

CABINET AGENDA

Monday, 15th December 2025 at 7.15pm

**Council Chamber, Braintree District Council, Causeway House,
Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB**

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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Members of the Cabinet are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.

Leader of the Council

Deputy Cabinet Member

Councillor G Butland

Councillor J Edwards

Transformation, Performance and Delivery

Finance, Resources and Performance
Transformation, the Environment and Customer
Services

Deputy Cabinet Member and Lead Member

Councillor K Bowers

Councillor T Cunningham (Deputy Leader)

Councillor R van Dulken

Connecting People, Places and Prosperity

Economic Growth and Infrastructure
Planning

Deputy Cabinet Member

Councillor F Ricci

Councillor G Spray

Councillor P Schwier

Supporting Communities

Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Deputy Cabinet Member

Stronger Communities

Deputy Cabinet Member

Councillor L Bowers-Flint

Councillor T Williams

Councillor M Cunningham

Councillor C Dervish

Invitees: Councillors J Beavis, J Bond and L Jefferis are invited to attend as Group Leaders.

Councillor P Heath is invited to attend as Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence to the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk

by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

D GASCOYNE
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Registerable Interests (ORI) or Non-Registerable Interests (NRI).

Any Member with a DPI, ORI or NRI must declare the nature of their interest and act in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Any Member who is unsure of their interest and how they may participate in this meeting are advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Public Question Time - Registration and Speaking

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time. Members of the public may ask questions or make a statement to the Cabinet on matters listed on the Agenda for this meeting.

All questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be heard within the 3 minutes allotted to each speaker.

Anyone wishing to ask a question or make a statement is requested to register their interest by completing the Public Question Time registration [online form](#) by **midday on the second working day** before the day of the meeting.

For example, if the meeting is on a Tuesday, the registration deadline is midday on Friday, (where there is a Bank Holiday Monday you will need to register by midday on the previous Thursday). The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register to speak if they are received after this time.

Please note that completion of the online form does not guarantee you a place to speak during Public Question Time.

We expect our confirmed Public Question Time speakers to attend the meeting in person, and they will only be permitted to attend remotely in exceptional circumstances. The request to join the meeting remotely would need to be submitted at the time of registering a request to speak.

You will receive email notification from the Governance Service confirming whether your request for Public Question Time is successful.

The Chairman has discretion to extend the time allocated to registered speakers and to amend the order in which they may speak.

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Comments and Suggestions

We welcome comments to make our services as efficient and effective as possible. If you have any suggestions regarding the meeting you have attended you may send these to governance@braintree.gov.uk

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PUBLIC SESSION	
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Declarations of Interest	
To declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Registrable Interest relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice where necessary before the meeting.	
3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 th November 2025 (copy previously circulated).	
4 Public Question Time	
Only Registered Speakers will be invited by the Chairman to speak during public question time. Please see the agenda notes for guidance.	
5 Disposal of Land, 4 Crittall Drive and Crittall Drive, Springfield Industrial Estate, Braintree, Essex	5 - 10
This Item has a Confidential Appendix. Any discussion of the information within the Confidential Appendix will require Cabinet to move into private session.	
6 Plant Equipment Replacement 2025-26	11 - 15
7 Procurement of Plastic Sacks 2026-27	16 - 22
This Item has a Confidential Appendix. Any discussion of the information within the Confidential Appendix will require Cabinet to move into private session.	
8 To Award a Contract for Recycling Boxes and Lids	23 - 27
9 Commercial Waste Service Review	28 - 32
10 Second Quarter Performance Management Report 2025-26	33 - 80
11 Exclusion of the Public and Press	
To agree the exclusion of the public and press for the consideration of any Items for the reasons set out in Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.	

Report Title: Disposal of Land, 4 Crittall Drive and Crittall Drive, Springfield Industrial Estate, Braintree, Essex	
Report to: Cabinet	
Date: 15 th December 2025	For: Decision
Key Decision: Yes	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2025/54
Report Presented by: Councillor Kevin Bowers, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Performance	
Enquiries to: Edwina Crowley, Head of Property and Asset Management edwina.crowley@braintree.gov.uk	

Confidential Appendix

This report has a confidential appendix which is not for publication as it includes exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider the disposal of industrial land site at 4 Crittall Drive and the unadopted road, Crittall Drive, Springwood Industrial Estate, noting that the rights to use the road will be unaffected by the disposal.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Braintree District Council (the Council) declare the industrial land site at 4 Crittall Drive and the unadopted road Crittall Drive as surplus and progress these sites for disposal.
- 2.2 That Cabinet grant delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Growth), to progress the conditional sale of industrial land site at 4 Crittall Road and the unadopted road, Crittall Drive, to Greenshields JCB Ltd at the best consideration price documented in the confidential appendix to this report.
- 2.3 That Cabinet grant delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Growth) to progress the sale on the open market for best consideration if the sale to Greenshields JCB Ltd does not complete.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The industrial land, site 4 Crittall Drive, is located within Springwood Industrial Estate, there is no property on the land because the previous industrial unit was demolished in 2023 due to poor condition. The site is currently leased

out to a tenant for temporary storage use; both the lease and the planning permission expire in July 2026.

- 3.2 The site is approached from an unadopted road, Crittall Drive, which the Council has covenanted to maintain. There is no recovery mechanism to pass these costs onto the beneficiaries and users of the road. Operations complete litter picking and road sweeping on Crittall Drive via a service level agreement with a recharge mechanism back to the asset management budget.
- 3.3 The legal title report confirms access and egress rights for industrial unit use on Crittall Drive and the conveyance will ensure that these rights are unaffected by the transfer of ownership.
- 3.4 With the temporary storage use for 4 Crittall Drive ending next year and no opportunity to extend this use as confirmed by planning policy, the asset management team were looking at options for the site including development of industrial units and/or a potential sale of the site.
- 3.5 Feasibility studies to explore the potential of developing smaller energy efficient industrial units were commissioned in 2024. The feasibility for the chosen designs confirmed budget build costs of £1.9million, a project build programme of three years for delivery of completed units. Agency confirmed rental incomes estimated for these at circa £125,000 per annum with service charge recovery (equivalent of circa £25,000 income for repairs and maintenance).
- 3.6 However, whilst the asset management team were still considering the feasibility studies, the Council was approached by Greenshields JCB Ltd, who have outgrown their current unit on Springfield Industrial Estate. They presented plans to the Council which would enable them to expand their operations and grow their business.
- 3.7 The Head of Property and Asset Management met Greenshields JCB Ltd representatives to on a without prejudice basis to discuss this further and Greenshields JCB Ltd subsequently made a conditional offer to purchase 4 Crittall Drive and the unadopted road.
- 3.8 Proactive asset management requires ongoing review of property and land, to identify both the risks and the opportunities, and provide advice to the Council on the corporate estate. Industrial land presents an opportunity for the Council to develop energy efficient modern units. Modern units provide for local employment and provide an income stream, revenue which forms part of the overall investment strategy.
- 3.9 However, property projects are not liquid; they take several years to complete. The Council is preparing for Devolution and Local Government Reform and therefore needs to balance the need to take new financial capital investment decisions against the responsibilities to continue “business as usual” which

includes the need to determine what to do with a site that becomes vacant next year.

- 3.10 Taking into account that the Council will have a vacant site next year, with planning policy confirming industrial use, and considering the significant capital project programme, it is therefore recommended to sell 4 Crittall Drive and Crittall Drive, as the Council will not have a permitted use for the site once the lease and planning permission expire.
- 3.11 To assist the Council with determining the offer made by Greenshields JCB Ltd, a RICS registered valuer has undertaken a RICS Red Book Market Valuation and confirmed the offer is best consideration.
- 3.12 The recommendations set out in this report will help the Council to deliver the following Corporate Priorities:
- Prosperity – our people prosper
 - Environment – our environment is cherished
 - Fit for the Future – ensuring our Council is fit for the future through our transformation programme
- 3.13 Economic growth is a priority for the Council, the sale will provide an opportunity for the site to be used to support business growth in Braintree. Any development will be regulated by planning policy and building control ensuring that current energy standards will be met. The proposals also support efficient use of Council funds.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Consultation has been completed with relevant service areas, Management Board and Cabinet.

5. Options

- 5.1 The Council could develop the industrial land at 4 Crittall Drive, but this is not already part of the capital programme and mindful of government guidance in relation to devolution/LGR this option is not recommended.
- 5.2 The Council could choose to sell the land on the open market, but we are in receipt of an offer by Greenshields JCB Ltd which provides the Council with a good opportunity to secure best value for the site and ensure the site is brought back into use as designated by planning policy. The opportunity to transfer the freehold in Crittall Drive removes ongoing maintenance liabilities for the Council. This the recommended option.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The lease expiry in July 2026 will result in a loss of revenue of £60,000 per annum, however this has been factored into the proposed budget for 2026/27 and MTFs.

- 6.2 Professional fees associated with the sale including the RICS valuation, surveyors and legal fees, will be netted off the capital receipt.
- 6.3 The capital receipt will provide an increase in capital resources that can be used for any future capital investment.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 Legal Services have provided a title report on 4 Crittall Drive and Crittall Drive, and will be retained to undertake the conveyance.

8. Local Government Reorganisation - Implications

- 8.1 MHCLG and the Local Government Association have published guidance on financial considerations in relation to capital projects, disposals and acquisitions, leading into Devolution and Local Government Reform.
- 8.2 This report has considered this guidance on balance with the need to continue business as usual and the requirement to resolve the issue of the use of the site in 2026.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 None.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 10.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 10.3 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

11. Next Steps

- 11.1 To progress the sale to Greenshields JCB Ltd on the terms identified in the confidential appendix to this report.
- 11.2 If contracts are not agreed and the sale falls through; the sites will be advertised on the open market to achieve a disposal at market value.

12. List of Appendices

- 12.1 Confidential Appendix – Greenshields JCB Ltd purchase offer and summary of RICS Red Book Market Valuation.
- 12.2 Appendix 2 – Asset Management Property file: 4 Crittall Drive (Asset/152) and Crittall Drive (Asset/395).

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 2 – Asset Number – ASSET/395

Address – Crittall Drive, Springwood Industrial Estate, Braintree, Essex CM7 2RT



Tenant	Not applicable
Lease Term	Not applicable
Tenure	Freehold
Site Area	1.120 m2, length of road
Book Valuation method of valuation	Infrastructure - £1
Market Valuation	Nil
Comments	Report on title obtained no restrictions on transfer, rights over secured will be retained by the Council and other beneficiaries as part of the transfer.

Report Title: Plant Equipment Replacement 2025-2026	
Report to: Cabinet	
Date: 15 th December 2025	For: Decision
Key Decision: Yes	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2025/29
Report Presented by: Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services	
Enquiries to: Debbie Bezzina, Transport Manager Debbie.bezzina@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek delegated authority to award any contract(s) and determine the most appropriate financing options at the conclusion of the procurement for the replacement of 18 pieces of plant equipment, to include, two tractors, two (4x4 utility vehicle,), two tow along mowers and 12 ride-on mowers.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Transformation, The Environment and Customer Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director (Operational), to award all associated contracts following the procurement of 18 pieces of plant equipment as follows: two tractors, two (4x4 utility vehicles), two tow along mowers and 12 ride-on mowers.
- 2.2 To delegate to the S151 Officer the decision to determine the most appropriate method of financing the procured plant equipment in line with the Council's capital and treasury management practices.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The current plant equipment is supplied on a lease basis. In 2024, these leases were extended for a further year, due to the low operating hours of many of the machines and condition of the tractors at that time, the decision was taken to review their replacement in 2025. As the plant equipment has started to deteriorate, it has the potential to adversely impact on providing essential services to maintain parks and open spaces, it is now proposed to acquire replacement plant equipment.
- 3.2 A full review of each piece of equipment has been conducted, including equipment type for suitability and quantity, to ensure it is still fit for purpose, both now and for the future. This has demonstrated that the current number of ride-on mowers was greater than needed and so this procurement has sought

a reduction of two machines. All other equipment type and quantity have remained.

- 3.3 The plant equipment is utilised by the Horticultural and Open spaces Teams to deliver both statutory and commercial services of grounds maintenance, such as cutting the grass on the Council's land, land occupied by our assets, and schools. Should we not replace the plant equipment in this service area, it could have a significant impact on the council's reputation, and an effect on the income that we currently receive for commercial activities.
- 3.4 Since extending the lease, one of the tractors sustained an unforeseen axle failure which resulted in an uneconomical repair, as the axle was discontinued by the manufacturer. Prior to this, the tractor had passed all safety inspections. This means that currently, and for the remainder of the 2025 season, the service has been required to hire a tractor when needed.
- 3.5 One of the Gators also sustained an uneconomical repair, and the decision was made to not repair this, but to proceed with just the one through the summer season and replace the second one in good time for 2026 cutting season.
- 3.6 The plant equipment recommended for replacement is beyond economical use and are a risk to the business to retain. They are likely to require substantial work and investment to continue delivering the expected standards of service, which impacts on the customer and our residents.
- 3.7 The 18 pieces of plant being considered within this report are not considered suitable for replacement with an alternative fuel product. Whilst an Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) exists or is being developed the technology, pricing and vehicle capabilities do not meet the Council's requirements at this time, therefore, it was recommended that for these 18 pieces of Plant, the Council opt for Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) models.
- 3.8 The current fuel contract has been renewed to facilitate the introduction of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) should the Council wish to opt for this fuel as a way of mitigating CO2 emission in the future.

4. Procurement Process

- 4.1 The procurement Partnership Limited Group (TPPL) will manage the tender process via their own e-tendering portal under the direction of the Essex Procurement Partnership, 18 pieces of plant equipment through four separate specifications will be tendered through Further Competition arrangements.

4.2 Procurement Timeline

Tender ITT Deadline – 31/10/25
Tender Consensus & Evaluation 21/11/25
Award Report – Governance 01/12/25 – 23/12/25
Estimate Award Date 16/01/26
Contract Execution 16/01/26 – 30/01/26
Raise Purchase Order 30/01/26

5. Tender evaluation panel

5.1 The panel for the quality evaluation will be represented by officers as follows:

Transport Manager, Braintree District Council
Horticultural Workshop Supervisor, Braintree District Council
Open Spaces Supervisor, Braintree District Council

5.2 The recommendations set out in this report will help the Council to deliver the following Corporate Priorities:

- Communities – our communities can thrive
- Environment – our environment is cherished
- Fit for the Future – ensuring our Council is fit for the future through our transformation programme

6. Consultation

6.1 The recommendations for this report have been undertaken in consultation with officers across Operations, finance and procurement.

7. Options

7.1 **Option 1 – Do Nothing.** This is not recommended as failure to replace this plant equipment carries a risk of it becoming more expensive to maintain or becoming unusable, which is already the case with two of them, and resulting in downtime impacting on the service delivery we offer commercially and for the land we maintain. Delaying a decision to replace this equipment could expose the Council to significant price increases and result in complaints as a result of the failure to deliver the expected service.

7.2 **Option 2 – Approve the delegated authority to replace the 18 pieces of Plant Equipment (Recommended Option)** This option is seeking to replace the 2 Tractors, 2 (4x4 utility vehicles), 12 Ride-on Mowers, and 2 tow-along Cutter. This procurement will allow the Council to remove costly hire charges and will ensure the Council is able to continue with the high standards currently enjoyed by residents of the Parks and Open Spaces and provide us with better sustainability.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The proposed Plant replacements have an estimated purchase price of £614,000. The Council's approach to financing operational vehicles is to assess the optimum funding arrangement consistent with the Council's capital and treasury management position. Where leasing (or similar) is proposed, a separate tender process is undertaken to obtain competitive financing rates.

8.2 The annual financing cost is funded through service budgets and the plant replacement reserve, the requirements for which are regularly reviewed as part of the annual budget process.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 This procurement exercise will be conducted in accordance with the Councils Constitution, Procurement Procedure Rules and all relevant legislative provisions. The Council is intending to use a legally compliant Framework which is open to the public sector to use. In doing so the Council will ensure that it adheres to the requirements of the relevant framework agreement.

10. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 10.1 Typically plant machinery has a cost-effective serviceable life cycle of 5 years. This means that any equipment purchased from this procurement would still be in service beyond vesting day (1st April 2028).
- 10.2 Post vesting day a new unitary council will still have obligations and commitments to still maintain the parks and open spaces, football pitches and any remaining contracts for school areas within the district which means the equipment will still be required and necessary into the future.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1 No other implications identified.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 12.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 12.3 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this proposal as the equipment being purchased is to replace the existing equipment like for like and there will not be any adverse impact on people with a particular characteristic.

13. Next Steps

- 13.1 Subject to Cabinet approving the recommendations within the report, the Council will proceed with the tender via the TPPL Framework.

13.2 At the conclusion of the procurement exercise, the Cabinet Member for Transformation, Environment and Customer Services, and s151 officer will undertake the decision to award in line with the delegations set out in this report.

14. List of Appendices

14.1 None.

15. Background Papers

15.1 None.

Agenda Item: 7

Report Title: Procurement of Plastic Sacks 2026/27	
Report to: Cabinet	
Date: 15 th December 2025	For: Decision
Key Decision: Yes	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2025/32
Report Presented by: Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services	
Enquiries to: Debbie Horey, Operations Contracts and Projects Manager debbie.horrey@braintree.gov.uk	

Confidential Appendix

This report has a confidential appendix which is not for publication as it includes exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Braintree District Council (the Council) to award two contracts;
- to award a contract for the procurement of plastic sacks.
 - to award a contract for compostable sacks.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the award of a contract to Cromwell Polythene for the procurement of plastic sacks for a contract term of 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years in 1-year increments. The contract value is expected to be £317,613.35 plus VAT over a five-year contract term.
- 2.2 To approve the award of a contract to Cromwell Polythene for the procurement of compostable sacks for a contract term of 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years in 1-year increments. The contract value is expected to be £26,387.62 plus VAT over a five-year contract term.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 As part of the Council's obligation to ensure containment and collection of waste and recycling, the Council requires plastic and compostable sacks for use by residents, staff for operational service delivery and commercial customers.

- 3.2 Due to upcoming changes in the method of collecting kerbside dry mixed recycling from June 2026, the Council's requirement for domestic clear dry mixed recycling sacks will cease. Therefore, on 2nd June 2025 the Council sought a short-term contract, to satisfy its current and known business as usual requirements to ensure sufficient stocks until a longer term contract had been established. The current contract is for three products only;
- Domestic Residual Sacks (black)
 - Domestic Residual Sacks (clear)
 - Commercial Recycling Sacks (clear)
- 3.3 The current contract expires on 3rd September 2026 and was for 15 months, however, all of the requirements have now been called off and this contract is complete.
- 3.4 Due to Simpler Recycling and the Council's waste review commitments, from June 2026 certain sack products will no longer be required such as clear recycling sacks as recycling will be contained in the new wheeled bins or boxes provided to residents. There will be a need for new sacks introduced. These are clinical waste sacks and Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) sacks. The collection of clinical waste is being brought in house from June 2026, where it is currently contracted out. The current contract is valued at £30,000 per annum of which 30% is recovered from Essex County Council (ECC). This arrangement will continue. The new collection service will utilise existing resources with no revenue costs other than the costs of the sacks. The Council will also be introducing a new Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) service for eligible residents who require additional collections of items such as nappies and sanitary products, above the three weekly collection of refuse. A provision for these sacks is also included in this procurement and contract.
- 3.5 There is no requirement for dog waste sacks, large litter bin sacks or small litter bin sacks until year 3 due to the quantity which the Council currently hold in stock. It is anticipated that stock will have been utilised by year 3 and therefore these will need to be reordered from that point forward.
- 3.6 A full list with a description of what each one is used for is below.

Product	Description	Required until 31 May 2026	Requirements from 1st June 2026
Residual Sacks (Black)	For residents who cannot facilitate a wheeled bin.	✓	✓
Recycling Sacks (clear)	To facilitate recycling for residents. Will be replaced by wheeled bins or boxes from 1 st June 2026.	✓	✗
Commercial Recycling Sacks (Clear)	To facilitate recycling for those who cannot accommodate a wheeled bin or box.	✓	✓

Commercial Residual Sacks (Blue)	To facilitate refuse for those who cannot accommodate a wheeled bin or box.	✓	✓
Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) (Grey)	To facilitate residents who require AHP collections more frequently than 3 weekly refuse schedule.	✗	✓
Clinical Waste Sacks (Yellow)	To facilitate the containment of clinical waste that does not include sharps eg hypodermic needles.	✗ currently outsourced	✓
Dog Waste Sacks (Red)	For the containment of dog waste in public use bins.	✓	✓
Litter Bin Sacks Large (Purple)	For the containment of litter in large public litter bins.	✓	✓
Litter Bin Sacks Small (Purple)	For the containment of litter in small litter bins (e.g. on lamp posts).	✓	✓
Dead Animal Sacks (Black)	For the containment of dead animals collected from roadside public highway by Street Scene operatives.	✓	✓
Compostable Caddy Liners	For residents who live in flats to assist in diverting food waste from refuse.	✓	✓
Compostable Garden Waste Sacks	For residents and commercial customers who cannot facilitate a garden waste bin.	✓	✓

3.7 Market engagement took place from 25th June 2025 to 21st July 2025 via the ESPO Framework, with all suppliers invited to respond. 5 suppliers responded which assisted in shaping the final tender documents, which were published on 3rd September 2025 for a four-week period.

3.8 Framework suppliers were invited to submit bids for both lots. It was originally anticipated that the requirement for lot 9 could be for all residents in the Braintree district, therefore would have been of higher financial value which is why this lot was tendered. However, the decision was subsequently made to reduce the requirement for food caddy liners to include only residents who live in flats. This was as a result of the flat trial and research undertaken which showed that participation in food waste was improved with the provision of a receptacle (caddy liner) to transport waste to the communal collection points.

3.9 The contract has been called off via the Council's own Framework Agreement (BDC Refuse Supplies Framework EPHF21-002 Lot 1) which has been in place since 6th December 2021 and expires on 5th December 2025. This framework is predominately for the Council to call off its refuse supplies requirements but is a national framework available for other public

sector bodies to use. This framework attracts a 1.5% rebate on all spend that is put through it. Accordingly, on a spend of £317,613.35 the framework will earn £4,764.20 of rebate back to the Council.

- 3.10 Cromwell Polythene Limited provided the most advantageous quote based on quality, price and social value for both lots 9 and 10. It is therefore recommended that the contract is awarded to Cromwell Polythene Limited. The prices provided by Cromwell have been included as Confidential Appendix A to this report.

The evaluation criteria was as follows;

Lot 9

Bidder		Cromwell	3 Non Complaint	2
Commercial Price	60%	£26,387.62	£37,329.78	£46,358.05
Commercial weighting	60%	60%	42%	34%
Question Criteria	35%	32%	20%	38%
Social Value	5%	0%	0%	0%
Total score	100%	92%	62%	72%
Pass/Fail		Pass	Fail	Pass

Lot 10

Bidder		Cromwell	2 Non Compliant	3
Commercial Price		£317,613.35	£344,678.00	£159,815.95
Commercial Weighting	60%	60%	55%	
Question Criteria	35%	27%	14%	11%
Social Value	5%	0%	0%	0%
Total score	100%	87%	69%	11%
Pass/Fail		Pass	Fail	Fail

- 3.11 No social value score could be allocated as there was less than £0.0100 of social value per £1.00 bid.
- 3.12 The recommendations set out in this report will help the Council to deliver the following Corporate Priorities:
- Environment – our environment is cherished as the Council is disposing of waste in a responsible manner, morally, environmentally, and socially and at a suitable processing facility.
 - Communities – our communities can thrive as a result of the proper disposal of waste keeping our streets and natural environment clear of litter.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 No consultation took place during the procurement of this contract. Consultation has been carried out in previous tender processes with Corporate Director, Operations and Cabinet Member, to ascertain the most appropriate method of delivering the required services.

5. Options

- 5.1 **Option 1 – To award the contracts for the procurement of plastic and compostable sacks to Cromwell Polythene.** This would preserve the Council’s ability to deliver operational services over the next 5 years. **This is the recommended option.**
- 5.2 **Option 2 - Do nothing** - If authority to award the contracts is not given, the current supply of sacks will diminish and the Council will not meet the obligation to ensure containment and collection of waste and recycling, for staff, residents and commercial customers to use. This will have a negative impact on recycling performance and other operational services such as the collection of litter and dead animals as the collection crews cannot collect recyclable and other waste streams presented in alternative sacks or bags. **This is not the recommended option.**

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There is potential for the range of sacks to increase or decrease or for new products to be included or substituted. The below tables show prices quoted from Cromwell Polythene based on indicative quantities provided within the pricing schedule at the time of tender.

Lot 9

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total price
£5,237.20	£5,257.13	£5,276.54	£5,296.98	£5,319.78	£26,387.62

Lot 10

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total Price
£45,338.37	£45,821.87	£74,907.87	£75,391.37	£76,153.87	£317,613.35

- 6.2 The pricing schedules supplied by Cromwell Polythene Limited will form a price list that will be used as the basis of charging, for each respective lot, throughout the duration of the contracts and will remain fixed for 12 months from the contract commencement date. Suppliers may request a variation to some or all its pricing on the anniversary of each contract year. if agreed in writing and signed by both parties. There is no reference to CPI, RPI, or other market-driven price adjustment mechanisms within the contracts.
- 6.3 Following the Waste Review and proposed changes to domestic recycling and refuse collection arrangements from June 2026, service budgets for

sack procurement have been realigned to reflect future requirements as set out in the Table in para 3.6.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 When undertaking this procurement exercise, the Council has complied with the relevant statutory provisions, and its own contract procedure rules as set out in its Constitution. A formal contract will be signed, sealed, and awarded following approval.

8. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 8.1 It is anticipated that during the life of this contract, the local government reorganisation process may potentially impact this contract. Impacts may include, but are not limited to, modifications such as a transfer of the legal entity, significant increases and/or decreases in the value/volume of goods/services/works required due to the change in size/scope of the Council, and/or changes to the scope of the nature of goods/services/works required. Although any contract scope changes should broadly relate to the nature of the existing scope, new goods/services/works of a related nature may be required that were not previously included.
- 8.2 The scale and exact timing of the changes are unknown at this point. All suppliers who work with the Council will be made aware through contract management meetings and where possible, work with the Council, to adapt to any changes/modifications as required to ensure smooth transition and continuity of services.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 10.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

10.3 There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment as this contract will not be aimed at set groups and therefore indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

11. List of Appendices

11.1 Confidential Appendix A – Pricing quoted from Cromwell.

12. Background Papers

13.1 Procurement pack.

Report Title: To award a contract for recycling boxes and lids	
Report to: Cabinet	
Date: 15 th December 2025	For: Decision
Key Decision: Yes	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2025/69
Report Presented by: Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services	
Enquiries to: Esme McCambridge, Operations Strategy & Business Development Manager esme.mccambridge@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for Braintree District Council (the Council) to award a contract for the provision of recycling boxes and lids.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the award of a contract to provide recycling boxes and lids to IPL Ltd for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for 2 years, in 12 month increments. The contract value of the contract is expected to be £295,465.28 over the 5 year period.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Council approved a change to the way it would collect waste and recycling from June 2026 at a Cabinet meeting in May 2025. As part of this, the receptacles used by residents to store and present recycling for collection would need to change from single use plastics bags to wheeled bins, or recycling boxes.
- 3.2 By default, most households will receive new wheeled bins for their recycling, but for those who were assessed under the criteria set out in the Household Waste and Recycling Policy, as requiring an alternative receptacle, a number of 55 litre recycling boxes would need to be provided instead. These households are known as needing a Non-Standard Waste Collection Service.
- 3.3 Non-Standard waste collection services will include either 4 or 8 boxes to be provided to households, in order to provide them the same capacity as if they were to receive wheeled bins. Through the work that has been done in the months since the May report, it is expected that around 5% of households (3,500) will require these alternative receptacles.
- 3.4 Prior to the May Cabinet decisions, a procurement exercise was conducted with the report recommending to award that contract in order to facilitate

delivery of bins and boxes from February 2026. However, as the procurement process continued, the winning manufacturer that was listed in the May report was unable to continue with that procurement process and therefore it ended without a successful award.

- 3.5 Since 13th June 2025, the Council has worked with colleagues in the Essex Procurement Partnership to find alternative ways to procure and award a new contract. This included an unsuccessful attempt to award from a framework before going to open tender again on 1st October 2025.
- 3.6 The most recent tender process received one compliant tender only, which was moderated on 3rd November 2025 by the Strategy and Business Development Manager, Contracts and Projects Manager and the Waste Service Manager. The only tender was provided by IPL Ltd and was successful in moderation.

Bidder	Weighting	IPL Ltd
Commercial Price		£295,465.28
Commercial Weighting	50%	50%
Question Criteria	45%	27%
Social Value	5%	To be added when scored
Total Score	100%	77% (-SV)
Pass / Fail		Pass

- 3.7 The recommendations set out in this report will help the Council to deliver the following Corporate Priorities:
- Environment – our environment is cherished by;
 - Supporting residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and be more resilient to climate related impacts.
 - Improve the way that we manage waste and encourage residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle more.

4. Consultation

4.1 No consultation was carried out during this procurement exercise.

5. Options

5.1 **Option 1 – Award a contract to IPL Ltd. (Recommended).** This would ensure that the Council could provide the alternative receptacles to the households which have been identified as requiring a non-standard waste collection service. It will fulfil the requirements and ambitions set out in the May 2025 Cabinet report to improve collection services from June 2026.

5.2 **Option 2 – No Nothing. (Not Recommended).** This would leave the Council without a contract for recycling box and lid provision and risk the changes to services being delivered on time to approximately 5% of residents by June 2026.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The contract value published in the May 2025 Cabinet report states that the expected overall value of the contract, to be awarded to IPL Ltd, was £125,640, at £6.98 per recycling box and lid unit. Since this procurement exercise, there has been further in-depth assessments carried out to understand a more accurate percentage of properties in the district that will require a non-standard collection service – and therefore provision of boxes. As a result of this, the quantity of recycling boxes and lids during the lifetime of the contract has increased from 18,000 to 31,944 boxes and 38,880 lids. This is because of the volumes that lids and boxes are sold in, which are different to each other, as well as the additional work done to assess property needs. Additional lids are purchased as they are more susceptible to breakages and therefore more are likely to be needed but number will be monitored before additional half loads are purchased.
- 6.2 Due to the unprecedented demand for recycling receptacles, given the national changes required to collections as a result of Simpler Recycling, buyer demand has increased. This increase in demand is reflected in the unit cost for the recycling boxes and lids under this procurement. The unit cost increase is due to the additional manufacturing and resources required to satisfy the industry demand.
- 6.3 The current unit cost has now increased to £8.70 for the box and lid, based on a full load purchase of each for the Year 1 requirement and £9.30 for all half load orders, where less boxes are required. To ensure the contract remains financially viable, future year orders will be bulked over alternate years to ensure cost effectiveness.

Boxes	Full Loads	Volume	Half Loads	Volume	Total Volume
Year 1	10	29040			29040
Year 4-5			2	2904	2904
Total	10	29040	2	2904	31944

Lids	Full Loads	Volume	Half Loads	Volume	Total Volume
Year 1	6	33300			33300
Year 4-5			2	5500	5500
Total	6	33300	2	5500	38800

- 6.4 There is sufficient budget confirmed and allocated in line with the contract value. In year 1, all the new boxes will be provided as part of the waste service review and the capital funding that was allocated in the report of May 2025. Therefore, the majority of the costs under the contract will be incurred at the start of the contract. The Year 1 requirement of £262,020 will be funded via the confirmed waste service review financial allocation. The future year requirements total £33,445 across four years, and this will be funded from revenue budgets and will be utilised for replacement boxes over the contract period.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 In undertaking this procurement exercise, the Council has complied with the relevant statutory provisions and its own contract procedure rules as set out under its Constitution. A formal contract will be signed, sealed, and awarded following approval.

8. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 8.1 It is anticipated, that during the life of this contract, the local government reorganisation process may potentially impact this contract. Impacts may include, but are not limited to, modifications such as a transfer of the legal entity, significant increases and/or decreases in the value/volume of goods/services/works required due to the change in size/scope of the Council, and/or changes to the scope of the nature of goods/services/works required. Although any contract scope changes should broadly relate to the nature of the existing scope, new goods/services/works of a related nature may be required that were not previously included.
- 8.2 The scale and exact timing of the changes are unknown at this point. All suppliers who work with the Council will be made aware through contract management meetings and where possible, work with the Council, to adapt to any changes/modifications as required to ensure smooth transition and continuity of services.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 10.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 10.3 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

11. Next Steps

- 11.1 Subject to approval of the recommendations within the report, the Council will issue the contract to IPL Ltd with a contract start date of 16th January 2026.

12. List of Appendices

- 12.1 There are no Appendices in this report.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 There are no Background Papers in this report.

Report Title: Commercial Waste Service Review including Trade Waste 2026/27 Fees and Charges	
Report to: Cabinet	
Date: 15 th December 2025	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2025/50
Report Presented by: Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services	
Enquiries to: Esme McCambridge, Operations Strategy and Business Development Manager esme.mccambridge@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report seeks approval for Braintree District Council (the Council) to introduce a new garden waste commercial collection service from 1st April 2026 which forms part of a package of waste collection services for businesses and supports compliance with Simpler Recycling.
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval for delegated authority to be given to the Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services to approve the charges for the Commercial (Trade) Waste Service for 2026/27.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the introduction of a garden waste collection service for commercial (Trade) waste customers from 1st April 2026.
- 2.2 To approve delegated authority to Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services to approve the 2026/27 Commercial (Trade) Waste charges once all applicable costs are available.

3. Summary of Issues

3.1 Commercial (Trade) Waste Service Charges for 2026/27

- 3.1.1 The Council, as a Waste Collection Authority (WCA), has a duty under section 45(1)(b) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to arrange the collection of commercial waste, where requested to do so. The Council provides a competitively priced service however, businesses are not obliged to use the service and can procure their own collection requirements via any other third-party supplier.

- 3.1.2 The Commercial (Trade) Waste Service generates income of £1.2 million covering operational and disposal costs and contributing towards management and overhead costs. Charges are inclusive of disposal costs which are payable to Essex County Council (ECC).
- 3.1.3 When developing the proposed charges for financial year 2026/7 the following considerations are made;
- Inflationary and other changes in the Council's operational costs relating to the service
 - Changes in the processing and disposal costs of the waste as controlled by Essex County Council
- 3.1.4 Using this analysis, a recommendation to increase charges will be made, however the disposal costs are yet to be confirmed by ECC. ECC will be seeking approval for their fees and charges at Cabinet on 24th November and therefore, the Council are unable to recommend the fees for 2026/27 at this time and are seeking a delegation.

3.2 **Proposed Commercial Garden Waste Collection Service**

- 3.2.1 The Council, under its duty to arrange the collection of commercial waste upon request, provides a reliable service to our commercial customers. Charges are appropriate to ensure full cost recovery for the service including collection, treatment and / or disposal of waste to ensure that the cost of the service is not borne by residents.
- 3.2.2 In May 2025, Cabinet agreed the implementation of a new Waste Strategy (the Strategy) for the Braintree District which aims to deliver improved recycling collections and efficiency savings. The Strategy and services will ensure the Council meets the requirements of Simpler Recycling for residents and reference was made to ensure that the same was applied to the Council's commercial services.
- 3.2.3 Simpler Recycling also requires all businesses to separate recyclable materials that the Council collects and must ensure these are recycled. The scope and range of materials to be separated for recycling mirrors the residential collections and are consistent with the new waste and recycling collection service to be introduced from June 2026. The materials to be separated are:
- dry recyclables - paper, card, plastic, metal, and glass
 - organic recycling - food recycling and garden waste
 - residual waste – for disposal
 - and by 2027 soft plastics, such as plastic film and carrier bags
- 3.2.4 Simpler Recycling references the waste hierarchy, which ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment. To ensure best practice of the Council, it is important that it collects and recycles all

recycling streams, in line with the hierarchy, for both residential and commercial collections.

- 3.2.5 The Council has received contact from some businesses enquiring about a garden waste collection service. To understand the potential demand for a new commercial garden waste collection service, officers conducted a survey with existing customers. Out of 55 businesses that responded, 30% of those confirmed that they would use the service or expressed interest in it. It is therefore anticipated, that whilst there is some initial interest, there is likely to be limited demand for the first year, meaning that initially the service may be able to be managed within existing resources. Once agreed and embedded, further marketing could be pursued to increase the customer base.

3.3 Proposed New Fee for Commercial Garden Waste Collections

- 3.3.1 Current commercial waste charges are competitive and inclusive of containers, scheduled collections, treatment / disposal and any required legal documentation. As with all other Council commercial waste services within the district boundaries, no VAT is charged.
- 3.3.2 The proposed charges for commercial garden waste collection will consider the applicable costs, in the same way that fees are set for material streams currently collected. These cannot be fully established yet whilst we await the disposal fee decision from ECC, so the delegation sought would include setting the garden waste fees, if the new service is approved.
- 3.3.3 In order to establish best practice and benchmark the service being offered, officers contacted a number of Local Authorities to establish their approach and any further relevant information. A summary of the results of this exercise is included as a background paper. Most Councils either do not publish a separate commercial charge or use their residential garden waste subscription rates.
- 3.3.4 The recommendations set out in this report will help the Council to deliver the following Corporate Priorities:
- Environment – our environment is cherished. By introducing a commercial garden waste collection service, the Council is ensuring that it meets the requirements of the Simpler Recycling strategy and supporting local businesses to recycle a wider range of recyclable materials. This will also assist in reducing the amount of recyclable materials sent to landfill or incineration and have an impact on the overall recycling rate.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Benchmarking for commercial garden waste collections was completed, using other Local Authorities and private companies, to understand who offers this type of service and what the costings around these were. Out of those contacted only a few responded and out of the received responses, two of the authorities in our areas offer a service. One is contracted out, the other is managed in house, offering a 240L commercial bin service. Local Authorities outside of Essex offer a limited commercial service but on an ad hoc basis

and is absorbed by the residential service. The results are provided in background paper A.

5. Options

- 5.1 **Option 1 – Approve the new commercial garden waste service and the request for delegated authority to Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services to approve the 20206/27 charges for the Commercial (Trade) Waste Service, including the new garden waste fees.** This will allow for the introduction of a commercial garden waste collection service from 1st April 2026, within current resources. The delegation enables the fees to be appropriately set once all relevant costs are available to ensure that the service can recover all costs and seek to achieve a commercial income. The timing of the decision is key to ensure all customers can be made aware of new charges ahead of the new financial year. **This is the recommended option.**
- 5.2 **Option 2 – Do nothing.** If the Council decides not to provide a commercial garden waste collection, customers may seek this service from a third-party provider which could result in loss of current and potential business for the Council. **This is not the recommended option.**

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Any proposed charges are to be set in line with the Council's Charging Policy that requires services to aim for full cost recovery unless there is a justification as to why this should not apply. The financial implications will be further detailed in a delegated decision when the actual charges are being requested for approval.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council is a Waste Collection Authority (WCA) under the Environmental Protection Act, 1990. This sets a legislative framework with statutory duties and non-statutory guidance for delivery of waste services.

8. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 8.1 Local government reorganisation will potentially impact elements of all operational waste services. The scale and exact timing of the changes are unknown at this point and therefore it is important that services continue to ensure best value and service delivery for our residents and customers. The Council will continue to adapt to any changes/modifications as required to ensure smooth transition and continuity of services.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 10.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 10.3 There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment as this report will not be aimed at set groups and therefore indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

11. Next Steps

- 11.1 If Cabinet approve the introduction of commercial garden waste collections, the costs will be confirmed and published in time for the start of the 2026/27 financial year.

12. List of Appendices

- 12.1 There are no Appendices in this report.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 Benchmarking of commercial garden waste.
- 13.2 Commercial garden waste engagement survey.

Report Title: Second Quarter Performance Management Report 2025/26	
Report to: Cabinet	
Date: 15 th December 2025	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2025/49
Report Presented by: Councillor Kevin Bowers, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Performance	
Enquiries to: Tom Williams, Corporate Performance Coordinator tom.williams@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the performance of Braintree District Council (the Council) at the end of the second quarter (July 2025 to September 2025).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is to note the performance of the Council for the second quarter (July 2025 to September 2025).

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Council keeps a record of its performance which is reported to Cabinet every quarter for consideration and noting.
- 3.2 The performance in the second quarter is broadly in line with expectations with most projects underway and progressing well. 29 projects are on track at the end of the second quarter.
- 3.3 Five projects completed in the second quarter, where:
- The Safer Streets Programme concluded in Halstead.
 - A sale was agreed for plots 5 – 8 at Horizon 120.
 - Arrangements were made to sell the soil with the plots at Horizon 120.
 - The North Essex Councils Climate Partnership published its risk register, and
 - The Essex Flood Guide was published and promoted by the Council.
- 3.4 Four projects have an amber status. Projects with an amber status are:
- The development of a renewable energy supplementary planning document, where resources are focused on delivering the local plan, and there is uncertainty around future renewable energy policies.

- The development of a waste supplementary planning document, where additional time to make all required considerations will likely result in an extension of the target date.
 - The delivery of the Green Skills programme, where a lower-than-expected uptake by learners has resulted in a reduced capacity for the programme.
 - The support of school access to university open days, where university capacity to facilitate the open day has been more limited and conditional than expected.
- 3.5 One project has a red status, where the regeneration works to Witham and Halstead town centres are still under discussion with Essex Highways to agree all aspects of adoptable works before a programme of works can be agreed.
- 3.6 Further information regarding the completed, on track, amber and red statuses can be seen within the detail for the respective projects.
- 3.7 Seven performance indicators have met or exceeded target and nine have not met target. For the performance indicators which have not met target, five have missed target by less than 5%, and four have missed target by more than 5%.
- 3.8 Performance indicators which have missed target by less than 5% are:
- Percentage of household waste sent for recycling, where a reduced tonnage of garden waste has resulted in a lower outturn.
 - Kilograms of residual waste per household, where despite an improvement against last year, a new and lower target was not achieved.
 - Percentage of fly tips cleared within 24 hours, where increased time to gather evidence prior to clearing caused a number of breaches.
 - Council tax collection rate, where minor variations against last year have resulted in a reduced outturn, and
 - Business rates collection rate had reduction against target. It is expected this will be on target by the end of the year, as minor variation year to year is expected.
- 3.9 The following performance indicators missed target by more than 5%:
- The number of affordable homes delivered, where delays in completions resulted in a low outturn this quarter.
 - Percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved within timescale, where applications effected by funding challenges last year are being approved during this reporting period.
 - Percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact in the customer service centre where there is a continued need to transfer complex calls through to specific departments where the customer needs a more detailed response, and
 - Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes, where the local council tax support scheme has changed the profile of cases resulting in fewer but more complex cases.

Further details of all performance indicator outturn can be found in the 'Performance indicators in detail' section of the report.

Financial Performance and Projected Outturn 2025-26

- 3.10 The review of the financial performance and projection for the year at this second quarter (Q2) shows an overall positive variance of £1.5 million, compared to £1.1 million reported at Q1. The main reason for the change in forecast is due to projected increases in income and also extended periods of staffing vacancies across services.
- 3.11 Treasury management income is projected to outperform budget due to higher cash balances and higher-for-longer interest rates. Sustainable Development is projecting a positive variance, mainly due to staffing vacancies but also from overachievement of planning related income. There are also positive variances within the Operations and ICT services which have primarily arisen due to staff vacancies and, additionally, there has been an increase in operational income.
- 3.12 Asset Management, Environment, Housing, and Strategic Investment are all projecting adverse positions greater than 5% (and £50k) of their budget. Both Asset Management and Environment are forecasting a shortfall in income, and there is additional staffing costs anticipated in Environment due to ongoing interim staffing in Building Control. Housing is projecting an overspend on staffing related costs due to service demand pressures and the need to cover unplanned absences through agency staff. Cost pressures in relation to temporary housing and nightly lets is being met from government grants and subsidy. Strategic Investment is projecting an overspend due to increased staffing costs and a reduction in service costs rechargeable to capital projects as the team supports a wider range of project delivery.
- 3.13 Following confirmation of the pay award, service budgets have been updated, and the in-year cost pressure is being met from overachieved treasury management income.
- 3.14 Significant adjustments were identified and included in the initial budget proposals for 2026/27 after the Q1 review had been completed. With the updated forecast, a further review will be undertaken to identify any ongoing risks and opportunities that may still need to be reflected in the final budget proposals.
- 3.15 Capital expenditure to the end of Q2 was £2.6 million, with the main areas of spend being on the Witham Community Centre, a new 3G artificial pitch in Witham, planned maintenance on Council owned property and community assets. There are several projects where budgeted spend is now expected to slip into next year but also several areas where projects are progressing faster than was originally assumed, bringing forward spend against budgets originally profiled into 2026/27. An underspend on the Causeway House refresh project has been included in forecasting available capital resources for the 2026/27 budget along with the other additional capital resources generated in the reporting period.

4. Consultation

4.1 There are no consultations to consider as a part of this report.

5. Options

5.1 There are no options to consider as a result of this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The report provides an update as to the financial position as at the end of the quarter, covering the revenue and capital outturn for the period.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report. All project specific implications are considered as part of those particular projects.

8. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

8.1 There is no implications on Local Government Reorganisation as a result of this report.

9. Other Implications

9.1 A summary of complaints received each quarter, analysed by outcome (justified, partially justified, and not justified) is provided.

9.2 The environment priority has a number of actions that are designed to have a positive impact on the environment and climate change. An update on the progress of the actions un the Climate Change Action Plan is included, classified under the themes of the Climate Change Strategy.

9.3 An updated position for the delivery of the Fit For The Future programme is provided.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and

(c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

10.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

10.3 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will/will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

11. Next Steps

11.1 The performance report will go to the next available Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

12. List of Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 – Second Quarter Performance Management Report 2025/26.

13. Background Papers

13.1 Previous performance reports are published on the Council website once noted by Cabinet. They are published at [Our Performance](#).



Second Quarter Performance Management Report

1st July to
30th September 2025



Braintree
District Council

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Section 1: Introduction and Summary

Purpose of the Report






The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the quarter in relation to the Annual Plan 2025/26. This sets out the key activities being implemented to deliver the corporate priorities and summarises the measures in place by aligning key performance indicators to the priorities within the Corporate Strategy 2024 – 2028. Further detail is given in relation to a set of business performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, our people, health and safety.

This report does not contain details of the numerous activities ongoing in each service area that also contribute to delivering what is important and will make a difference to all in the district. Full details of all projects and performance indicators used to measure the outcomes are available upon request.




Summary of the Corporate Projects current position for the end of the quarter

Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Communities	2	14	-	-	-
Prosperity	2	9	2	1	-
Environment	4	6	2	-	-
TOTAL	8	29	4	1	-




KEY:

-  Project completed
-  Project on target
-  Project scope/target date requires attention
-  Project requires amendment
-  Project aborted/closed

Summary of the Key Performance Indicators position for the end of the quarter

Status of indicators			
			Data Only
7	5	4	5

KEY:

-  Performance Indicator has achieved target
-  Performance Indicator is up to 5% below target
-  Performance Indicator is 5% or more off target

Summary Position

The performance in the second quarter is broadly in line with expectations with most projects underway and progressing well. 29 projects are on track at the end of the second quarter.

Five projects completed in the second quarter, where:

- The Safer Streets Programme concluded in Halstead.
- A sale was agreed for plots 5 -8 at Horizon 120.
- Arrangements were made to sell the soil with the plots at Horizon 120.
- The North Essex Councils Climate Partnership published its risk register, and
- The Essex Flood Guide was published and promoted by the Council.

Four projects have an amber status. Projects with an amber status are:

- The development of a renewable energy supplementary planning document, where resources are focused on delivering the local plan, and there is uncertainty around future renewable energy policies.
- The development of a waste supplementary planning document, where additional time to make all required considerations will likely result in an extension of the target date.
- The delivery of the Green Skills programme, where a lower-than-expected uptake by learners has resulted in a reduced capacity for the programme, and
- The support of school access to university open days, where university capacity to facilitate the open day has been more limited and conditional than expected.

One project has a red status, where the regeneration works to Witham and Halstead town centres are still under discussion with Essex Highways to agree all aspects of adoptable works before a programme of works can be agreed.

Further information regarding the completed, on track, amber and red statuses can be seen within the detail for the respective projects.

Seven performance indicators have met or exceeded target and nine have not met target. For the performance indicators that have not met target, five have missed target by less than 5% and four have missed target by more than 5%.

Performance indicators which have missed target by less than 5% are:

- Percentage of household waste sent for recycling, where a reduced tonnage of garden waste has resulted in a lower outturn.
- Kilograms of residual waste per household, where despite an improvement against last year a new, lower target was not achieved.
- Percentage of fly tips cleared within 24 hours, where increased time to gather evidence prior to clearing caused a number of breaches of timescales.
- Council tax collection rate, where minor variations against last year have resulted in a reduced outturn, and
- Business rates collection rate had a reduction against target. It is expected that this will be on target by the end of the year as minor variation year to year is expected.

The following indicators missed target by more than 5%:

- Number of affordable homes delivered, where delays in completions resulted in a low outturn this quarter.
- Percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved within timescale, where applications effected by funding challenges last year are being approved during this reporting period.

- Percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact in the customer service centre where there is a continued need to transfer complex calls through to specific departments where the customer needs a more detailed response, and;
- Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes where changes to the local council tax support scheme has changed the profile of cases resulting in fewer but more complex cases.



Further details of all performance indicator out turn can be found in the 'Performance Indicators in detail' section of the report.





Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy




Communities



Priority 1: Improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for individuals and families and reduce health inequalities focusing on prevention and early intervention

Project title & progress	Target date & status
<p>1.1 - Support residents and communities impacted by the cost-of-living crisis through initiatives raised by the £1m new homes bonus.</p> <p>A cost-of-living residents survey has been created to gain insight into the current challenges faced by residents. The survey was released on 11 September and has already had over 350 responses. This work will be used to inform future cost-of-living support.</p> <p>Further data analysis work is taking place to overlay data on social rent arrears, council tax debt, food bank use, poor property energy efficiency rating and other indicators of poverty and hardship to help develop a model to assist in proactive support to residents.</p> <p>The Agewell support offered across the district from July through to the end of September supported 23 new clients, and addressed a total of 26 individual cases.</p> <p>Work continues to support residents in accessing unclaimed benefits, and in the second quarter has helped residents to access nearly £87,000 of benefits for which they were eligible but not claiming.</p> <p>Nearly 2,500 'boost your budget' books have been distributed, receiving exceptionally positive feedback. Particularly, staff at Job Centre have praised the resource, and find it a valuable tool to help support clients.</p> <p>Research has been undertaken to survey homeless individuals, particularly those rough sleeping or sofa-surfing, to better understand what specific support people in these situations need. The lived experience of residents has been invaluable in identifying practical support such as internet access, places to charge mobile phones, support directories, amongst other suggestions. This feedback is being formalised and will be published to employees working with those at risk of homelessness to enhance understanding and ensure these needs can be addressed readily.</p>	<p>August 2026</p> 
<p>1.2 - Deliver activities to support the priorities of the LiveWell Strategy.</p> <p>The Council is working in partnership with Essex County Council and St Helena Hospice to deliver a 'Compassionate Communities' approach in the district, focusing on the Livewell and Diowell domains. A stakeholder workshop is scheduled on 21 October, facilitated by St Helena Hospice.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 




<p>Planning for the Braintree District Sports and Volunteer Awards is underway. Public Health Practitioners are supporting Active Braintree and Active Essex to organise the event, taking place on 29 October.</p> <p>The Council is supporting the Essex County Council Children’s Commissioner’s planned autumn events in the shape of ‘School Transition Roadshows’, the dates for which are to be confirmed but anticipated to fall throughout October in mid-Essex.</p>	
<p>1.3 - Administer the Health and Wellbeing Panel Grants.</p> <p>Eight small grants have been successful in 2025/26 to date, for values up to £1,000. These are Fusion Lifestyle, CARA Essex, Carers Connect, Braintree Mencap, Crossroads Braintree and Chelmsford, Healthwatch Essex, Chapel Community Care, and Rayne Boxing Club, for various projects. A further two grant applications are being considered.</p> <p>The remaining allocation of the grant fund will be available for large grants up to £10,000. The process for this is currently being confirmed.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>1.4 - Procure and implement a 3-year contract for leisure services in the Braintree District.</p> <p>The new contract with Freedom Leisure commenced on 1 September. Daily updates have moved to weekly meetings with officers from the Council to support mobilisation and transition. From October these will move into monthly operational meetings and be incorporated into business-as-usual activities.</p> <p>Throughout September both Freedom and Council officers attended Leisure Centre member engagement sessions to hear feedback and for Freedom to answer any queries.</p> <p>The annual service plan meeting with Freedom is due to take place in November. The Quarterly Strategic Partnership board meetings have been set up throughout the year, with the first taking place in November also. Monthly contract meetings have been established covering operations, Property and Assets, and site visits.</p>	<p>October 2025</p> 

Priority 2: Provide affordable, high quality and safe homes that meet the needs of our residents

<p>2.1 - Revise the Local Plan in line with recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>Work continues to identify sites which meet National Government Housing Targets. Site selection work and highways evidence work is due to complete by the end of December. It is anticipated that a statutory Regulation 18 consultation will begin in February 2026.</p>	<p>June 2026</p> 
<p>2.2 - Work with Essex County Council on the outcomes of the research from the Housing Learning and Improvement Network to develop a Supported Housing Strategy.</p> <p>The County Wide Advisory Group for Supported Housing met in September to continue collaborative work in response to the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. The meeting reaffirmed the importance of proactive, cross-district coordination, particularly in light of ongoing delays to national guidance. While a full government response to the initial consultation was expected following Parliament’s Summer Recess which ended on 1 September, no further update has been published to date. A second consultation on draft regulations remains scheduled for early 2026, with implementation to follow as soon as is practicably possible.</p> <p>Locally, Essex County Council (ECC) is leading the development of a draft Supported Housing Strategy for Essex, supported by an external advisor. The strategy will align with anticipated national standards while addressing local needs across vulnerable groups, including those affected by domestic abuse, mental health challenges, and disabilities. ECC met with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in August, and MHCLG have indicated a desire to meet with the County Wide Advisory Group.</p> <p>The advisory group is looking to address a number of strategic and operational issues, including: how to effectively map void units and understand current capacity, how best to engage with health colleagues to integrate with health services, resource planning in respect of the cross over with the implementation of the Renters Rights Bill, data gathering, and what lessons can be learned from similar pilots in other authorities.</p>	<p>December 2026</p> 
<p>2.3 - Establish a Landlord Register as part of the regulations introduced by the Renters Rights Bill.</p> <p>The Renters Rights Bill is currently undergoing the required parliamentary process and is anticipated to gain Royal Assent in the third quarter. A cross-departmental internal working group has been established to prepare for this.</p> <p>In September, a local authority checklist was published detailing necessary preparations for when the act is enacted. The working group is evaluating the checklist requirements and the associated cost implications of responding to the new duties in the Bill.</p>	<p>March 2027</p> 

<p>A business plan is in development to plan for three levels of response to the bill. A basic, intermediate, and advanced option are anticipated to be proposed, though the adopted response will be determined by the level of 'new burden' funding provided by central government, which is unknown presently.</p>	
<p>2.4 - Through the Homelessness Prevention Partnership distribute the rough sleeping Winter Pressure Fund.</p> <p>During the second quarter, the Council awarded a total of £8,137.73 through the Winter Pressures Fund, supporting tenancy sustainment and preventing rough sleeping. Peabody awarded £490.95 during the same period. The Council's allocations included rent arrears clearance and support for accommodation essentials, while Peabody's award focused on rent payment assistance. The fund continues to be used flexibly to respond to emerging needs, with a combined remaining balance of £41,495.81 across both allocations. Compared to the first quarter, where the Council awarded £5,095.51 and Peabody made no allocations, the second quarter reflects a significant increase in activity and fund utilisation.</p> <p>The fund continues to support a range of interventions, including rent in advance, arrears clearance, and essential accommodation items. It has also enabled partnership working with organisations such as CHESS and First Stop to provide accommodation essentials and weather-appropriate supplies for those sleeping rough.</p> <p>The Homelessness Prevention Partnership remains the key forum for identifying and responding to cases where targeted financial support can prevent rough sleeping or sustain tenancies for those at risk.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>2.5 - Develop options and feasibility to provide Temporary Accommodation that is fit for the future needs of the district.</p> <p>The strategic recommendation is that a 6-bed unit is required to meet current and projected temporary accommodation needs in Braintree. A secondary workstream is underway to explore the feasibility of a larger unit that could be reconfigured to consolidate smaller units or existing contracts. The Council is liaising with Eastlight Community Homes regarding the potential availability of a sheltered scheme, following their recent board paper on asset disposal.</p> <p>Bi-weekly meetings have been established with Asset Management and Housing to ensure regular updates and maintain momentum. These meetings will also support the development of a realistic timescale for delivery.</p> <p>The Housing Research and Development team have engaged a Data Science Fellow and Intelligence Manager at Essex County Council to peer review the data to ensure accuracy and identify any miscalculations. The Council also continues to contact neighbouring local authorities to compare challenges and identify potential resolutions.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 

Priority 3: Reduce social isolation and loneliness and support communities to build positive social networks and connections.

<p>3.1 - Build Witham Sports Ground 3G Pitch.</p> <p>Practical completion was achieved on 30 May, marking the project as complete. The pitch is now in use.</p>	<p>June 2025</p> 
<p>3.2 - Continue to work with partners to deliver various activities and initiatives supporting people experiencing loneliness or social isolation.</p> <p>In July the Council attended the Active Essex Voluntary and Community Service meeting. The group discussed the challenges presented to the sector including recruitment of volunteers, networking opportunities and the availability of funding. The group is awaiting an announcement from Active Essex regarding the appointment of partners to support the group. During the session, many partners expressed that the Council’s involvement was highly valued and requested more meetings facilitated by the Council.</p> <p>The Council has also identified an area of need in the Armed Forces community, with the latest needs assessment highlighting that nearly 70% of respondents agreed loneliness and social isolation were significant issues. Work is ongoing with the Royal British Legion to evaluate the new veterans ID card to enable public and charity sector services to better identify veterans.</p> <p>In August the first Food Network focus group was held. This is a joint session between the Cost-of-Living and Social Isolation and Loneliness groups, aimed at bringing together organisations delivering food initiatives across both areas. The goal is to create a shared toolkit of local projects, enabling cross-referral and raising awareness of available support, whilst expanding the offering to local residents.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>3.3 - Award contract and start to build Witham Community Centre.</p> <p>Work on the Community Centre is progressing well. Due to the good weather over the summer, the construction team have bought forward the building of the car park which has progressed quickly. Blockwork and brickwork continues, and utility services have been ordered. Planned completion of 15 May 2026 is still on target. Before a final decision can be made on the boundary treatment, a site visit has been planned with the developer and the land agent for the neighbouring site.</p>	<p>July 2026</p> 

Priority 4: Develop safer and more resilient communities empowering residents to take ownership of local projects and initiatives

4.1 - Through the safer streets funding, prevent violence against women and girls in public, neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour in Halstead.

The safer streets programme in Halstead has now concluded, delivering a positive impact on the residents of Halstead. Halstead Town Council noted that there has been a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour and shoplifting in the bid areas, particularly due to employing the Street Warden who regularly patrols the bid areas and wider areas of the town.

The programme has delivered numerous positive outcomes, including:

- 29 CCTV cameras were installed to help deter crime and record any crimes which may take place.
- The Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse delivered 811 specialist counselling sessions for women and girls.
- Essex Police completed monthly ASB & Crime Prevention patrols and dedicated over 500 policing hours to the programme which exceeded the original planned amount.
- The Outreach Sports Programme by Fusion delivered over 500 free activities to more than 2,800 young people in Halstead.
- The number of Neighbourhood Watch members in Halstead increased over the course of the Safer Streets programme by a minimum of 5%.

Partners provided positive feedback regarding the delivery of the programme and would all recommend other local partners to take part in future Safer Streets programmes. It was highlighted by multiple partners that the programme has strengthened local partnerships, and they would like this collaboration to continue

To continue the work of Safer Streets in Halstead, Halstead Town Council applied to the Police Fire and Crime Commissioners's Community Safety Development fund in order to fund the Essex Youth Service to deliver an additional evening at the Halstead Youth Centre, which will increase the provisions for young people in the town.

September
2025



4.2 - Continue to administer the Councillor Community Grant Scheme.



To date the Councillor Community Grant Scheme has awarded £32,545 in grants to local community groups for various projects and initiatives.

In the second quarter grant awards included:

- CARA – specialist counselling for young people in Halstead who have experienced sexual violence or abuse.
- Great Yeldham Youth Festival.
- Witham Badminton Club – Court hire and shuttle costs for inclusive sessions.
- Lamarsh Village Hall – Contribution towards replacing the front door.

March 2026






<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halstead Dementia Friendly Project – Activities including an inclusive cinema and dementia choir. • Essex Gliding Club – installation of a defibrillator. • Terling Swimming Pool – purchase of an ultraviolet water filtration system. • Royal British Legion – First aid training • The Third Space Youth Group – Funding for a youth worker. 	
<p>4.3 - Oversee the coordination of the Community Safety Action Plan to increase awareness of child exploitation, domestic abuse, fraud and cybercrime.</p> <p>Joint patrols as part of ‘Op Guardian’ were carried out in August and September whereby Officers of Essex Police jointly patrolled with Braintree District Council’s Children and Young Person Safeguarding Officer to educate and engage with members of the Community on crime prevention issues and to enforce the active Public Spaces Protection Order. 19 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued to persons witnessed breaching the PSPO since its implementation in October 2024.</p> <p>During the second quarter Essex Police facilitated 8 fraud prevention/awareness events, with a total attendance across the events of 342. These took place across Braintree, the Colnes and the Bardfields.</p> <p>The Council’s Children and Young Person Safeguarding officer attended various meetings relating to Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE), which monitor and review multi-agency activity to known and potential child exploitation and trafficking across Essex.</p> <p>There were 5 drop-in sessions for Council employees to raise awareness of and discuss safeguarding concerns, including advice around preventative measures.</p> <p>The Community Safety Officer from Braintree District Council continues to attend the monthly ‘Parish Council Forum’ facilitated by Essex Police. This forum provides an opportunity to discuss community safety concerns and explore preventative measures collaboratively with Parish Councils, Essex Police, Braintree District Council and other members of the Community Safety Partnership. All parish councils are invited to attend these meetings monthly.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>4.4 - Continue to support local investment in communities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year 4).</p> <p>Following first quarter confirmation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund continuing to fund projects into year 4 (2025/26), work has been ongoing to initialise new projects for delivery whilst continuing to deliver existing initiatives.</p> <p>All new projects are either in contract development or are ready to start delivery. These include, creative career sessions, crucial crew sessions, an anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 

workshop for partner organisations, enhanced CCTV, and additional business support sessions delivered through the North Essex Economic Board.







Existing projects continuing this year thanks to the extension of the UKSPF include extending the Community Engagement Officer post, mental health training workshops, the holiday club programme, key safe and handyman services, play park development, and employability training.



Priority 1: Ensure district growth is sustainable and accessible with strong connectivity and infrastructure



Project title & progress	Target date & status
<p>1.1 - Deliver physical improvements to Halstead and Witham Town centres.</p> <p>Work on the Council’s land and all phase 1 work has been completed, including bins, benches, way-finding monoliths, painting works and noticeboards. Project closure for phase 1 is underway, including work with Essex Highways to ensure adoption of street furniture on Highways land.</p> <p>Discussions with Highways continue around phase 2 works, with lighting columns and paving materials the focus, to ensure all works are adoptable upon completion.</p> <p>A programme of works is being produced by the developers, where agreed works will commence at the start of the programme to allow continued discussion around more complex works concurrently. However, until the schedule is agreed by all parties, the target date is unknown. As such, this project has a red status.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> 
<p>1.2 - Support the development and adoption of Neighbourhood Plans in Earls Colne, Wethersfield and Finchingfield and Bures/Bures St Mary’s.</p> <p>The Earl’s Colne Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in July.</p> <p>The Bures/Bures St Mary’s Neighbourhood Plan is presently out for consultation, which is due to conclude in mid-November. The Stisted Plan is also out for consultation until early-December.</p> <p>The Great Bardfield plan screening opinion has been conducted. This is next due to be considered by the Local Plan Sub-Committee in November, and if agreed will go out to consultation thereafter.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>1.3 - Develop a design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>After a pause in the first quarter to facilitate recruitment and other critical pieces of work, delivery of the design code is due commence at pace in the third quarter.</p>	<p>December 2026</p> 

Priority 2: Attract and support growth, providing high quality employment opportunities in high growth sectors and industries


<p>2.1 - Build on inward investment activity through the North Essex Economic Board to create an action plan for Braintree.</p> <p>A third video has now been published via all Council social media channels and on the Locate website – The Braintree District Inward Investment Website. Drone footage of all the high priority industrial estates together with stills has been commissioned and produced. The Council is now selecting suitable images and video to upload to the Locate website to promote significant land and property in the area to investors.</p> <p>The Council has prepared a 2-year Inward Investment Action Plan for the period 2026-2028, which is currently being considered for adoption. Interest has been secured from an engineering firm in Halstead to provide one of the video case studies for the Locate website and other Social Media channels, awaiting confirmation of their availability for filming. Meanwhile a construction firm in Earls Colne have agreed a shoot for a video case study in October.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>2.2 - Complete the final infrastructure delivery elements of Horizon 120 by removing excess soil.</p> <p>Contracts to sell the remaining plots with the soil in situ have been agreed with the developer. As part of the contract, the developer will be responsible for the onward re-location of the soil in line with Environment Agency waste handling requirements. This represents the most cost-effective and lowest-risk approach for the Council. This project is now complete.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> 
<p>2.3 - Finalise an approach to zone A at Horizon 120.</p> <p>The developer is currently progressing with a proposal for the site.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 
<p>2.4 - Sell plots 5 – 8 at Horizon 120.</p> <p>Contracts to sell plots 5 – 8 have been agreed with the developer completing this project.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> 
<p>2.5 - Take forward the recommended option from the viability study for the Witham Enterprise site.</p> <p>The land valuation exercise has concluded, providing further information to support decisions on how to market the land. The Council continues to work with a land agent to identify available options to develop the site and the best route to market.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>2.6 - Support the work on developing a North Essex Growth Plan that will inform and promote positive engagement with the emerging plans for Devolution in Greater Essex.</p> <p>The North Essex Growth Plan continues to be one of the main areas of activity for North Essex Councils (NEC) which will feed into Devolution work as this continues to</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 



<p>develop. Work progressed over the summer to reach a final list of priority projects that NEC will be asked to advocate for, with a final draft of the various chapters also being completed and considered by the North Essex Economic Board on 17 September.</p> <p>A workshop was held on 24 September to finalise the draft before being taken to Chief Executive Officers for sign off.</p>	
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Priority 3: Provide tailored business support and access to funding to help businesses thrive and innovate

<p>3.1 - In association with the North Essex Economic Board, provide business support services focussed on enhancing financial management and business growth.</p> <p>The tender process for the programme concluded in the second quarter with a contract successfully awarded. The first two of ten events were held in September, one took place at the Bardfield Vineyard, with the Chairman in attendance. The other event took place in Epping. Both events were well attended, and the feedback received has been extremely positively.</p> <p>The eight remaining events are scheduled to take place at regular intervals until March 2026, with the next Braintree district event taking place in November at Crossing Temple.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>3.2 - Support businesses and residents across the district through delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year 4) projects.</p> <p>The Sole Trader Business Incubation Scheme is a fully funded membership to The Hatchery, a co-working space with dedicated desks or hot desks within an open plan shared workspace at The Plaza. Aimed at Sole Traders, each membership is worth up to £1170 and will be valid up to 31 March 2026. The membership also includes free parking and access to the on-site café.</p> <p>During the second quarter, the scheme has seen 12 members join and start, with a further 6 due to receive induction in the third quarter. This represents full capacity for the scheme with all 18 places currently allocated.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 

Priority 4: Develop skills that are attractive to employers and support residents to access opportunities to improve their economic well-being




<p>4.1 - Support school engagement to access University of Essex open days.</p> <p>The Council continues to engage with both schools and the University of Essex to support secondary school pupils to attend open days. The capacity of the University of Essex to deliver open days this academic year has been lower than anticipated, and where open days are scheduled, pupils must meet certain criteria to attend.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
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<p>The Council is exploring how open days can be accessed by schools, and whether it may be more viable for year 10s to attend the open day rather than the planned visits by year 9s. The Council continues to encourage schools to work directly with the University to organise visits.</p> <p>The Council is also exploring what opportunities may exist for students to visit the Anglia Ruskin University Campus in Chelmsford.</p> <p>Due to the uncertainty around capacity and criteria for open days, and that no schools have yet organised open days for this academic year, this project is currently at amber status.</p>	
<p>4.2 - Organise and deliver jobs fairs in the district.</p> <p>The Autumn Job Fair is taking place on 14 October between 9.30am and 12.30pm at Witham Public Hall, with 28 exhibitors registered. It has been promoted to DWP claimants via their work coaches and the DWP social media accounts, as well as the general public via flyers, posters and Council sponsored social media posts.</p> <p>30 exhibitors are signed up to the Midlife Employment, Skills and Health Fair taking place on 13 November at Causeway House. Promotion for this event will commence after the Job Fair. It is anticipated that the Council will see maximum capacity for the venue reached for this event.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>4.3 - Through the Shared Prosperity Fund, deliver year 2 of the Green Skills Programme.</p> <p>An updated proposal to deliver the Green Skills Programme has been received from the training provider, considering the lower-than-anticipated uptake from learners. The proposal outlines how the Green Skills Programme will continue to deliver, but with a reduced capacity, reflecting the lower number of learners. As a result of this, only half of the planned funding will be used, and as such, surplus funding will be returned to the Shared Prosperity Fund for re-investment.</p> <p>Due to the reduced scope of this project, it is marked as amber but is anticipated to be on track in the third quarter to deliver against the revised scope.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 






Environment

Priority 1: Ensure district growth is sustainable and accessible with strong connectivity and infrastructure

Project title & progress	Target date & status
<p>1.1 - Enhance the play areas at Beckers Green, Braintree, Kings Rd, Halstead, Spa Rd, Witham and Rickstones Rd, Witham</p> <p>The tender documentation for the play areas was released in September, with evaluation and moderation anticipated to take place in early November, with a view to award in early 2026.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p></p>
<p>1.2 - Develop a renewable energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>The Local Plan review is the highest priority project within the Local Plan team which is taking up the majority of staffing resource. The review of the Local Plan includes reviewing policies relating to renewable energy, both in terms of requirements for new developments as well as potential renewable energy proposals. Additionally, the team are monitoring how other Essex Authorities (Uttlesford and Chelmsford) are progressing with their renewable energy policies in their Local Plans which are more advanced. The outcomes of neighbouring authority examinations will inform the approach taken by the Council. Given the current uncertainty around future renewable energy policies, officers are reviewing the requirement for an SPD.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> <p></p>
<p>1.3 - Work with partners on the requirements to deliver a Local Nature Recovery Strategy across Essex.</p> <p>The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been adopted by Essex County Council and was published on the Essex County Council website on 10 July.</p> <p>The primary purpose of the LNRS is to identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. The Essex LNRS describes the problems faced with biodiversity loss and how they can be addressed. This includes information about some of the mechanisms available to help support developers, landowners, farmers and others to improve biodiversity. The maps indicate where actions could be carried out that will create, expand and connect existing spaces for nature. In accordance with a key principle of nature recovery known as the Lawton Principles, these actions come under three main headings, designed to make habitats: Bigger, better, and more connected. The LNRS is now adopted, marking this project as complete.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p></p>



<p>1.4 - Revise The Council's Tree Strategy.</p> <p>Recruitment was successful in appointing a Landscape Services Manager, who will join the Council in December. Once onboarded revision of the Tree Strategy will commence, using the work which has already been done to update the tree management protocol.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
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Priority 2: Continue to deliver a cohesive and integrated response to climate change adaptation and mitigation


<p>2.1 - Work with Essex Air Consortium to finalise and adopt a joint Essex Air Quality Strategy.</p> <p>The drafted Air Quality Strategy was adopted at Essex County Council (ECC) through its Cabinet in September. The Strategy now adopted by ECC will be adopted by the Council at the following Cabinet meeting in November.</p> <p>The Air Quality Strategy has been published by EssexAir on behalf of the Essex Air Consortium. The strategy can be viewed here: https://www.essexair.org.uk/strategy.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 
<p>2.2 - Through the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership, develop a shared risk register and best practice for adapting to climate change events.</p> <p>The North Essex Councils Climate Partnership (NECCP) working group has completed the local climate risk register, based on identified risks in the national climate risk register. The work has now been presented to the North Essex Council Chief Executives who approved the risk register. The risk register will now be reviewed on a regular basis by the NECCP. This project is now complete.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>2.3 - Work with partners to address the complex challenge of fuel poverty.</p> <p>BDC continues to support residents through multiple routes to limit the impact of fuel poverty. The Council is working with Essex County Council on the Warms Homes Local Grant Scheme which is due to go live in November. The Handyman Scheme assists with installing energy efficiency measures into the homes of the most vulnerable. Promotion of the Green Doctor Service continues with increasing in demand as winter approaches, 19 interventions in residents' homes were installed in September.</p> <p>Continued promotion of residents to the ECO4/Flex and Great British Insulation schemes takes place on a rolling basis. Cross departmental work with the Cost-of-Living Partnership is ongoing to promote these schemes and to highlight risks such as the energy price caps.</p> <p>The Autumn Energy Switch Auction took place on 30 September and a total of 531 residents have registered for this auction.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 



<p>In the second quarter the Sustainability Team updated the Winter Warmth Booklet which will be presented to the Cost-of-Living Group on 17 October.</p>	
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Priority 3: Support residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and be more resilient to climate related impacts

<p>3.1 - Work with Essex County Council and our partners in Essex to promote the Essex Flood guide.</p> <p>The Essex Flood Guide was published in July 2025. The Council has shared the guide on social media and had a promotion of the guide included in the Summer Contact Magazine. The Council is in the process of updating its webpage on flooding to include a link to the guide.</p>	<p>September 2025</p> 
<p>3.2 - In partnership with Groundworks, deliver the extended Green Doctor Service, advising residents on energy efficiency.</p> <p>The Green Doctor Service offers residents who are in fuel poverty or struggling to keep their homes warm support in controlling energy usage. The service, which is in pilot, has secured additional funding to extend the provision until March 2026. Officers in the sustainability team continue to direct residents to the service, and assisted 39 residents in accessing the service in the second quarter.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 

Priority 4: Improve the way that we manage waste and encourage residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle more

<p>4.1 - Implement new waste collection arrangements following the conclusion of the waste service public consultation and Cabinet decision</p> <p>The property assessment continued into the second quarter to prepare for communication to households in the third quarter, regarding whether their property will receive standard or non-standard collection receptacles. In line with this, a policy is being developed to allow households to request a review if they believe they have been mis-categorised.</p> <p>Procurement has been successful in sourcing a provider for additional bins, and a procurement exercise to identify a provider for recycling boxes for non-standard households has commenced. Additionally, a site to store additional bins has been identified and procurement to prepare the site has also been successful.</p>	<p>April 2026</p> 
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<p>The second quarter also saw a trial for collection food waste from flats conclude with positive results, ahead of extension to this service as a part of the wider waste reforms. A new trial is being planned to introduce paper and card receptacles to the same trial blocks.</p> <p>Work has continued on the communication strategy for the upcoming changes, including a publication in the Council’s Contact magazine.</p>	
<p>4.2 - Work with other Authorities including Essex County Council to develop and deliver waste minimisation and recycling initiatives that deliver on the requirements of the Waste Reforms and Essex Waste Strategy</p> <p>Communications continued in the second quarter to support the Waste Service Review, explaining the reasons for the changes and trying to encourage increased take up of recycling in the meantime. In this quarter, the Council published several animated social media explainers, including a timeline of key events for residents, how to reduce odours in the grey bin, why things are changing, standard vs non-standard collections, the new Absorbent Hygiene Product service, and how to maximise space in bins.</p> <p>Alongside the social media posts and reels, a four-page spread was published in Contact magazine, explaining the new service and the reasons for it. This has received positive feedback.</p> <p>As well as covering the Waste Service Review, the Council also published several posts on recycling and refuse collections, covering arrangements for collections during the heat waves, driver behaviour around vehicles and the annual clear sack deliveries. There is good feeling towards the waste collection crews and residents respond positively to posts of this nature, making them a good way to increase engagement with the service.</p> <p>Supplementing comms on the Waste Service Review, there has been a push on food recycling, aiming to increase take up of the service in advance of the changes. The magnetic display in Causeway House was replaced with one showing the food recycling journey, emphasising its circular nature. For Zero Waste Week in September, focus was on food recycling with waste minimisation tips, and there were two reels on social media, one looking at storage of commonly wasted foods, the other at how to use them up.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> 
<p>4.3 - Develop a waste Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>The development management team are finalising the waste SPD having considered how kerbside collections can be best managed in new estates where roads may remain under the care of management companies, rather than being adopted by highways. It is anticipated that the consultation on this will take place in the third quarter. As a result, this project is marked at amber status as it is likely a change management process will need to be completed to amend the target date.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> 

Climate Change Action Plan



Introduction

In July the Climate Change Annual Report detailing progress during 2024-25 was prepared and was presented to Cabinet in September. Progress highlights include:

- A reduction in the organisational carbon emissions by 509 metric tonnes (8.5%) against the strategy's baseline year 2019-25
- 6% of the Council's energy use is now derived from renewable/green sources
- In 2024/25 14.4% of the Council's electricity usage is from our own solar pv on estate buildings
- The installation of Witham Leisure Centre 407kW Solar arrays and LED lighting was completed in March 2025 saving 60 tonnes carbon/pa
- £767K of electricity offset from solar feed since the Council's climate emergency was declared in 2019
- 89% of the Council managed lighting is now LED
- Procurement of 14 electric light vehicles for the Council's fleet of operational vehicles delivered in Spring 2025

The Climate Change Action Plan (CAP) for 2025-26 contains 44 actions for reporting.

The post of Climate Change Project Manager has been vacant since May 2025. After securing approval for funding from the Climate Change Reserve the post was advertised and successfully recruited, and the post will be filled by December 2025.

Resources

In July Planning approval was given to the 13.8MW Sheepcote Solar Farm scheme, between Bradwell and Silver End, which will power over 6,000 homes annually and deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of over 400% through wildflower meadows and new hedgerow planting. The plant is expected to break ground in late 2026.

The Council e-newsletter covered Plastic Free July, Bee's Needs Week, the Green Skills Programme, Great Notley Country Park winning Green Flag status, and saw an increase to a total of 8,556 subscribers.

In this quarter the Council continued to promote the June 2026 waste collection changes and published further information on the waste review. The Council has also promoted an animation on what can be recycled that is currently going into the grey bins.

In August water saving advice was published in the environment newsletter. The Council posted the bank holiday bin collection changes on social media and published a post on Facebook asking people not to litter over the bank holiday weekend. The Council also published tips on food recycling in the hot weather in the environment newsletter.

Energy Conservation

Work continued between the Sustainability Team and Assets Team shortlisting suitable sites for rooftop and carpark canopy solar for consideration. In September the sites identified had Expressions Of Interest prepared and were submitted to Finance for consideration of developing business cases for 2026-27 Capital Projects.

The Council continues to wait for approval on its application to UK Power Networks to install an export meter to take advantage of payments for energy export up to 200kVA.

The Council published a reminder to register for the Essex Energy Switch on Facebook with over 500 households already registered by mid-September. A page on support available for home heating this winter was published in Contact magazine, as well as some home energy saving tips to coincide with the news that the Energy Price Cap was to be increased.

Transport

The Council progressed an opportunity with Essex County Council (ECC) of fully funded installation of electric vehicle chargers in Easton Road car park in Witham.

ECC published their public transport total passenger journey figures for 2024-2025. Across Essex there has been an increase in the uptake of public transport with over 37.5 million journeys recorded in 2024/5, up on the previous year of 2023-24 which showed just over 35 million.

ECC launched the Essex Transport Strategy and the Council have promoted the Essex Public Consultation in the e-newsletter and on social media.

The Council promoted Cycle-to-Work day on social media and in the e-newsletter, linking to the regular free bike fix-it events that aim to keep bikes out of landfill.

Built Environment

The Council promoted the Green Skills Programme of retrofit training.

Business & the Green Economy

The Council continued to support local food producers by encouraging buy local habits, promoting our monthly markets and local food suppliers on social media, also shopping locally in the environment e-newsletter as a way of cutting plastic waste, linking to our local food suppliers directory.

Natural Environment

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy was published by Essex County Council (ECC), which can be accessed on the ECC website.

The Council promoted on social media Great Notley Country Park once again receiving Green Flag status; it ran a story in the newsletter on Bees' Needs Week and published a social media post on the Big Butterfly Count.

Adapting to Climate Change

The Council continues to promote seasonal-weather-related health warnings through social media and communications channels as part of its statutory Warning and Informing role. Information is received from MET Office, UK Health Security Agency and Environment Agency. In July there were two extreme weather warnings following the heat health alert and during the heatwave the Council published a social media post advice on where and how to keep cool in the heatwave. Advice was also published on social media regarding avoiding wildfires in the heatwave.

Emergency Planning Officers took part in an Essex Resilience Forum flood teleconference led by Essex Police in preparation of possible flooding during a July storm.

A North Essex Council's Climate Partnership Climate Risk Register for the north of Essex (based on local risks identified in the National Risk Register) has been developed which will support future policy decisions and strategies by highlighted key climate related risk in North Essex.

Emergency Planning Officers facilitated a workshop session with members of the Essex Resilience Forum on engaging with community groups on protecting themselves from events like flooding and storms.

The Sustainability team have produced a first draft replacement of the Be Ready for Winter booklet for residents, which will include seasonal advice on staying warm at home during the winter months. The leaflet will be re-named and will incorporate all-year round advice.

The new Braintree District Council Flood Plan was completed and has been approved for sign off.

The Emergency Planning team attended cold weather planning updates on the UKHSA Adverse Weather Plan and Met Office Winter Hazards course. Both are fundamental to the Council's severe weather planning and winter warning and informing.

The Environment Agency's (EA) new flood warning system is due to go live in October. The EA will lead on communications to the public detailing sign-up options and any actions needed for those already signed up to the system. The Council and other partners will amplify the EA messaging as requested.



Fit For The Future

The Fit for the Future Transformation Programme is making strong progress, with a focus in the second quarter on achieving measurable results, involving employees, and encouraging new ideas - especially in digital services.

Employees have taken part in multiple workshops and feedback sessions, which have helped understanding and support of the changes. Events like the 'Your Voice' employee forum have given employees a chance to share their views and help shape new ways of working and transformation initiatives to support the Council's ambition to innovate and drive productivity.

Following the reassessment of the Transformation Programme following the confirmation of Greater Essex's future on the priority devolution timeline, the programme has developed a high-level plan that supports the three key workstreams: People and Process, Service Reviews and Digital. This has enabled a clear plan for quick improvements, prioritisation and better resource alignment to delivery.

Workstream Highlights

- **People and Processes:** Planning is underway to deliver reviews and improvements in key areas including spans and layers of management structures, organisational culture and resilience, core processes, and skills development.
- **Digital:** The Digital Customer proposal is progressing, aiming to improve how residents use council services. New features under consideration include AI-supported chatbots, Single Sign On functionality, secure payments, and a unified consultation platform. Cyber security remains a priority, with ongoing events and policy reviews. Infrastructure upgrades at Causeway House are also underway with investment in collaboration and meeting spaces for employees to improve working and use of technology.
- **Service Reviews:** Reviews of Fleet Management are complete, with Financial Services, Sustainability, Climate Change, Graphics and ICT questionnaires nearly complete. The Food, Health and Safety review is close to completion, and Community Development has recruited to support delivery of its next phase. Progress continues across many services, whilst consolidation of lessons learned and realised benefits has started for completed reviews such as Anti-Social Behaviour, Leisure and Waste.
- **Asset Management:** A new approach to managing council assets has been proposed, with extra risk controls being considered. Work is ongoing to put these changes in place.
- **Shared Services:** The Braintree-backed business case for local government reform was submitted to Central Government in September. Collaboration with other Essex councils is helping to share best practice and support transformation.

In summary, the programme is gaining ground, with tangible progress in all areas. Employee engagement, digital innovation, and strong governance are keeping the programme on track to deliver meaningful change for employees and residents. The programme remains closely monitored, responsive to challenges, and committed to ongoing improvement.

Section 3: Managing the business

Performance Indicators in detail

Number of affordable homes delivered

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status: ●

Year to date position:

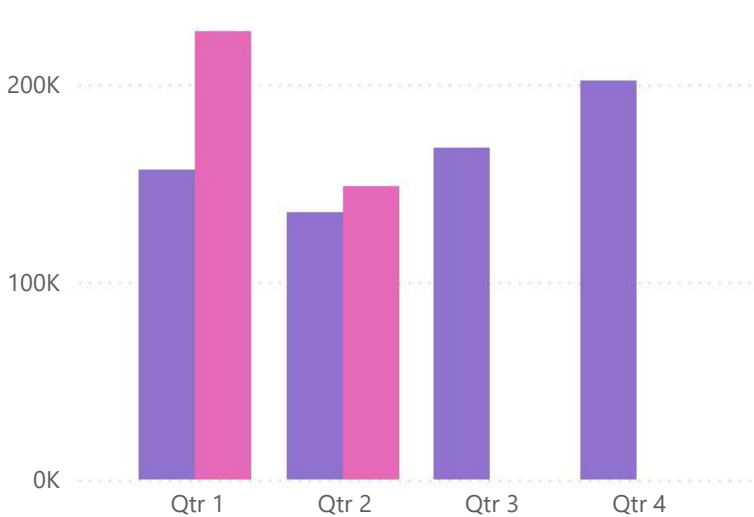
111

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	58	63
24-25	Qtr 2	70	62
24-25	Qtr 3	113	62
24-25	Qtr 4	54	63
25-26	Qtr 1	73	63
25-26	Qtr 2	38	62

Comments: The number of affordable homes delivered in the second quarter missed target, due to delays in completions. It is anticipated, considering planned completions, that this indicator is still on track to achieve target by the end of the year.

Number of visitors to our leisure centres

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

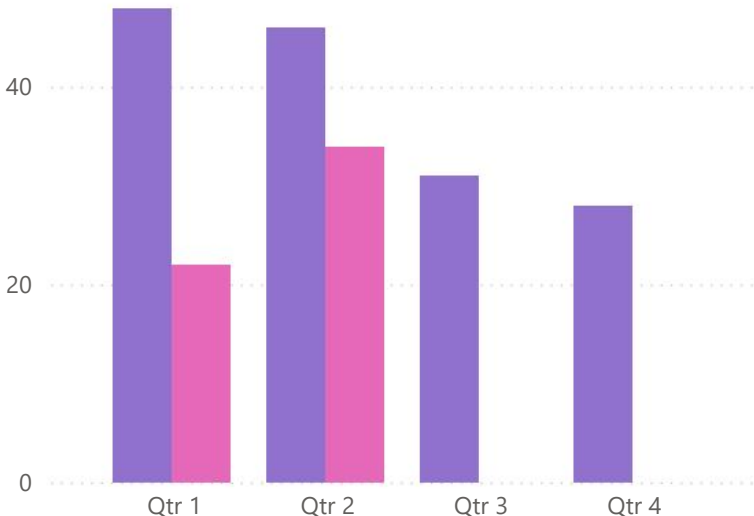
375,304

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	156,554	228,341
24-25	Qtr 2	134,916	208,939
24-25	Qtr 3	167,508	171,666
24-25	Qtr 4	201,461	175,513
25-26	Qtr 1	226,836	
25-26	Qtr 2	148,468	

Comments: The target for this metric has been paused for the 25/26 financial year whilst the leisure services contract changes provider. The second quarter outturn shows an improvement on the same quarter last year, though it should be noted the leisure services provider experienced system issues in 24/25, and the second quarter of 25/26 includes the transition period between providers.

Number of homelessness cases prevented

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

56

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
24-25	Qtr 1	48
24-25	Qtr 2	46
24-25	Qtr 3	31
24-25	Qtr 4	28
25-26	Qtr 1	22
25-26	Qtr 2	34

Comments: The number of homelessness cases prevented increased in the second quarter compared to the first quarter. Whilst this can be an indicator of demand, the metric only captures where a formal duty of homelessness was owed and prevented. Housing continue to focus on early intervention, where working with households to achieve positive outcomes earlier in the process resolves cases before they are owed a statutory duty of prevention.

Major planning applications decided on time

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	100.00%	70%
24-25	Qtr 2	100.00%	70%
24-25	Qtr 3	88.89%	70%
24-25	Qtr 4	100.00%	70%
25-26	Qtr 1	100.00%	70%
25-26	Qtr 2	90.00%	70%

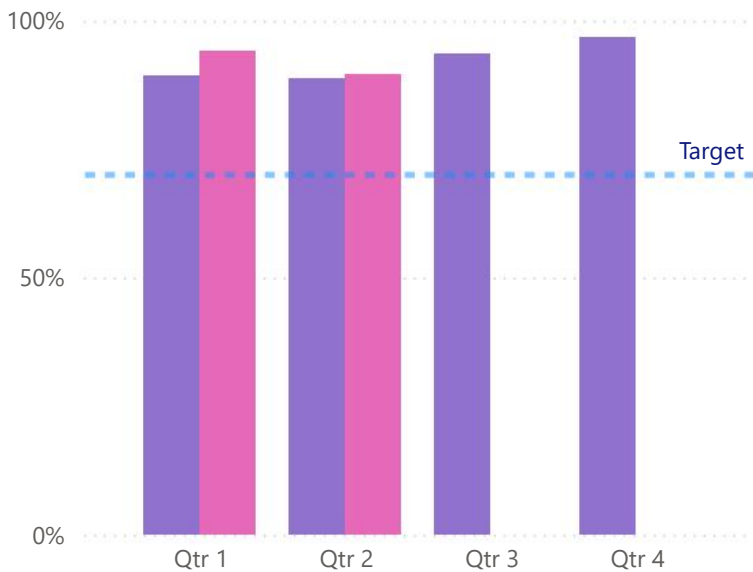
Year to date position:

94.12%

Comments: 9 out of 10 major planning applications were decided on time in the second quarter. This continues a positive trend where the target has been achieved every quarter since 2019.

Minor planning applications decided on time

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	89.29%	70%
24-25	Qtr 2	88.71%	70%
24-25	Qtr 3	93.42%	70%
24-25	Qtr 4	96.67%	70%
25-26	Qtr 1	93.98%	70%
25-26	Qtr 2	89.47%	70%

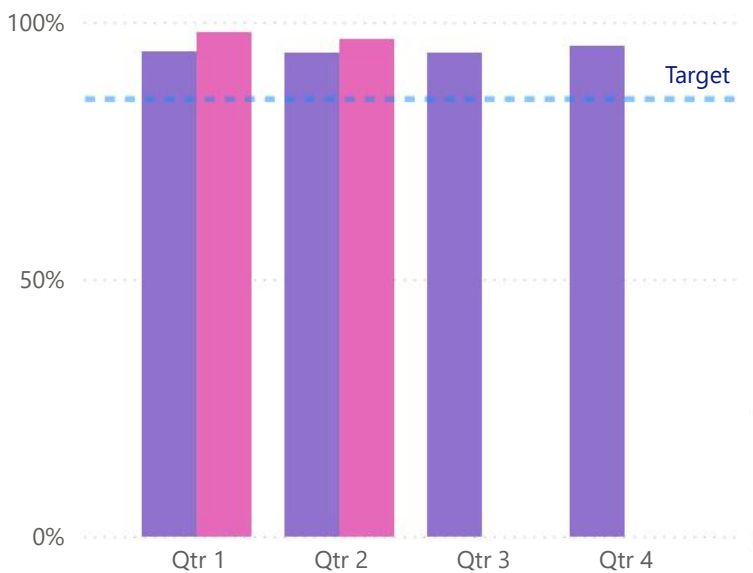
Year to date position:

91.82%

Comments: 93.98%, 68 out of 76 minor planning applications were approved in time in the second quarter, continuing a strong history of achieving this target.

Other planning applications decided on time

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	94.41%	85%
24-25	Qtr 2	94.05%	85%
24-25	Qtr 3	94.16%	85%
24-25	Qtr 4	95.52%	85%
25-26	Qtr 1	98.17%	85%
25-26	Qtr 2	96.82%	85%

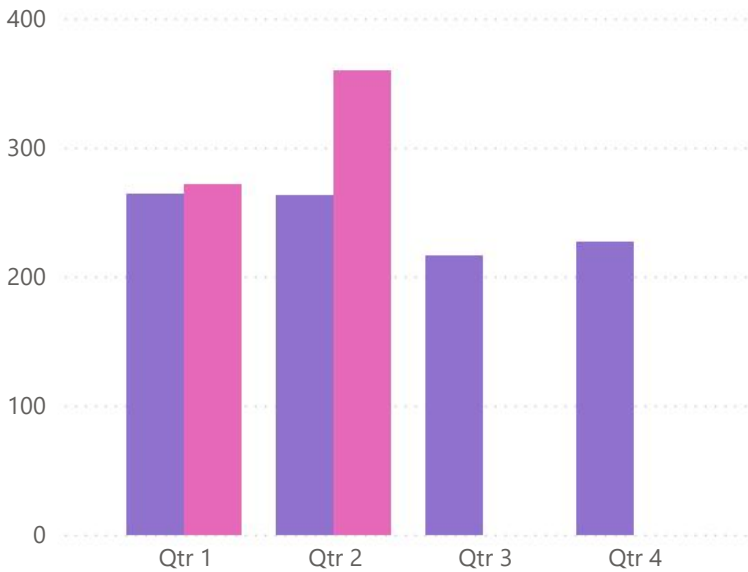
Year to date position:

97.51%

Comments: The second quarter outturn for other planning applications decided on time was 96.82%, representing 152 out of 157 applications. This is well in excess of the 85% target, and continues a trend of comfortably achieving this target.

Number of new start up businesses

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

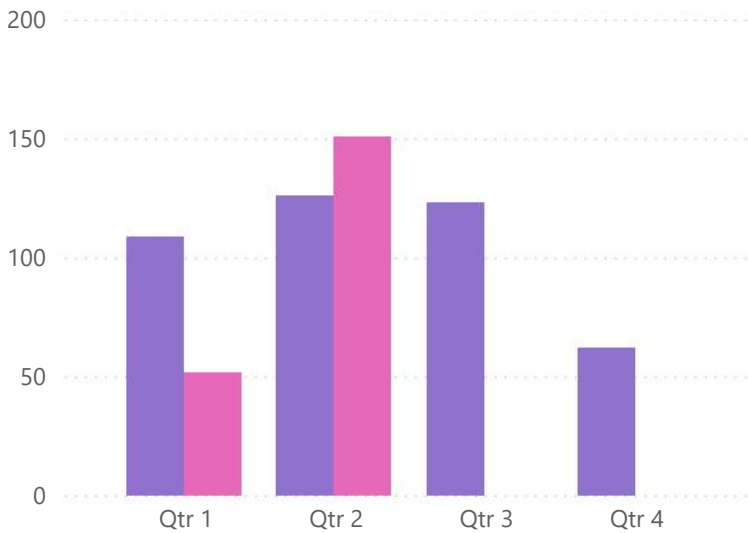
632

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
24-25	Qtr 1	264
24-25	Qtr 2	263
24-25	Qtr 3	216
24-25	Qtr 4	227
25-26	Qtr 1	272
25-26	Qtr 2	360

Comments: 360 new businesses were registered in the second quarter, which is a greater outturn than any quarter in the current or previous year. A 23% increase in business registrations has been observed across Essex in the second quarter, and so is not unique to Braintree, but may be an indication of increased summer trade and confidence in the local economy.

Number of businesses accessing business support

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Year to date position:

203

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
24-25	Qtr 1	109
24-25	Qtr 2	126
24-25	Qtr 3	123
24-25	Qtr 4	62
25-26	Qtr 1	52
25-26	Qtr 2	151

Comments: The number of businesses accessing business support recovered in the second quarter, following a low outturn in the first quarter. This is a result of funding made available in the first quarter funding activity in the second quarter.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26

Desired trend: Higher



Status:



Year to date position:

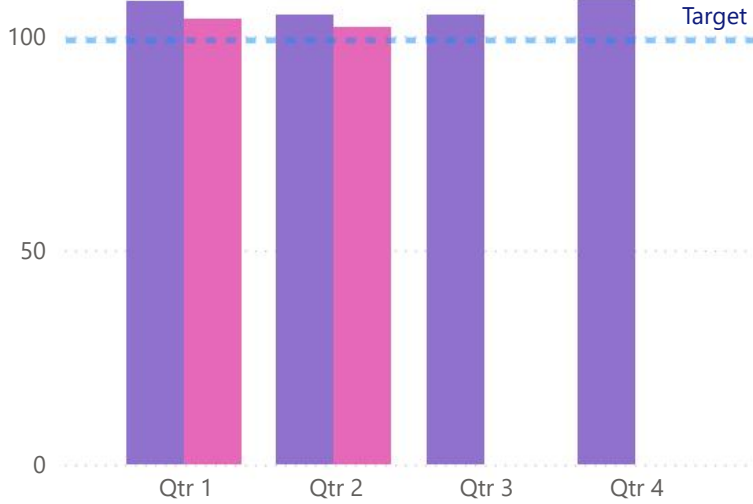
51.77%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	52.5%	50%
24-25	Qtr 2	51.3%	50%
24-25	Qtr 3	46.8%	50%
24-25	Qtr 4	41.1%	50%
25-26	Qtr 1	53.0%	53%
25-26	Qtr 2	50.5%	53%

Comments: The second quarter outturn for recycling rate has missed target. This decrease is due to a reduced tonnage of garden waste collected compared to the first quarter likely due to a hot summer. The second quarter observed less residual waste being collected, but this was offset by the reduction in garden waste tonnage.

Kilograms of residual waste per household

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Lower



Status:



Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	108	100
24-25	Qtr 2	105	100
24-25	Qtr 3	105	100
24-25	Qtr 4	109	100
25-26	Qtr 1	104	98
25-26	Qtr 2	102	98

Year to date position:

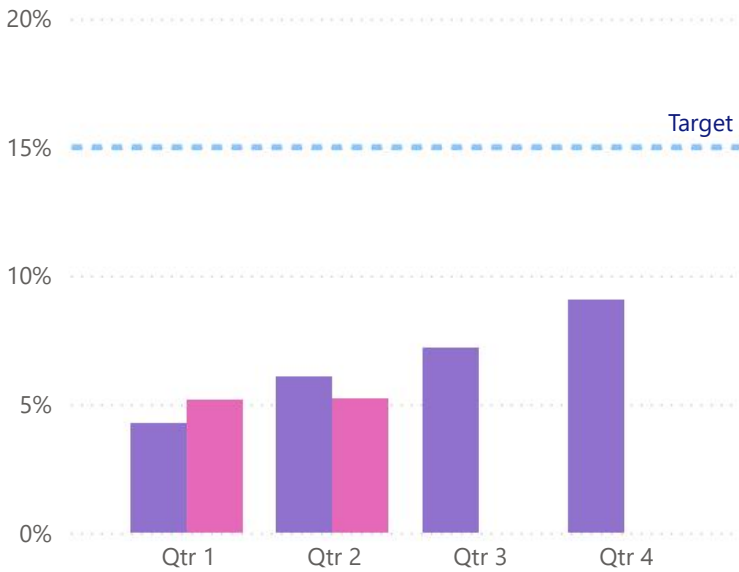
206

Comments: The second quarter outturn for residual waste missed the new, lower target, returning 102 kgs per household. However, the second quarter outturn is 3kg lower than the same quarter last year, and a reduction on the first quarter. The second quarter outturn would have achieved target if not for a peak in residual waste tonnage in July.

As part of the waste review, trials, engagement events and opportunities to drive behaviour change are underway to improve recycling and reduce residual waste.

Recycling contamination rate

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Lower



Status:



Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	4.24%	15%
24-25	Qtr 2	6.06%	15%
24-25	Qtr 3	7.21%	15%
24-25	Qtr 4	9.03%	15%
25-26	Qtr 1	5.17%	15%
25-26	Qtr 2	5.21%	15%

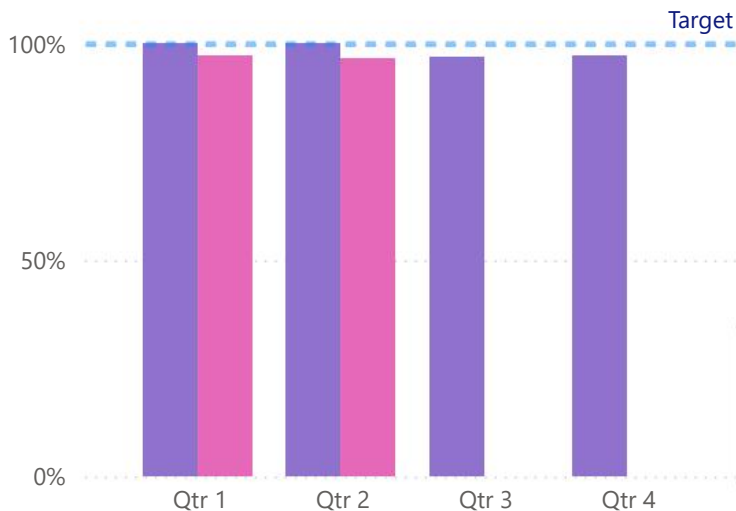
Year to date position:

5.19%

Comments: Recycling contamination rate was below target for the second quarter returning a rate of 5.21%. This reflects an improved position compared to last year.

Percentage of fly tips cleared within 24hrs (numbers reported within table)

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:



Financial year	Quarter	Number	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	173	100%	100%
24-25	Qtr 2	218	100%	100%
24-25	Qtr 3	196	97%	100%
24-25	Qtr 4	214	97%	100%
25-26	Qtr 1	224	97%	100%
25-26	Qtr 2	240	97%	100%

Year to date position:

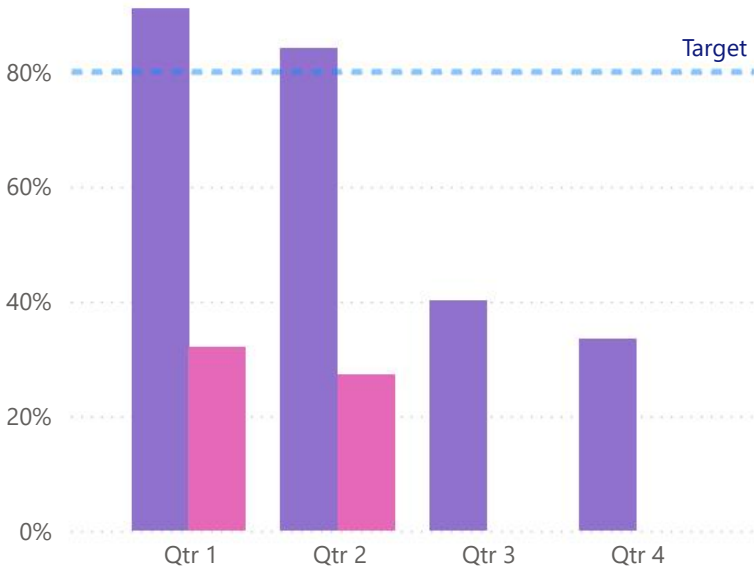
97%

Comments: In the second quarter, 97% of fly tips were cleared within 24 hours (231 out of 240). The main reason for the delayed clearances resulted from taking increased time to gather evidence for enforcement before the fly tips were able to be cleared.

Percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved on time

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26

Desired trend: Higher



Status:



Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	90.9%	80%
24-25	Qtr 2	84.0%	80%
24-25	Qtr 3	40.0%	80%
24-25	Qtr 4	33.3%	80%
25-26	Qtr 1	32.0%	80%
25-26	Qtr 2	27.3%	80%

Year to date position:

30.56%

Comments: The percentage of DFGs approved on time missed target in the second quarter, returning 27.3% (3 on time out of 11 approved). This is the result of two factors. Firstly, applications now being approved which were delayed by the availability of funding during the previous year. Secondly, the resource required to action historic applications whilst processing new ones. Recruitment to a vacant position in Q2, and additional recruitment in Q3 is hoped to relieve this. During this time the Council has prioritised urgent grants, ensuring that critical requests have been able to be actioned.

Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the customer service centre

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26

Desired trend: Higher



Status:



Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	60%	65%
24-25	Qtr 2	62%	65%
24-25	Qtr 3	57%	65%
24-25	Qtr 4	64%	65%
25-26	Qtr 1	53%	65%
25-26	Qtr 2	51%	65%

Year to date position:

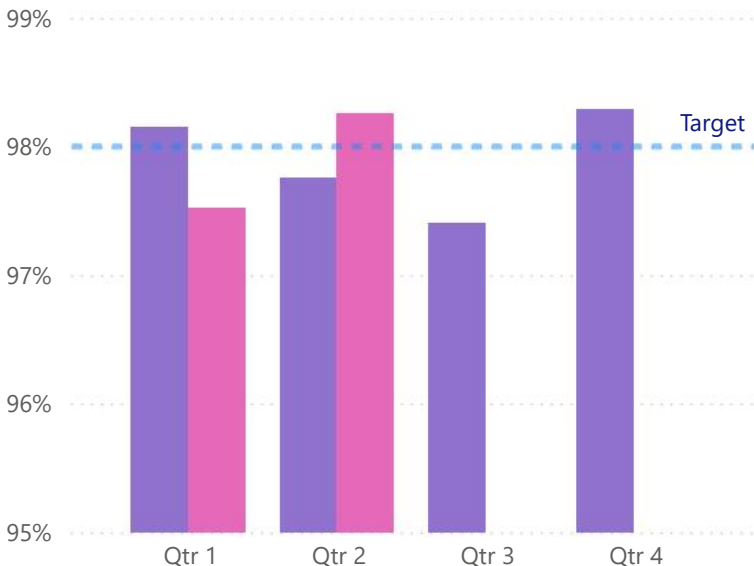
52%

Comments: In the second quarter, the Customer Services team supported 21,178 callers, successfully resolving 10,723 enquiries straight away. The more complex matters are passed through to the relevant departments ensuring the callers receive the right expertise to respond to their enquiry. A review of Customer Services is now underway, looking at opportunities to enhance how the service operates and making it easier for residents to access the support they need.

Percentage of invoices paid on time

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26

Desired trend: Higher



Status:



Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	98.2%	98.5%
24-25	Qtr 2	97.8%	98.5%
24-25	Qtr 3	97.4%	98.5%
24-25	Qtr 4	98.3%	98.5%
25-26	Qtr 1	97.5%	98.0%
25-26	Qtr 2	98.3%	98.0%

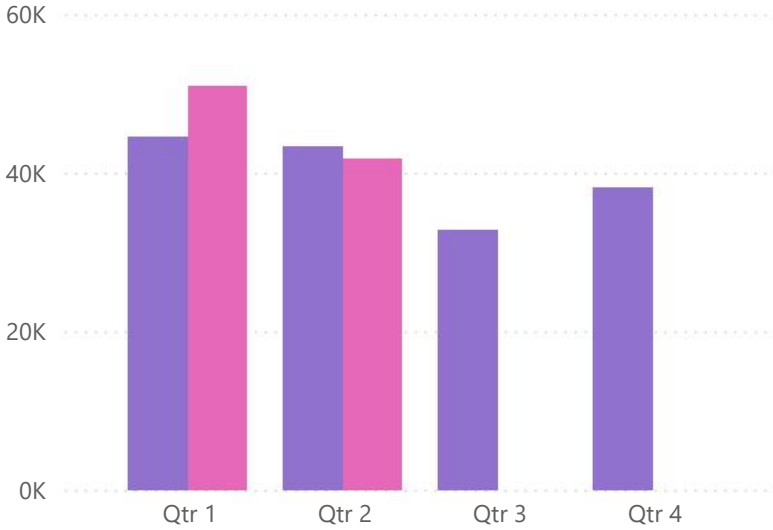
Year to date position:

97.9%

Comments: The percentage of invoices paid on time was 98.3% in the second quarter, achieving the target by 0.3 percentage points. This is due to ongoing work by the Finance team with departments across the organisation to improve the processing speed of invoices.

Number of people transacting with the Council online

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26



Data only: This metric does not have a target.

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn
24-25	Qtr 1	44,532
24-25	Qtr 2	43,440
24-25	Qtr 3	32,904
24-25	Qtr 4	38,253
25-26	Qtr 1	50,991
25-26	Qtr 2	41,776

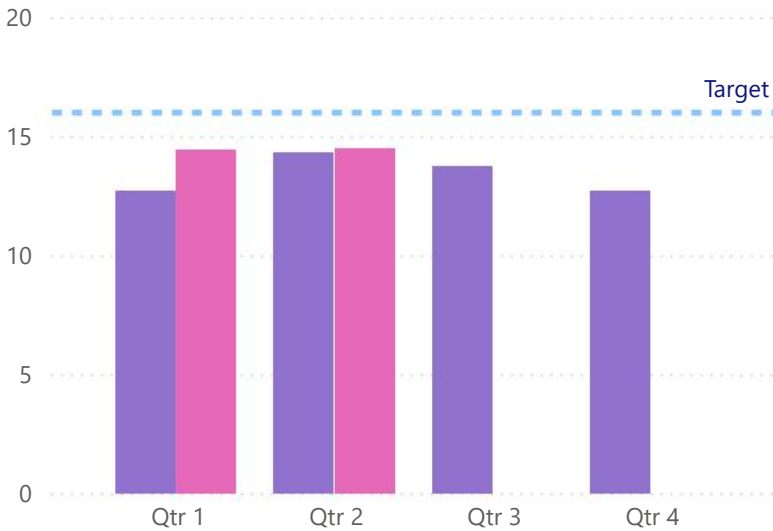
Year to date position:

92,767

Comments: The Council observed a decrease in web transactions in the second quarter when compared to the same period in the previous year. However, following a high outturn in the first quarter, the year to date position for 2025/26 is ahead of the previous year.

Days taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Lower



Status:

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	12.73	16
24-25	Qtr 2	14.37	16
24-25	Qtr 3	13.77	16
24-25	Qtr 4	12.74	16
25-26	Qtr 1	14.44	15
25-26	Qtr 2	14.52	15

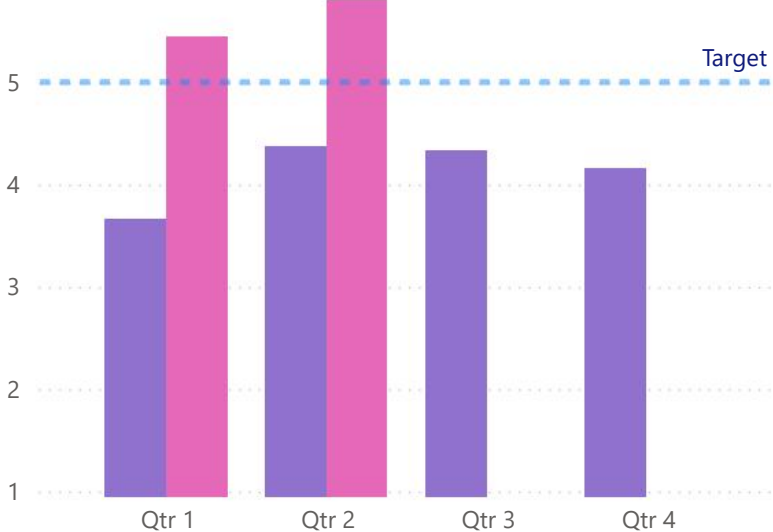
Year to date position:

14.48 days

Comments: The time taken to process new benefit claims has remained below the lower target for 25/26 in the second quarter with an outturn of 14.52 days.

Days taken to process housing benefit claim changes

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Lower



Status:

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	3.67	3
24-25	Qtr 2	4.38	3
24-25	Qtr 3	4.33	3
24-25	Qtr 4	4.16	3
25-26	Qtr 1	5.45	5
25-26	Qtr 2	5.81	5

Year to date position:

5.63 days

Comments: The local council tax support scheme has resulted in a positive fall in overall caseload; however this means that the remaining claim changes are more complex, which causes an increase in average processing time. The majority of claims are being processed within target, however outliers which are often due to delayed information, distorts the average. In the second quarter 77% (2840 out of 3695) claims were processed in less than 5 days. When a change request is received the timer is started, any time taken to have the claimant provide the required information occurs during the recorded processing time, which can result in claims taking far in excess of 5 days.

Percentage of stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescale

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

Year to date position:

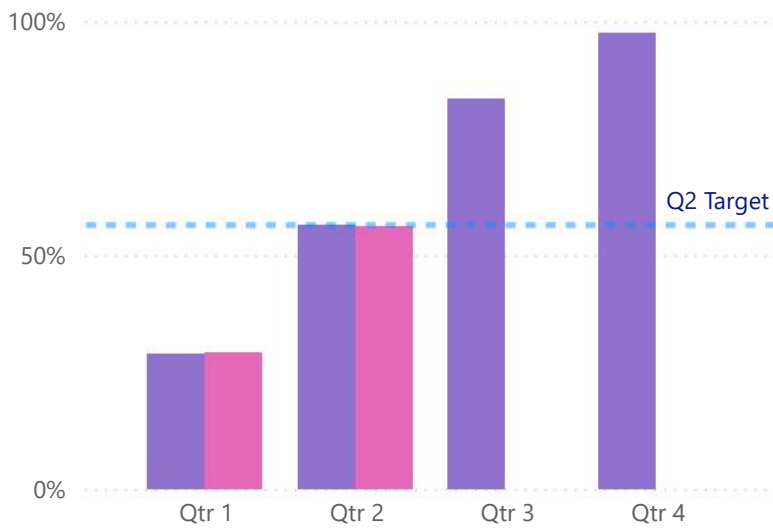
91.35%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	74.33%	90%
24-25	Qtr 2	86.27%	90%
24-25	Qtr 3	84.09%	90%
24-25	Qtr 4	89.47%	90%
25-26	Qtr 1	91.35%	90%
25-26	Qtr 2	92.91%	90%

Comments: The percentage of complaints responded to within timescales achieved target again in the second quarter, continuing a trend of improved performance.

Collection rate for Council Tax

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

Year to date position:

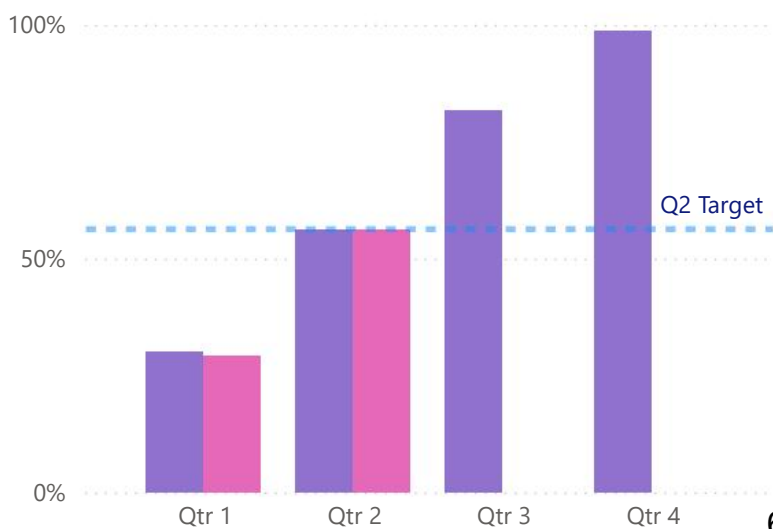
56.27%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	29.06%	30.45%
24-25	Qtr 2	56.41%	57.42%
24-25	Qtr 3	83.38%	83.81%
24-25	Qtr 4	97.55%	97.59%
25-26	Qtr 1	29.18%	29.06%
25-26	Qtr 2	56.27%	56.41%

Comments: Council tax collection rate was marginally below the target in the second quarter. Minor variations are anticipated year on year, and this is expected to achieve target by the end of the year.

Collection rate for Business Rates

Financial year ● 24-25 ● 25-26 Desired trend: Higher



Status:

Year to date position:

56.19%

Financial year	Quarter	Outturn	Target
24-25	Qtr 1	30.17%	30.12%
24-25	Qtr 2	56.27%	56.40%
24-25	Qtr 3	81.70%	82.90%
24-25	Qtr 4	98.68%	98.13%
25-26	Qtr 1	29.27%	30.17%
25-26	Qtr 2	56.19%	56.27%

Comments: Business rates collection missed target by 0.08 percentage points for the second quarter. Minor deviations are anticipated year to year, and this is expected to recover by the end of the year.

Complaints

The quarterly complaints analysis is detailed below. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

Complaint Category	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Justified	115	102	56	74	83	93
Not Justified	62	33	25	26	16	48
Partially Justified	14	23	11	12	2	10
Not known	5	1	2	2	4	4
Total	196	159	94	114	105	155

Comments:

The second quarter saw an increase in the volume of complaints compared to the first quarter (+48%). This resulted from several factors. Firstly, a number of Planning complaints were received in relation to a single matter. Secondly, Finance, Operations and Housing received slightly more complaints than previously. Thirdly, ten stage 2 and four stage 3 complaints were escalated, compared to one escalated complaint in the previous quarter. However, complaint volumes in the second quarter are within the range of complaints received over the past year and represent a slight improvement on the same quarter in the previous year.

Operations received the most complaints (118), with the majority relating to waste collections. Compared to the same quarter last year, this was a 16% reduction in complaint volume. Planning received six complaints in relation to an enforcement case, with four other complaints received regarding tree protection orders, whilst only having received one complaint in the first quarter.

Despite an increase in complaint volume in the second quarter, the Council improved its response rate to complaints, responding to 92.91% (131 out of 141) of stage 1 complaints within the 7 working day timescale, compared to 91.35% in the first quarter.

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

July 2025

Two complaints were received from the LGO in July.

Complaint 1 - The complaint was in respect of the Council's consideration of a planning application. The substantive issues are not separable from the planning appeal. In addition, for the remaining elements of the complaint, there was no significant injustice, and elements are better considered by the Information Commissions' office.

Complaint 2 - The complaint was about how the Council dealt with a planning application. The complaint was late, and the complainant had a right of appeal to the Planning Inspector. As a result, the LGO decline to investigate.

August 2025

No correspondence was received from the LGO in August.

September 2025

The LGO confirmed that the Council had satisfactorily complied with the remedies agreed in relation to a housing complaint and now had closed its file. The Council was required issue an apology together with a symbolic payment and to draw up an action plan with clear timescales for reducing avoidable delay when dealing with an applicant's request for a review of their housing application. The aim being to ensure the Council can make decisions within 8 weeks of a review request in line with its housing allocations policy.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	499	509	505	506	503	513	+10	-
Headcount – Permanent employees	463	467	464	467	467	474	+7	-
Headcount – Fixed term contract	36	42	41	39	36	39	+3	-
Total employee FTE	458.52	467.96	465.91	467.21	466.63	475.32	+8.69	-
Level of employee turnover	2.4%	3.1%	1.98%	2.17%	3.18%	1.56%	-1.62%	-
Number of leavers	12	16	10	11	16	8	-8	-
Number of starters	10	26	6	12	13	18	+5	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee (rolling)	6.22	5.65	6.01	6.85	7.27	8.52	+1.25	8.0
Percentage of employees with nil sickness	80.8%	67.4%	51.5%	45.3%	79.92%	66.28%	Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	688	842	1068	895	1235	753	-482	-
Number of delegates	345	314	363	377	289	234	-55	-
Number of apprentices *	21	20	23	23	20	26	+6	-

Year on Year Headcount	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	492	499	492	486	501	506

* BDC's apprenticeship programme runs throughout the year. The figures reflect various apprenticeships ranging from level 3 through to a level 7.

Health & Safety

The following is a selection of our health and safety performance measures. The data is for information purposes only.

Health and safety is a crucial responsibility of everyone within the organisation. This information is used to improve the management of health and safety of employees, our customers, residents and other non-employees we come into contact with. Monitoring is undertaken by the corporate health and safety committee and action plans will be put in place where necessary.

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	5	16	16	10	9	10
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	5	14	14	10	9	9
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	0	2	1	0	0	1
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	25	0	10	0	0	38
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	3	2	2	4	1	5
Number of near miss incidents	0	1	0	1	0	1
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	0	0	0	1	2	0
Number of claims settled	0	2	0	0	1	2

Comments:

In the second quarter the Council recorded a total of ten accidents/incidents. Nine incidents affected employees, of these three were struck by a moving object, four were slips/trips/falls, and two were injured whilst handling or lifting.

One incident occurred to a non-employee, where the individual tripped on steps outside of the Town Hall.

A total of 38 days were lost due to three employee incidents. All three incidents were recorded under RIDDOR (Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). One incident related to an employee who injured his hand whilst handling bins. One incident related to an employee slipping and twisting his ankle, and the third related to an employee who suffered a head injury after being struck by a tree. It is to be noted two of the above employees are still absent as of the end of the second quarter, and as such the third quarter days lost statistic will include days from these incidents.

Five incidents of verbal or physical abuse were record in the second quarter. Four incidents relate to verbal abuse, and one related to a physical altercation by a member of the public towards a member of the waste crew.

The near miss relates to an incident which occurred whilst a vehicle was reversing.

Financial Summary

The review of the financial performance and projection for the year at this second quarter (Q2) shows an overall positive variance of £1.5 million.

Treasury management income is projected to outperform budget due to higher cash balances and higher-for-longer interest rates.

Sustainable Development is projecting a positive variance, mainly due to staffing vacancies but also from overachievement of income. The budget reset the previous baseline income target; however, this was before government confirmed significant increases in household application fees. Income from this source can be volatile and subject to market conditions where the position can change significantly, particularly in respect of major applications.

There are also positive variances within the Operations and ICT services. These have primarily arisen due to staff vacancies across both areas. Additionally, there has been an increase in operational income, further contributing to the positive variance.

Asset Management, Environment, Housing, and Strategic Investment are all projecting adverse positions greater than 5% (and £50k) of their budget. Both Asset Management and Environment are forecasting a shortfall in income, and there is additional staffing costs anticipated in Environment due to ongoing interim staffing in Building Control. Housing is projecting an overspend on staffing related costs due to service demand pressures and the need to cover unplanned absences through agency. Strategic Investment is projecting an overspend due to increased staffing costs and a reduction in service costs rechargeable to capital projects.

Following confirmation of the pay award, service budgets have been updated, and the in-year cost pressure is being met from overachieved treasury management income.

Significant adjustments were identified and included in the initial budget proposals for 2026/27 after a review of Q1 was conducted. With the updated forecast, a further review will be undertaken to identify any further ongoing risks and opportunities that may still need to be reflected in the final budget proposals.

Capital expenditure to the end of Q2 was £2.6 million, with the main areas of spend being on the Witham Community Centre, a new 3G artificial pitch in Witham, planned maintenance on Council owned property and community assets. While there are several projects where budgeted spend is now expected to slip into 2026/27, there are also several areas where spending is progressing faster than was assumed and therefore bringing forward budgets originally profiled into 2026/27. A projected underspend on the Causeway House refresh project has been included in forecasting available capital resources for the 2026/27 budget, along other capital resources generated to date.

Background

Full Council agreed a net budget of £21.2m. Budgets may be updated during the year in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure, and monitoring is then against the updated budgets. The financial review is a collaborative process between Finance and Service Managers. The assessment uses information that is available at the end of the quarter and applies previous experience for making assumptions over the remainder of the year.

General Fund Revenue Spending

The tables below show the projected outturn for the year by service as forecast at the end of Q2.

Business Plan Service	Updated Budget £'000	Forecast Spend for the Year £'000	Current Forecast Variance £'000	Previous Quarter Variance £'000	Forecast RAG Status
Asset Management	(2,995)	(2,842)	153	205	R
Community & Leisure	1,117	1,102	(15)	(37)	G
Corporate Management Plan	1,731	1,703	(28)	(2)	G
Economic Development	203	163	(40)	0	G
Environment	1,016	1,283	267	214	R
Finance	488	(216)	(704)	(952)	G
Governance	1,688	1,609	(79)	(22)	G
Housing Services	1,073	1,140	67	0	R
ICT & Facilities	2,210	2,105	(105)	(107)	G
Marketing & Communications	760	695	(65)	(36)	G
People & Performance	1,242	1,227	(15)	17	G
Operations	7,455	6,976	(479)	(288)	G
Strategic Investment	339	392	53	46	R
Sustainable Development	2,175	1,553	(622)	(442)	G
Service Plan Total	18,502	16,890	(1,612)	(1,404)	G
Corporate Financing	3,014	2,875	(139)	(51)	G
Est. Impact of Pay Award	0	0	0	60	
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	300	300	
Net Total	21,216	19,765	(1,451)	(1,095)	G

Business Plan Service	Staffing Expenditure			Other Expenditure			Gross Income		
	Updated Budget	F//Cast	Variance	Updated Budget	F/Cast	Variance	Updated Budget	F/Cast	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset Management	553	524	(29)	1,410	1,541	131	(4,958)	(4,907)	51
Community & Leisure	989	946	(43)	879	883	4	(751)	(727)	24
Corporate Management Plan	2,226	2,189	(37)	(116)	(107)	9	(379)	(379)	0
Economic Development	206	166	(40)	65	65	0	(67)	(67)	0
Environment	1,965	2,184	219	166	178	12	(1,115)	(1,079)	36
Finance	2,918	2,831	(87)	26,132	26,242	110	(28,562)	(29,289)	(727)
Governance	1,015	900	(115)	922	926	4	(249)	(217)	32
Housing Services	1,721	1,788	67	423	423	0	(1,071)	(1,071)	0
ICT & Facilities	1,184	1,163	(21)	1,026	943	(83)	0	(1)	(1)
Marketing & Communications	599	546	(53)	315	296	(19)	(154)	(147)	7
People & Performance	1,157	1,139	(18)	85	88	3	0	0	0
Operations	8,575	8,416	(159)	7,262	7,339	77	(8,381)	(8,778)	(397)
Strategic Investment	393	415	22	6	6	0	(61)	(30)	31
Sustainable Development	3,122	2,740	(382)	611	639	28	(1,559)	(1,827)	(268)
Service Plan Total	26,623	25,947	(676)	39,186	39,462	276	(47,307)	(48,519)	(1,212)
Corporate Financing	742	640	(102)	5,574	5,604	30	(3,301)	(3,368)	(67)
Vacancy Allowance	(300)	0	300	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total	27,065	26,587	(478)	44,760	45,066	306	(50,608)	(51,887)	(1,279)

General comments:

- Staffing projections are based on vacancies and other known changes at the end of Q2 and reflect service expectations for the remainder of the year. Changes are likely to occur across the year which will impact future quarterly reviews
- A vacancy allowance of £300k is included in the base budget anticipating that staffing costs may be lower than budgeted due to staff turnover and other changes

Main changes (+adverse/ -positive) from the previous quarter

The change in forecast from that at the First Quarter is an improvement of £356k. The main reasons for this change relate to the following areas:

- **Sustainable Development (-£180k)** – Several posts within the service have remained vacant longer than originally anticipated (-£92k), while income from planning applications is forecast to exceed expectations based on extrapolations of actual income and including an estimate of when income from major applications could be received (-£88k).
- **Finance (+£248k)** – Budget adjusted to reflect virement approved for funding the increased cost of the staff pay award and uplift to Members' allowances, and a reduction in forecast average cash balances. Housing benefit subsidy reduction from several backdated claim adjustments. Amounts may be recoverable but are likely to be subject to extended payment plans.
- **Operations (-£191k)** – The change in underspend is primarily due to vacancies within Street Cleansing and Refuse and Recycling service areas.
- **All Other Services (-£233k Net)** – whilst there was an adverse shift in Environment due mainly to the position in Building Control, there was an overall improvement across most other services mainly in relation to staffing costs including Asset Management, Governance and Marketing and Communications.

Specific comments on the main service variances (+adverse/ -positive)

Asset Management

- Reduced income at the Plaza from the Makerspace and casual lettings (+£119k)
- Additional rental income following backdated rent reviews (-£51k)
- Lower income at Victoria Square due to vacant units (+£45k)
- Net staffing pressure due to reduction in costs charged to capital (Net +£26k)
- Net other variances, mainly related to properties (Net +£14k)

Community and Leisure

- Net saving on staffing costs due to vacancies (-£44k)
- Community Transport income is lower due to difficulty finding volunteer drivers (+£37k).
- Other minor variances (-£8k)

Corporate Management

- Net saving on staffing costs from vacant post and roles have been filled at a lower grade than originally budgeted (-£38k).

Environment

- Staffing variance due to the extremely difficult labour market. Interim staff have been appointed to the Building Control service to cover vacant permanent posts resulting in net additional costs (+£228k).
- Forecast shortfall in the income on the fee earning account (+£97k)
- Revenue cost reduced due to a higher recharge of service costs to capital in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (-£49k)
- Other minor variances (net -£9k)

Finance

- Additional treasury management income due to higher cash balances, higher-for-longer interest rates, and better performance of strategic pooled funds (-£841k).
- Housing Benefits net additional cost of benefits paid (+£147k) – Expenditure is demand led and subject to subsidy limitations on certain types of benefit payments. Several backdated claims have reduced in-year subsidy recovery.
- Net underspend on staffing due to vacancies, and reductions in contracted hours or staff appointed at lower scale points than assumed (-£87k)
- One-off cost associated with asset & insurance valuations for 2025/26 (+£39k)
- Current level of Council Tax discounts for annexes exceeds the grant received from government (+£29k).
- Projected additional income from Local Tax and Housing Benefit cost recoveries assuming similar position to recent years' outturns (-£23k).
- Increased system related costs for the Revenues and Benefits system (+£22k)
- Other minor variances (£10k).

Governance

- Recruitment and retention challenges have resulted in continued vacancies, including two senior lawyer posts. (-£142k).
- The cost of Member allowances is projected to be higher due to increased National Insurance including as a result of increases to the Basic Allowance approved by Full Council on the 21st July 2025 (+£27k).
- Shortfall in net income from residential searches and sealing charges partially offset by increased income from commercial searches (+£20k).
- Overspend on Electoral Registration service e.g. postage costs (+£16k)

Housing

- Increased staffing costs are projected due to ongoing service demands combined with the need to use agency staff to cover unplanned absences (+£67k). This increase in cost is offset by a higher than planned use of the Housing reserve shown under corporate financing.
- The service is also facing higher costs due to an increase in the use of nightly lets and temporary accommodation, estimated to be c£100k; however, this cost pressure is able to be contained within the total allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant for the year and therefore results in a net nil reported service variance at this time.

ICT & Facilities

- Corporate ICT systems maintenance (-£60k)
- Net other underspend (-£25k) mainly on Causeway House operating costs.
- Net saving on staffing costs due to vacancies and reduction in hours (-£20k)

Operations

- Net saving from vacancies within Street Cleansing, Horticultural Services and Fleet workshop; a reduction in overtime cost; and appointments at a lower grade than originally budgeted (-£159k)
- The subscription-based garden waste collection service is projected to generate additional net income (-£109k)
- Demand for commercial waste and bulky waste services continues to increase resulting in a forecast of net additional income (-£69k).
- Income received on recycling material, composting credits and tipping away payments are projected to be higher for the range of materials collected due to changes in market prices and

tonnages (-£70k). There are forecast increased related cost associated with transportation and tipping away (+£67k)

- Reduction in vehicle maintenance costs as a result of the vehicle replacement programme net of additional costs of hire of vehicle at Cordons Farm (-£24k).
- Car parking income has been overachieved mainly on pay & display, partially offset by increased collection costs (-£55k)
- Income received from recycled glass is higher due to market prices (-£34k)
- Other minor variances (-£26k).

Strategic Investment

- Increase in staffing costs following a review of the service (+£22k) and a reduction in service costs recharged to capital as the work of the team is being refocused to support on wider project management across the council (£31k).

Sustainable Development

- Net staffing variance due to vacancies in Development Management (-£264k) and Landscape Services (-£118k), partially offset by agency cover. Posts within the Landscape Service have now been appointed.
- Projected overachievement in Planning Application income (-£100k), Pre-application income (-£90k), Planning Performance Agreements (-£40k). Income can be highly variable and subject to economic conditions.
- Additional income from street naming (-£30k)
- Other variances (+£3k).

Corporate Financing

- The Council Tax Sharing Arrangement gainshare is projected to be higher based on collection performance at Q2 (-£78k). The amount is provisional and assumes 7% share-back. Subject to final performance for the year achieved across all Essex authorities, there is potential for this to increase to 9% (resulting in an additional positive variance of £124k against budget).
- Other staffing related underspends such as the employee leave purchase scheme, central staff retention provision, and lower pension fund costs (-£74k).
- Legal settlement costs arising from the Wethersfield legal challenges (+£40k).
- Net increase (-£27k) in use of reserves as a contra to the projected variance on Economic Development (+£40k) and Housing (-£67k)
- Staffing costs recharged to capital are estimated to be lower than assumed in the budget, based on current project officers' timesheet data (+£20k).
- Other variances, including leased car scheme, apprentice levy, business rates transitional adjustments, and other grant funding (-£20k)

Capital Programme

Current capital programme totals £17.4m (excluding prior year spend) of which £3.3m is profiled into 2026/27:

	Budget Profiled 25/26 £000	Actual Spend 25/26 £000	In-year Variance 25/26 £000	Slippage (-or deduction from future budget) £000	Forecast Project Variance 25/26 £000	Expected Remaining Spend 25/26 £000
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	134	11	123	0	0	123
Horizon 120 - The Plaza	87	54	33	0	0	33
Waste Review	3,378	0	3,378	0	0	3,378
Witham Community Centre	2,752	702	2,051	402	0	2,453
Town Centre improvements	663	200	463	-31	0	432
Property planned maintenance (incl. Causeway Hse)	2,117	272	1,845	591	-819	1,617
Information technology systems & equipment	367	95	272	-169	-12	92
Community facilities, play areas, parks & open spaces	788	295	493	22	-4	511
Cemetery improvements	29	3	26	0	0	26
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	68	5	63	0	0	63
Operational equipment	499	12	486	0	0	486
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	1,076	601	475	-173	0	302
Climate change initiatives	135	35	100	0	0	100
Shared / Rural Prosperity Fund	239	15	225	0	0	225
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	1,031	209	821	-214	0	608
Capital salaries	278	109	170	0	-26	144
Total	13,641	2,616	11,025	428	-861	10,592

Comments on the Capital Programme

- The overall programme has increased by £145k since Q1, mainly due to the addition of a S106 funded project for Witham Riverwalk Footpath and an increase to the DFG budget in line with additional ringfenced contributions.
- Spend at the end of the Q2 was £2.6m and anticipated spend in the remaining quarters of the year are: £2.7m (Q3) and £7.9m (Q4).
- Spending profiles have been developed in conjunction with Project Officer and where appropriate derived from project milestones and related cash flow statements.
- There has been a net increase of £428k in the budget profiled to be spent in the current year due to the following:-
 - Budgets totalling around £1 million originally profiled to be spent in 2026/27 have been reprofiled into the current year, mainly for Witham Community Centre (£403k) and Planned Maintenance of Council Assets (£591k)
 - Estimated slippage of £595k of budgeted spend, mainly Disabled Facility Grants (£214k), Leisure Centre improvements (£180k), and ICT related projects (169k)
- The programme is projected to be £861k under spent in 25/26, mainly due to the reduced scope of works to be undertaken as part of the Causeway House refresh project.

Capital resources generated

- Eastlight agreements: Right-to-Buy sales – number of completed sales 12 with £1.6m due to the Council. A further 17 applications are in progress (In 2024/25 only 4 sales in the year were completed generating £533k); and VAT shelter £191k. 2 further sales under clawback arrangements generating £200k.
- Other minor receipts totalling £29k.
- Agreement for the sale of plots 5-8 at H120 was in progress at the end of Q2 and subsequent completion will be reflected in Q3.

Treasury Management

At the start of the year £73.1m was invested. During the first half of the year the average amount under management was £90.1m with a peak of £98.0m. New investments of £81.1m were made, and £64.5m matured, resulting in £89.7m being held at the end of the quarter.

Monies held in long-term pooled funds was kept at £19m with varying exposures to property, equities, and other financial assets. The remainder of managed funds were held in short-term investments comprising money market funds; Debt Management Office Account (UK Government); other local authorities; bank deposits; and liquid cash held with Lloyds Bank.

Dividend income earned to the end of the second quarter was £396k and interest on short-term investments was £1.536 million, a total of £1.932 million or annualised return of 4.24%.

The market value of shares and units in long-term pooled funds at the end of the second quarter was £23.6m, representing an unrealised gain of £4.6m.

General Fund Balances

General Fund balances are currently estimated to be £11.7m by the end of the year, a net decrease of £0.4m.