantly lower than in previous years.	Likely (4)	Major (4)	21	▲	➡	Likely (4)	Moderate (3)	17	Whilst the pressures generated in the Council's grant income are largely driven by Government policy the financial situation continues to be monitored at a high frequency. The Administration will continue to be provided with detailed financial information and will be appropriately supported in reaching decisions upon how these financial challenges can be faced.	31/03/2017
CR03 - Lack of Suitable Housing Mix													
IF : If the town lacks a suitable housing mix													
THEN : Then it will not attract or retain residents													
BACKGROUND : 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.													
Bloomer, Graeme	Likely (4)	Major (4)	Duty to cooperate discussions. Housing studies including joint ones to support the Local Plan.	Likely (4)	Major (4)	21	▲	➡	Moderate (3)	Major (4)	18	Implement Local Development Plan	31/03/2017

Section Seven: Progress in delivering the Corporate Plan

Corporate Priorities Milestone Tracker as at 31/03/2017

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.



	Number	%
Completed Milestones	145	86%
On Track Milestones	7	4%
Further action required	15	9%
Significantly off target	2	1%
Not Started Milestones	0	0%

Ninety per cent (152 out of 169) of all milestones are self-assessed as completed or on track as at 31 March 2017.

Nine per cent (15 out of 169) of milestones have lapsed or require further action to ensure they are brought back on track.

One per cent (2 out of 169) of milestones is significantly off target as at 31 March 2017. (See next page for explanation)

Milestones that are assessed as significantly off track (red)

Objective	Action	Milestone	Due Date	What is the performance situation?
HSG02 – Implement the new Housing and Planning Act	HSG02.01 – Review impact of policy changes	HSG02.01.01 – Impact assessments made	31/10/2016	Partially complete. Government guidance is outstanding on ‘fixed term’ tenancy rules, sale of high value voids and Housing Revenue Account financial implications.
FIN05 – Maintain, improve and enhance a secure IT and telephony service to the Council	FIN05.03 – to ensure the security, integrity and availability of data	FIN05.03.01 – Continued PSN code of connection certification / business critical services are maintained	31/07/2016	Cabinet Office formally notified authorities (13/02/2017) that Certification will not be issued to any authority operating Windows 2003 Servers. The ICT Service will accelerate the transition from the 2003 servers and will look to complete transfer by end of Sept 2017.