



Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

Governance, Audit and Performance Committee Remote Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 16th March, 2021

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Zoom - <https://zoom.us/>

Chair: Councillor E Oliver

Members: Councillors S Barker, G Driscoll (Vice-Chair), M Foley, V Isham, R Jones, A Khan, S Luck and J De Vries

Substitutes: Councillors H Asker, M Caton, C Criscione, M Sutton and M Tayler

Public Speaking

At the start of the meeting there will be an opportunity of up to 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions and make statements subject to having given notice by 12 noon two working days before the meeting. Please register your intention to speak at this meeting by writing to committee@uttlesford.gov.uk

Public speakers will be offered the opportunity for an officer to read out their questions or statement at the meeting, or to attend the meeting over Zoom to read out their questions or statement themselves.

Members of the public who would like to watch the meeting live can do so [here](#). The broadcast will be made available as soon as the meeting begins.

AGENDA

PART 1

Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**
To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 4 - 9
To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 3 Audit Plan** 10 - 46
To receive BDO's Audit Planning report for the year ending 31 March 2021.
- 4 Internal Audit Terms of Reference - Review of Grant Governance** 47 - 51
To consider the objectives and scope of the review.
- 5 Covid-19 Performance Indicator Report 6** 52 - 85
To receive the COVID-19 Performance Indicator Report 6.
- 6 Council Procedure Rules: time permitted for questions to the executive and committee Chairs** 86 - 117
To consider the report on Council Procedure Rules: time permitted for questions to the executive and committee Chairs.

REMOTE MEETINGS AND THE PUBLIC

Due to the Government's social distancing measures imposed in the wake of Covid-19, the way in which the public can participate in Uttlesford District Council meetings has changed. Meetings are no longer being held on site or in person and 'remote meetings' will be held on the virtual meeting platform Zoom until further notice. Members of the public are welcome to listen live to the debate of any of the Council's Cabinet or Committee meetings. All live broadcasts and meeting papers can be viewed on the Council's calendar of meetings webpage.

If you wish to make a statement via Zoom video link, you will need to register with Democratic Services by midday two working days before the meeting. There is a 15 minute public speaking limit and 3 minute speaking slots will be given on a first come, first served basis. Those wishing to make a statement via video link will require an internet connection and a device with a microphone and video camera enabled. Those wishing to make a statement to the meeting who do not have internet access can do so via telephone. Technical guidance on the practicalities of participating via Zoom will be given at the point of confirming your registration slot, but if you have any questions regarding the best way to participate in this meeting please call Democratic Services on 01799 510 369/410/467/548 who will advise on the options available.

The agenda is split into two parts. Most of the business is dealt with in Part I which is open to the public. Part II includes items which may be discussed in the absence of the press or public, as they deal with information which is personal or sensitive for some other reason. The broadcast will be unable when Part II items are discussed.

Agenda and Minutes are available in alternative formats and/or languages. For more information please call 01799 510510.

Facilities for people with disabilities

If you are deaf or have impaired hearing and would like a signer available at a meeting, please contact committee@uttlesford.gov.uk or phone 01799 510 369/410/467/548 as soon as possible prior to the meeting.

For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services

Telephone: 01799 510369, 510548, 510410 or 510467

Email: Committee@uttlesford.gov.uk

General Enquiries

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Agenda Item 2

GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE held at ZOOM on THURSDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor E Oliver (Chair)
Councillors S Barker, G Driscoll (Vice-Chair), M Foley, V Isham, R Jones, A Khan, S Luck and J De Vries

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services), E Brooks (Internal Audit Manager), P Evans (Customer Services and Performance Manager), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), C Gibson (Democratic Services Officer), O Knight (PFI and Performance Officer), R Millership (Assistant Director - Housing, Health and Communities), J Reynolds (Lawyer) and A Webb (Director – Finance and Corporate Services).

GAP27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Barker and the new Internal Audit Manager to the meeting.

GAP28 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Khan referred to possible omissions from the minutes in respect of Agenda Item GAP25 Armed Forces Covenant Trust Grant in respect of Debden Village Hall, Page 7, Paragraph 6 as to what the Chief Executive had reported. He said that this matter had been raised with him by a resident. The Democratic Services Manager said that this matter would be taken away, reviewed and amended if appropriate.

In response to a question from Councillor Barker, the Director – Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that the Aspire (CRP) Limited accounts were not due for filing until March 2021 and that they were currently being audited.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2020 were approved, subject to clarification on the matter raised by Councillor Khan.

GAP29 INTERNAL AUDIT INTERIM REPORT 2020/21

The Internal Audit Manager introduced herself and outlined the new internal audit arrangements in place. She said that she was working 18 hours per week for the Council and was also working for Chelmsford City Council.

She gave a summary of the report, which detailed the work that Internal Audit had undertaken between April and December 2020 and set out the planned work to the end of March 2021. She said that changes had been made to the revised

audit plan in order to focus more on the higher risks to the Council and she confirmed that Internal Audit was on track to complete the revised plan by the end of March 2021. She reported that five reports had been completed and that a further ten reports remained to complete. She referred Members to Paragraph 7.4 of her report which detailed the deferrals and cancellations.

Councillor Khan welcomed the clear report.

The Chair noted the contents of the report.

Councillor De Vries joined the meeting at 7.15 pm and Councillor Gregory joined the meeting at 7.19 pm.

GAP30 2021-22 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN & CHARTER

The Internal Audit Manager gave a summary of the report, which detailed the draft Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22 and the Internal Audit Charter.

She said that the plan was based on a prioritisation of the audit universe using a risk-based methodology; it was focussed on the highest priorities and risks and was intended to add value. There was a heavy focus on cross-cutting reviews as that was where the most risk existed. She said that there was some contingency built into the plan.

The Internal Audit Manager also presented the Internal Audit Charter that was a standard document and a key requirement of compliance.

The Chair referred to the reference in the Charter to the GAP Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Luck, the Internal Audit Manager said that in moving forward there was no real change in approach but that she was looking to add value.

Councillor Khan said that it was a clear report but that he would like some audit input into the area of contract management relating to grants.

The Internal Audit Manager confirmed that there had been no time allocated in the plan to this area.

Members referred to the earlier discussion about the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Grant in respect of Debden Village Hall. Some views were expressed that this matter should be examined by Internal Audit or referred to Scrutiny Committee. Councillors Driscoll raised a point of order and said that he believed that this matter had already been mentioned and brought up at a Scrutiny Committee meeting. Councillor Foley said that he understood that Scrutiny had brought this matter up but without resolution.

Members supported a review of the system, an understanding as to what had gone wrong in the process as well as lessons to be learned.

The Internal Audit Manager said that she could undertake a review of the Council's Grants Policy and processes, taking on board the grant in respect of Debden Village Hall.

The Chair asked that Internal Audit looked at this matter quickly and brought it back to GAP Committee.

Members noted the contents of the report and approved the draft Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22 and Internal Audit Charter.

GAP31 COVID-19 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT 5

The PFI and Performance Officer gave a summary of the report, which presented the outturn data for all COVID-19 performance indicators for the period 2 November 2020 to 3 January 2021. He said that overall, data outturns highlighted that services were continuing to perform well despite the current circumstances. He referred Members to the summary provided in Paragraph 19 of the report that included new indicators such as CV 48 "the number of Test and Trace Support payments".

In response to a question about the percentage change in penalty charge notices from Councillor Jones, the PFI and Performance Officer said that there had not been as much enforcement at the start of the pandemic.

Councillor Luck confirmed that parking machines had been covered up and monies not collected

Councillor Barker said that there was no KPI for rent received from commercial tenants.

The PFI and Performance Officer confirmed that this was correct and that he could take this away for consideration. The Chair confirmed that this should be considered.

The Chair noted the performance of services during the COVID- 19 pandemic, as attached in Appendix 1.

GAP32 PFI CONTRACT UPDATE 2020/21

The Chair referred to questions that he had received from members of the Saffron Walden Squash Club that afternoon and said that he would refer them to officers to respond in writing.

The Customer Services and Performance Manager gave a summary of the report that provided an annual update on the Uttlesford Leisure PFI contract for the 2020/21 financial year. She said that the main focus related to how the contract had been managed during the COVID- 19 pandemic, risk assessments had been reviewed collaboratively by all PFI project parties and the Council had been in regular contact with 1Life. She said that the Council had waived the

monthly operator fee of approximately £14,500 per month up until the end of March 2021. She referred to Paragraphs 24 to 28 that provided some assurances on the way forward in these uncertain times.

The Chair asked what would happen if the sub-contractor became insolvent.

The Customer Services and Performance Manager said that in the first instance the Project Company (Linteum Uttlesford Limited) would be responsible for procuring another operator.

Councillor Driscoll was advised by the PFI and Performance Officer that the contract had started in May 2002 and ran until August 2035 with no break clause.

The Chair received the report.

GAP33 GRANT ALLOCATION POLICY (SPORTS PROVISION - MAJOR PROJECTS)

The Assistant Director – Housing, Health and Communities gave a summary of the report, which detailed the Grant Allocation Policy (Sports Provision – Major Projects) for approval and adoption.

Councillor Barker said that she would have expected the responsible Cabinet Member to have presented the item.

Various Members commented on the proposed Grant Allocation Policy that was due to be submitted to Cabinet on 9 February 2021. The main points were as follows:

- The Committee believed the requirement for grants to be “fully spent within the year for which they are allocated” was unrealistic, given the likely size of some of these projects. If the intention was that recipients will be allowed to roll forward their grant into the following year, this did need to be explicitly stated in the policy.
- The Policy stipulated that a recipient cannot have received a grant from the Council for the same project. Did this include grants given by Councillors under the Ward Member Initiative Grant scheme?
- Could the same organisation apply in subsequent years or would there be restrictions on this – for example only every other year or once every three years? If there was to be a restriction on how frequently a club could apply, this needed to be stated in the policy.
- Could a line be added to the policy stating that all grants are awarded by the Council “in good faith” to cover the Council for any unseen eventuality?

Some members of the committee expressed disquiet that they were being asked to recommend approval of the policy when it was clear that it had already been decided who was to receive the first grant. The point was made that the Council would be launching a grant scheme and could potentially have between 15 and 20 clubs making applications for it when it has already been decided who was to receive it. Members were concerned at the apparent lack of transparency.

The Director - Finance and Corporate Services said that the matter had been brought to the Committee for governance reasons in that any comments made would be forwarded onto Cabinet. He said that this was an opportunity for extra controls to be added in and said that a paper would be taken to Cabinet that presented views expressed by the Committee. He said that no decision was being taken relating to allocating and spending grant monies but that the decision from the Committee was in respect of procedures and policies.

The Assistant Director - Housing Health and Communities said that smaller grants would fall under different criteria. She said that the document could be considered to be a living document that could be periodically reviewed. She also confirmed that the policy in respect of terms and conditions would have input from legal officers.

The Chair said that he would take a paper forward to Cabinet that outlined the views of the Committee.

Councillor Barker said that she would be abstaining from voting on the recommendation on the basis that she considered that the grant recipient had already been agreed.

A roll call vote was taken that the Grant Allocation Policy (Sports Provision – Major Projects) be recommended to Cabinet for approval, together with a paper being taken to Cabinet outlining the Committee's views on making improvements to the policy.

RESOLVED that the Grant Allocation Policy (Sports Provision – Major Projects) be recommended to Cabinet for approval, together with a paper being taken to Cabinet outlining the Committee's views on making improvements to the policy.

GAP34 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES: TIME PERMITTED FOR QUESTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

The Chair summarised the recommendations detailed in Paragraphs 4 and 5 of the report which was to consider whether there was a need to amend Rule 2.4 (Section 2, Part 4 – Rule 2.4) relating to the time permitted for questions to the executive and committee chairs and to look at two possible options for taking this forward either through a recommendation to extend permitted time for questions to 30 minutes or by establishing a Task and Finish Group to review the time permitted.

The Democratic Services Manager said that there were currently ten Cabinet Members and this was one of the reasons for possibly extending time limits for questions.

Members debated:

- the merits of extending the time permitted for questions
- the possibility of extending the time on a trial basis
- the need to be more efficient

- the possibility of questions being provided in writing ahead of meetings with supplementary questions being taken at the meetings.
- The discretion of Chairs to extend the fifteen minute rule
- Concerns that time was sometimes being taken up with too many questions on the same subject
- the merits of Task and Finish Groups
- the possibility of a wider remit to consider such matters as the Constitution and Members being able to speak more than once in a debate
- the possibility of looking at how other Councils work, with Essex County Council being given as an example.

The Chair considered that the preferred option amongst Members was that Members were minded to amend Rule 2.4 and that a Task and Finish Group should be established.

Councillors Driscoll, Isham, Jones and Khan agreed to sit on the Task and Finish Group and Councillor Barker agreed to act as an adviser.

The Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group in order to carry out a review of Rule 2.4 “time permitted for questions to the executive and committee chairs”. The Task and Finish Group’s recommendations would be brought back to the Committee for endorsement and comment.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.



Report to the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Audit Planning Report: year ending 31 March 2021

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WELCOME

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Welcome

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We have pleasure in presenting our Audit Planning Report to the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee of Uttlesford District Council (the 'Council'). This report forms a key part of our communication strategy with you, a strategy which is designed to promote effective two way communication throughout the audit process with those charged with governance.

It summarises the planned audit strategy for the year ending 31 March 2021 in respect of our audit of the financial statements and use of resources; comprising materiality, key audit risks and the planned approach to these; together with timetable and the BDO team. This is an outline plan due to the changing climate we find ourselves in, which in particular is affecting audit scope, risk to financial reporting in Local Government and timetabling. We may issue an updated report to the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee when risk assessment has progressed further, in particular in respect of our work on use of resources.

The planned audit strategy has been discussed with management to ensure that it incorporates developments in the business during the year under review, the results for the year to date and other required scope changes.

This report contains matters which should properly be considered by the Council as a whole. We expect that the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee will refer such matters to the Council, together with any recommendations, as it considers appropriate.

We look forward to discussing this plan with you at the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee meeting on 16 March 2021 and to receiving your input on the scope and approach.

In the meantime if you would like to discuss any aspects in advance of the meeting please contact one of the team.

David Eagles, Partner
For and on behalf of BDO LLP, Appointed Auditor

8 March 2021

This report has been prepared solely for the use of the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee and Those Charged with Governance. In preparing this report we do not accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person. For more information on our respective responsibilities please see the appendices.



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SCOPE AND MATERIALITY

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This summary provides an overview of the key audit matters that we believe are important to the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee in reviewing the planned audit strategy for the Council and the Group for the year ending 31 March 2021.

It is also intended to promote effective communication and discussion and to ensure that the audit strategy appropriately incorporates input from those charged with governance.

Audit scope

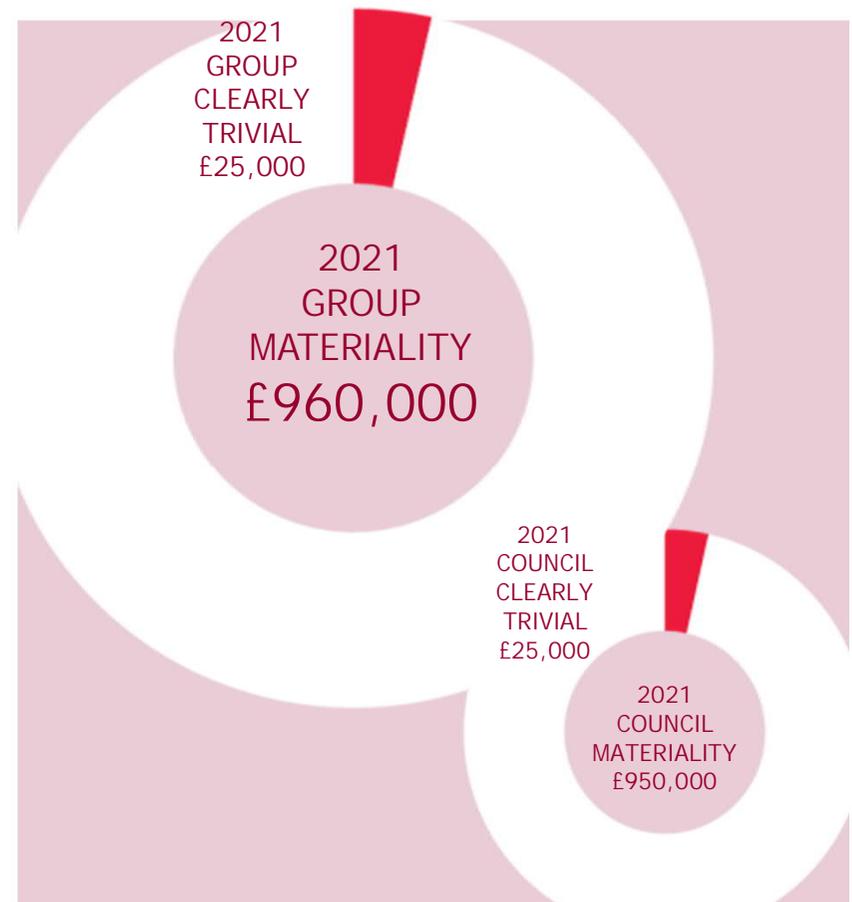
The scope of the audit is determined by the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice that sets out what local auditors are required to do to fulfil their statutory responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. This includes: auditing the financial statements and consolidated entities (together the 'Group'); reviewing the arrangements to secure value for money through the economic, efficient and effective use of its resources; and, where appropriate, exercising the auditor's wider reporting powers and duties. The Code of Audit Practice was updated with effect from 1 April 2020 and as a consequence the scope of the use of resources work has changed for the year ending 31 March 2021. More information on this change is included on page 19.

Our approach is designed to ensure we obtain the requisite level of assurance in accordance with applicable laws, appropriate standards and guidance issued by the National Audit Office.

Materiality

Planning materiality for the Council and the Group will be set at 1.75% of gross expenditure for the year (prior year 1.75%). This will be revisited when the draft financial statements are received for audit.

Although materiality is the judgement of the engagement lead, the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee is obliged to satisfy themselves that the materiality chosen is appropriate for the scope of the audit.



AUDIT STRATEGY

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Our audit strategy is predicated on a risk based approach, so that audit work is focused on the areas of the financial statements where the risk of material misstatement is assessed to be higher, or where there is a risk that the organisation has not made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We have discussed the changes to the Council, systems and controls in the year with management and obtained their own view of potential audit risk in order to update our understanding of the Council's and Group's activities and to determine which risks impact on the numbers and disclosures in the financial statements, or on its arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We will continue to update this assessment throughout the audit.

The table on the next page summarises our planned approach to audit risks identified.

There has been no significant change to audit risks identified or their classification as compared to the prior year.

The following areas will be subject to a controls based approach

- Expenditure
- Housing Benefits.

All other material areas will be subject to a substantive approach.

AUDIT RISKS OVERVIEW

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Risk identified	Risk rating	Fraud risk present	Testing approach	Impact of significant judgements and estimates
Management override of controls	Significant	Yes	Substantive	Medium (except non-current assets and pensions)
Revenue recognition	Significant	Yes	Substantive	Medium
Expenditure cut-off	Significant	Yes	Substantive	Medium
Valuation of non-current assets	Significant	Yes	Substantive	High
Valuation of pension liability	Significant	No	Substantive	High
Use of Resources (to be defined)	Significant	N/A	N/A	N/A



INDEPENDENCE AND FEES

Executive summary

Independence

We confirm that the firm complies with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard for Auditors and, in our professional judgement, is independent

Fees

	2020/21	2019/20
Code audit fee	¹ £47,455	¹ £47,455
Additional audit fee: specific risks	-	² £2,500
Additional audit fee: Covid-19 remote working	³ £7,115	-
Additional audit fee: new Use of Resources approach	⁴ TBC	-
Audit of Aspire subsidiary	£12,750	£13,700
Total audit fees	£TBC	£TBC
Fees for non-audit services - audit related:		
• Certification of housing benefits subsidy claim	TBC	£ ³ 17,250
• Certification of pooled housing capital receipts return	£1,560	£1,525
Total non-audit services fees	TBC	£18,500
Total fees	TBC	£79,655

Separate engagement letters proposing fees for the 2020/21 audit related non-audit services will be issued at a later date.

Fee variances

¹Core Code fee

This is the Scale fee plus recurring quality-focused elements relating to auditing groups, valuation of property, plant and equipment and pensions liability. The 2019/20 fee is the planned and not the final fee because the audit is not yet concluded.

² Specific risks

This relates to the additional use of resources risk relating to commercial investments which we estimate will increase fees by approximately £2,500.

³Covid-related costs

This represents an estimate of the additional resource time and costs necessary when audits are undertaken remotely. The 15% is at the lowest end of the 15-20% range experienced by BDO and the other audit firms. If we are able to undertake some key work on site, the time reflected here should reduce and the fee level decrease accordingly.

⁴Use of resources fee variance

The audit fee is based on audit scope under the Code of Audit Practice. A new Code is effective for periods commencing 1 April 2020, which significantly increases the work of auditors for reporting on a body's use of resources. We will propose a fee variation in respect of this once additional procedures have been fully scoped. We await final NAO guidance.

⁵ Housing benefits assurance

The 2019/20 work is not yet complete. The fee quoted is the planned fee.

Amendments to the proposed fees

If we need to propose any amendments to the fees during the course of the audit, where our assessment of risk and complexity are significantly different from those reflected in the proposed fee or where we are required to carry out work in exercising our additional powers and duties, we will first discuss this with the Council. Where this requires a variation to the scale fee set by PSAA we will seek approval from Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA). If necessary, we will also prepare a report outlining the reasons why the fee needs to change for discussion with the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee.

OVERVIEW

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Key components of our audit objectives and strategy for the Group are highlighted and explained on the following pages.

Audit planning is a collaborative and continuous process and our audit strategy, as reflected here, will be reviewed and updated as our audit progresses.

We will communicate any significant changes to our audit strategy, should the need for such change arise.

Reporting	Objectives
Auditing standards	We will perform our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing UK (ISAs (UK)) and relevant guidance published by the National Audit Office.
Financial statements	We will express an opinion on the Council and Group financial statements, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2020/21 and other directions.
Statement of Accounts	In addition to our objectives regarding the financial statements, we will also read and consider the other information contained in the Statement of Accounts to consider whether there is a material inconsistency between the other information and the financial statements or other information and our knowledge obtained during the audit.
Additional powers and duties	Where necessary we may be required to: issue of a report in the public interest; make a written recommendation to the Council; allow local electors to raise questions and objections on the accounts; or exercise legal powers to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law, issue an advisory notice or an application for a judicial review.
Audit Completion Report to the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee	Prior to the approval of the financial statements, we will discuss our significant findings with the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee. We will highlight key accounting and audit issues as well as internal control findings and any other significant matters arising from the audit.
Use of resources and Auditor's Annual Report	We will provide an annual commentary on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The commentary will explain the work that we have undertaken during the year and highlight any significant weaknesses identified, along with any recommendations for improvement. The commentary will also draw attention to emerging or developing issues which may not represent significant weaknesses, but which may nevertheless require attention from the Council. The Auditor's Annual Report is required to be published by the Council. At the time of drafting this Audit Planning Report the timetable for publication is not yet confirmed.

AUDIT SCOPE ENTITIES, COMPONENTS AND AUDIT RISKS

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As Group auditor we are required to design an audit strategy to ensure we have obtained the required audit assurance for each component for the purposes of our Group audit opinion ISA (UK) 600

A high-level overview of how we have designed the Group audit strategy is summarised below to ensure you have clear oversight of the scope of the work we intend to perform on each entity.

Audit Risks, covered later in this report, are cross referenced to each entity to provide clarity over how these arise within your business and where the focus of the audit work will be.

The clearly trivial threshold for all components has been set at the Group level, being £25,000.



AUDIT SCOPE ENTITIES, COMPONENTS AND AUDIT RISKS 2

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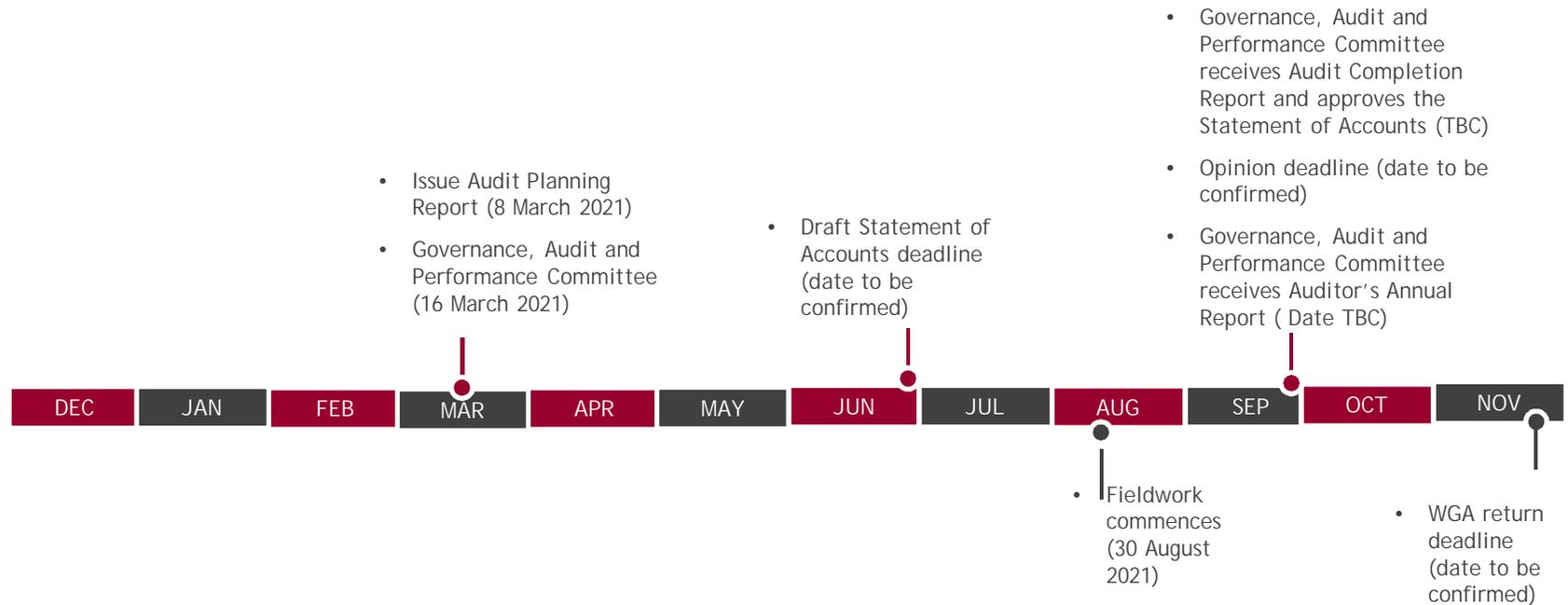
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Entity	Nature of Operations	Audit classification	Reason for classification	Audit Risks response	Component Materiality and basis of assessment	Audit strategy
Uttlesford District Council	Provision of statutory services	Significant	Size (revenue impact)	As described in this report.	£950,000	Statutory audit performed by BDO UK
Aspire (CRP) Limited	Holding of Chesterford Research Park (Joint Venture)	Non significant component	Size (revenue impact)	Non-current assets existence and valuation subject to specified procedures; verification of other material components as relevant; and analytical review.	£960,000	Specified procedures performed by BDO UK

AUDIT TIMELINE

An overview of the key dates

At the time of drafting this Audit Planning Report, the deadlines for preparing and publishing local authority accounts are subject to consultation, as part of the Government's response to Sir Tony Redmond's review. The consultation proposes pushing back the final accounts publication date to 30 September 2021 and requiring draft accounts to be published on or before 1 August 2021, together with a new requirement for local bodies to provide an explanation on their website if they miss the revised draft publication date.



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BDO TEAM

Team responsibilities



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As audit engagement lead I have primary responsibility to ensure that the appropriate audit opinion is given.

In meeting this responsibility I ensure that the audit has resulted in obtaining sufficient and appropriate evidence to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to report on the financial statements and communicate as required by the ISAs (UK), in accordance with our findings.

I will ensure that we have undertaken sufficient work to assess the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources against the guidance published by the National Audit Office.

I am responsible for the overall quality of the engagement and am supported by the rest of the team as set out here.



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I will lead on the audit of the Council. I work closely with David to develop and execute the audit strategy. I will be a key point of contact on a day to day basis and will ensure that timelines are carefully managed to ensure that deadlines are met and matters to be communicated to management and the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee are highlighted on a timely basis.

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OVERVIEW

Audit risks

We have assessed the following as audit risks. These are matters assessed as most likely to cause a material misstatement in the financial statements or impact on our use of resources opinion and include those that will have the greatest effect on audit strategy, the allocation of audit resources and the amount of audit focus by the engagement team.

Key: **Significant** / **Normal**

Description of risk	Significant risk	Normal risk	Overview of risk
1. Management override of controls			Management has the ability to manipulate accounting records and override controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We are required to consider this as a significant risk of material misstatement due to fraud.
2. Revenue recognition			Auditing standards presume that income recognition presents a fraud risk.
3. Expenditure cut-off			For public sector bodies the risk of fraud related to expenditure is also relevant.
4. Valuation of non-current assets			The valuation of non-current assets is a significant risk as it involves a high degree of estimation uncertainty.
5. Valuation of pension liability			The valuation of the pension liability is a significant risk as it involves a high degree of estimation uncertainty.
6. Use of Resources			The Code of Audit Practice was updated with effect from 1 April 2020 and as a consequence the scope of our value for money work has changed for the year ending 31 March 2021. We are not yet in a position to report risks of significant weakness under the new Code requirements to those charged with governance and will issue an updated planning report once our risk assessment has progressed. Further information is provided on page 18.

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MANAGEMENT OVERRIDE OF CONTROLS

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Management has the ability to manipulate accounting records and override controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

Significant risk
Normal risk
Fraud risk
Assess design & implementation of controls to mitigate
Significant Management estimates & judgements
Controls testing approach
Substantive testing approach
Risk highlighted by Council

Risk detail

Management has the ability to manipulate accounting records and override controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We are required to consider this as a significant risk of material misstatement due to fraud.

Planned audit approach

Our audit procedures will include the following:

- Review and verification of journal entries made in the year, agreeing the journals to supporting documentation; we will determine key risk characteristics to filter the population of journals and use our IT team to assist with the journal extraction
- Review of estimates and judgements applied by management in the financial statements to assess their appropriateness and the existence of any systematic bias
- Review of unadjusted audit differences for indications of bias or deliberate misstatement.

REVENUE RECOGNITION

Auditing standards presume that income recognition presents a fraud risk.

Risk detail

Under auditing standards there is a presumption that income recognition presents a fraud risk. For the Council, we consider the risk of fraudulent revenue recognition to be in respect of the accuracy and existence of fees and charges income.

Planned audit approach

Our audit procedures will include the following:

- Test a sample of fees and charges to ensure income has been recorded in the correct period and that all income that should have been recorded has been recorded.

Significant risk	■
Normal risk	
Fraud risk	■
Assess design & implementation of controls to mitigate	■
Significant Management estimates & judgements	
Controls testing approach	
Substantive testing approach	■
Risk highlighted by Council	

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EXPENDITURE CUT-OFF

For public sector bodies the risk of fraud related to expenditure is also relevant.

Risk detail

For net-spending bodies in the public sector there is also risk of fraud related to expenditure. For the Council, we consider the risk of fraud to be in respect of the cut-off of expenditure at year-end.

Planned audit approach

Our audit procedures will include the following:

- Checking that expenditure is recognised in the correct accounting period by substantively testing a sample of expenditure around year-end.

Significant risk	
Normal risk	
Fraud risk	
Assess design & implementation of controls to mitigate	
Significant Management estimates & judgements	
Controls testing approach	
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Risk highlighted by Council	

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VALUATION OF NON-CURRENT ASSETS

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The valuation of non-current assets is a significant risk as it involves a high degree of estimation uncertainty.

- Significant risk
- Normal risk
- Fraud risk
- Assess design & implementation of controls to mitigate
- Significant Management estimates & judgements
- Controls testing approach
- Substantive testing approach
- Risk highlighted by Council

Risk detail

Local authorities are required to ensure that the carrying value of land, buildings and dwellings is not materially different to the current value (operational assets) or fair value (surplus assets, assets held for sale and investment properties) at the balance sheet date. There is a risk over the valuation of these assets due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty and where updated valuations have not been provided for a class of assets at the year-end.

Planned audit approach

Our audit procedures will include the following:

- Reviewing and critically assessing the instructions provided to the valuer and the valuer's skills and expertise in order to determine if we can rely on the management expert
- Verifying that the basis of valuation for assets valued in year is appropriate based on their usage
- Verifying the accuracy and completeness of information provided to the valuer, such as rental agreements and sizes
- Critically assessing assumptions used by the valuer and movements against relevant indices for similar classes of assets
- Following up valuation movements that appear unusual
- Verifying that assets not specifically valued in the year have been assessed to ensure their reported values remain materially correct.

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The valuation of the pension liability is a significant risk as it involves a high degree of estimation uncertainty

Significant risk	■
Normal risk	—
Fraud risk	—
Assess design & implementation of controls to mitigate	■
Significant Management estimates & judgements	■
Controls testing approach	—
Substantive testing approach	■
Risk highlighted by Council	—

Risk detail

The valuation of the defined benefit obligation is a complex calculation involving a number of significant judgements and assumptions. The actuarial estimate of the pension fund liability uses information on current, deferred and retired member data and applies various actuarial assumptions over pension increases, salary increases, mortality, commutation take up and discount rates to calculate the net present value of the liability.

There is a risk that the membership data and cash flows provided to the actuary at year end may not be accurate, and that the actuary uses inappropriate assumptions to value the liability. Relatively small adjustments to assumptions used can have a material impact on the Council's share of the scheme liability.

Planned audit approach

Our audit procedures will include the following:

- Agreeing the disclosures to the information provided by the pension fund actuary
- Assessing the competence of the management expert (actuary)
- Challenging the reasonableness of the assumptions used in the calculation against other local government actuaries and other observable data
- Assessing the controls in place for providing accurate membership data to the actuary
- Agreeing a work programme with the pension fund auditor and requesting confirmation of the controls in place for providing accurate membership data to the actuary and testing of that data
- Checking that any significant changes in membership data have been communicated to the actuary.

USE OF RESOURCES

New Code of Audit Practice (“Code”)

The Comptroller & Auditor General has determined through a new Code and guidance that the key output from local audit work in respect of value for money (VFM) arrangements is a commentary as reported in the Auditor’s Annual Report, not a VFM arrangements ‘conclusion’ or ‘opinion’. There may be matters referred to in the auditor’s commentary that do not represent significant weaknesses in arrangements and where significant weaknesses are reported we are required to also report recommendations.

As auditors we need to gather sufficient evidence and document our evaluation of arrangements to enable us to draft our commentary under three reporting criteria. These criteria are:

- Financial sustainability - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services
- Governance - How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks
- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness (‘Improving 3Es’) - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

In addition to new assessment criteria and commentary requirements, the scope of the new Code also considerably increases auditors’ requirements for planning documentation and management should expect an increase in requests for discussion and evidence to facilitate this requirement.

Risk of Significant Weakness

We are required to report the results of our risk assessment to those charged with governance, including additional work planned in respect of any identified risks of significant weakness, and to keep our risk assessment under continual review, with any changes again communicated to those charged with governance.

We are working through the implications of the new Code, including our risk assessment and a work programme that addresses risks of significant weakness identified.

Pertinent matters from early discussions with management include how the Council plans finances to support the sustainable delivery of services in accordance with its strategic and statutory priorities (Financial Sustainability), how the Council ensures it delivers its role, engages with stakeholders, monitors performance and acts for improvement within significant partnerships (Improving 3Es) and how the Council ensures it makes properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence and allowing for challenge and transparency (Governance). We are however not yet in a position to report any risks of significant weakness.

We will update the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee on risks of significant weakness and planned work when it meets next and, subject to risks being identified, will issue an updated version of this report.

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GOING CONCERN

Officers are required to make an assessment of the Council's ability to continue as a going concern.

Officers' responsibilities

It is the officers' responsibility to make an assessment of the Council's ability to continue as a going concern to support the basis of preparation for the financial statements and disclosures in the financial statements. This is a requirement of the accounting standards.

This assessment should be supported by detailed cash flow forecasts with clear details of the key underlying assumptions, consideration of available finance throughout the forecast period, and a consideration of the forecast's sensitivity to reasonably possible variations in those assumptions along with any other relevant factors.

The going concern assessment should cover a minimum of 12 months from the date of the officers' approval of the financial statements. However, consideration should also be given to any major events or circumstances that may fall outside this period.

Audit responsibilities

Our responsibilities in respect of going concern are:

(a) To obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding, and conclude on, i) whether a material uncertainty related to going concern exists; and ii) the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements

(b) To report in accordance with ISA (UK) 570.

We will obtain an understanding of the business model, objectives, strategies and related business risk, the measurement and review of the Council's financial performance including forecasting and budgeting processes and the Council's risk assessment process. We will evaluate:

- a) The Council's method, including the relevance and reliability of underlying data used to make the assessment, whether assumptions and changes to assumptions from prior years are appropriate and consistent with each other
- b) The Council's plans for future actions in relation to the going concern assessment including whether such plans are feasible in the circumstances
- c) The adequacy and appropriateness of disclosures in the financial statements regarding the going concern assessment and any material uncertainties that may exist.

OTHER MATTERS REQUIRING FURTHER DISCUSSION

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Fraud

Whilst the directors of the Council have ultimate responsibility for prevention and detection of fraud, we are required to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, including those arising as a result of fraud. Our audit approach includes the consideration of fraud throughout the audit and includes making enquiries of management and those charged with governance.

We have not been made aware of any actual alleged or suspected incidences of fraud. We request confirmation from the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee on fraud and a discussion on the controls and processes in place to ensure timely identification and action.

Management believe that there is low risk of material misstatement arising from fraud and that controls in operation would prevent or detect material fraud.

Accounting policies

We will report to you on significant qualitative aspects of your chosen accounting policies. We will consider the consistency and application of the policies and we will report to you where accounting policies are inconsistent with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2020/21 under the circumstances.

Significant accounting estimates and judgements

We will report to you on significant accounting estimates and judgements. We will seek to understand and perform audit testing procedures on accounting estimates and judgements including consideration of the outcome of historical judgements and estimates. We will report to you our consideration of whether management estimates and judgements are within an acceptable range.

Contingencies

We request input from the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee on recent claims.

Internal audit

We will ensure that we maximise the benefit of the overall audit effort carried out by internal audit and ourselves, whilst retaining the necessary independence of view.

We will review the reports issued by the Council's internal audit function although we do not plan place reliance on their work in respect of their assessment of control processes. We will use the work of Internal Audit to inform our consideration of the arrangements in place to secure value for money wherever possible.

Laws and regulations

We will consider compliance with laws and regulations. The most significant of these for your organisation includes VAT legislation, Employment Taxes, Health and Safety and the Bribery Act 2010. We will make enquiries of management and review correspondence with the relevant authorities.

Related parties

Whilst you are responsible for the completeness of the disclosure of related party transactions in the financial statements, we are also required to consider related party transactions in the context of fraud as they may present greater risk for Management override or concealment or fraud. Our audit approach includes the consideration of related party transactions throughout the audit including making enquiries of management.

Financial statement disclosures

We will report to you on the sufficiency and content of your financial statement disclosures.

Any other matters

We will report to you on any other matters relevant to the overseeing of the financial reporting process. Where applicable this includes why we consider a significant accounting practice that is acceptable under the financial reporting framework not to be the most appropriate.

IRREGULARITIES (INCLUDING FRAUD)

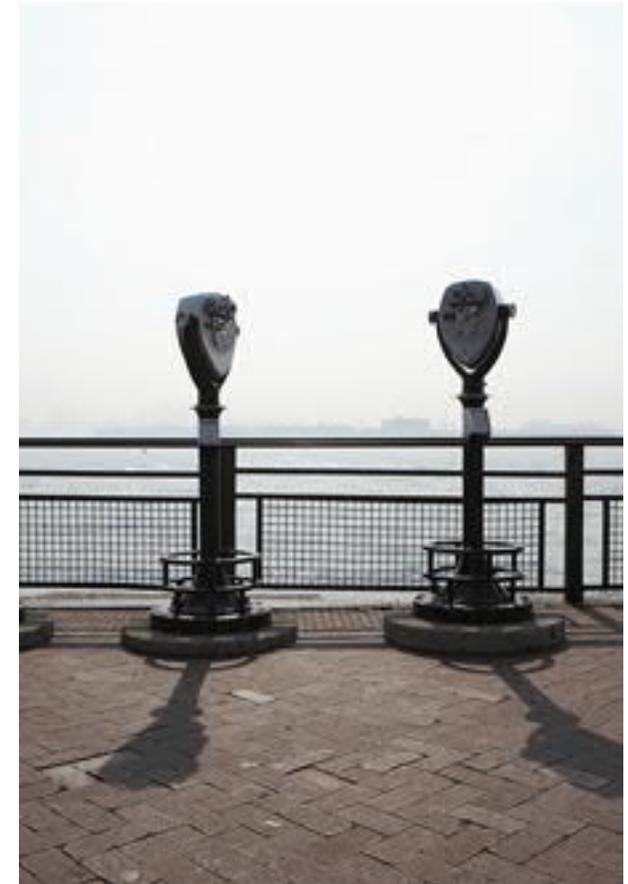
We are required to include in our auditor's report an explanation of the extent to which the audit is considered capable of detecting irregularities (non compliance with laws and regulations), including fraud.

Our audit is designed to provide reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as whole a free from material misstatement whether due to fraud or error. We design audit procedures to respond to the risk of material misstatement in the financial statements, recognising that the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and that irregularities that result from fraud might be inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error.

Our audit work will focus on laws and regulations that could give rise to a material misstatement in the Council's financial statements and may include, where appropriate:

- Obtaining an understanding of the control environment in monitoring compliance with laws and regulations
- Enquiries of management, those charged with governance and the Council's legal advisers
- Agreement of the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation
- Review of minutes of Council and Cabinet meetings throughout the year and of correspondence with regulatory authorities
- Written representations.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.



ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES

Revision to ISA (UK) 540 means that we may need to update our approach the audit of accounting estimates - including confirmation and documentation of our understanding of the Council's estimation process.

We will need to obtain an understanding of how you control your estimation process including not only the design and implementation of the process, but also the policies and procedures you put in place to satisfy yourself that each step in the process is properly applied, and that the resulting accounting estimates are reasonable.

For significant accounting estimates, particularly those that are complex or where there is a high degree of estimation uncertainty we will also make enquiries about how you:

- Make those responsible for deriving or changing your accounting estimates aware of relevant significant transactions, conditions or events
- Review the outcome(s) of previous accounting estimates and respond to the results of that review
- Identify and comply with the relevant requirements in the applicable financial reporting framework regarding your accounting estimates and related disclosures including how they are affected by complexity and your judgment
- Account for regulatory factors relevant to the Council's accounting estimates; including, when applicable, regulatory frameworks related to prudential supervision
- Identify the need for, and apply, specialised skills or knowledge related to accounting estimates, including with respect to the use of a management's expert
- Identify and address risks related to accounting estimates through your risk assessment process

- Identify relevant methods (including models), assumptions and data and the need for changes in them and from those identified, and select those to apply
- Address the degree of estimation uncertainty in selecting your final point estimates
- Describe in your financial statements matters related to your process for deriving your accounting estimates, and matters related to the degrees of estimation uncertainty underlying your accounting estimates
- Ensure there is oversight and governance in place over management's financial reporting process relevant to accounting estimates.

Under ISA (UK) 540 (revised) our audit approach will involve a more granular risk assessment relating to each significant estimate and separate consideration of the methods (or models) applied in calculating the estimate, the nature, source and reliability of data used and the significance, consistency and appropriateness of assumptions made.

We will also request written representations from you regarding the reasonableness of the methods, significant assumptions and the data used in determining the monetary amounts of accounting estimates, including the related disclosures, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2020/21.

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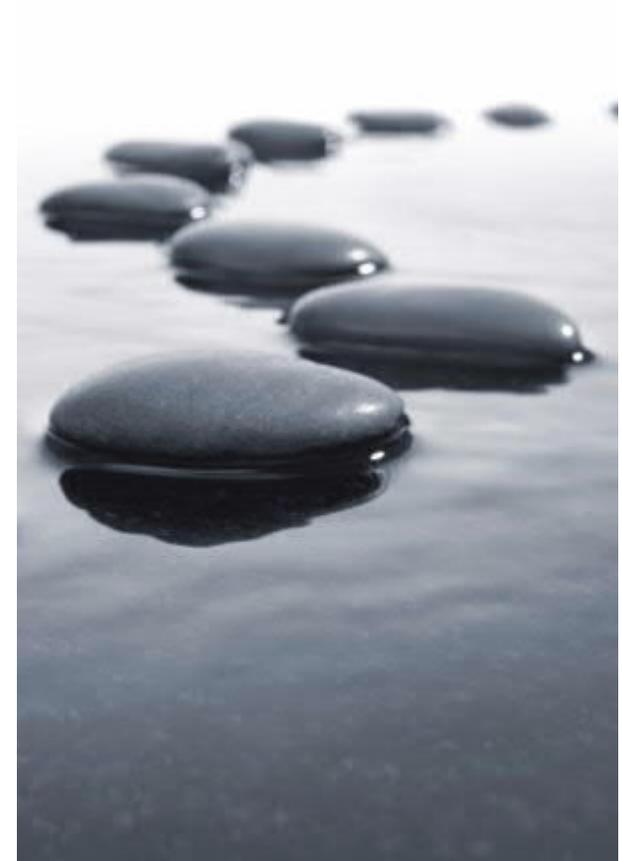
IT GENERAL CONTROLS

IT General Controls (ITGCs) are the policies and procedures that relate to many IT applications and support the effective functioning of application controls by helping to ensure the continued proper operation of information systems. They commonly include controls over data center and network operations; system software acquisition, change and maintenance; access security; and application system acquisition, development, and maintenance.

ITGCs are an important component in systems of internal control, and sometimes have a direct impact on the reliability of other controls.

IT assurance is embedded in our audit strategy to ensure the IT systems provide a suitable platform for the control environment and is undertaken in conjunction with our IT Assurance team. Our testing strategy includes a tailored range of data analytics, system configuration and IT environment testing.

We will also obtain an understanding of the information system, including the related business processes relevant to financial reporting.



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FRC ETHICAL STANDARD (DECEMBER 2019)

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In December 2019 the FRC published the Revised Ethical Standard 2019 ('ES'), which is applicable from 15 March 2020. There are some transitional provisions for services and arrangements that are not currently prohibited under the existing Standard. The ES aims to further strengthen auditor independence and enhance confidence in the profession. The table below provides a high level summary of the key headlines as applicable to our audit of the Council.

Key headlines	Impact
The objective, reasonable & informed third party test	Reinforcement that ethical principles take priority over rules. A need to take care where particular facts and circumstances are either not addressed directly by the rules or might appear to 'work around' the rules, or result in an outcome that is inconsistent with the general principles.
Contingent fees	Non-audit services with contingent or success-based fee arrangements will be prohibited for audited entities.
Secondments	All secondments/loan staff to audited entities are prohibited with the exception of secondments to public sector entities.
Recruitment and remuneration services	Prohibition on providing remuneration services to audited entities such as advising on the quantum of the remuneration package or the measurement criteria for calculation of the package. In addition, the prohibition on providing recruitment services to an audited entity that would involve the firm taking responsibility for, or advising on the appointment of, any director or employee of the entity.

INDEPENDENCE

Under ISAs (UK) and the FRC’s Ethical Standard we are required, as auditors, to confirm our independence.

We have embedded the requirements of the auditing standards in our methodologies, tools and internal training programmes. Our internal procedures require that audit engagement leads are made aware of any matters which may reasonably be thought to bear on the integrity, objectivity or independence of the firm, the members of the engagement team or others who are in a position to influence the outcome of the engagement.

This document considers such matters in the context of our audit for the year ending 31 March 2021.

We confirm that the firm, the engagement team and other partners, directors, senior managers and managers conducting the audit comply with relevant ethical requirements including the FRC’s Ethical Standard and are independent of the Council and the Group.

We also confirm that we have obtained confirmation that external audit experts involved in the audit comply with relevant ethical requirements including the FRC’s Ethical Standard and are independent of the Council and the Group.

Should you have any comments or queries regarding any independence matters we would welcome their discussion in more detail.

Non-audit services

Details of services, other than audit, provided by us to the Council during the period and up to the date of this report are set out in the fees table on page 7.

Should you have any comments or queries regarding any independence matters we would welcome their discussion in more detail.

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COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council's responsibilities and reporting

Financial reporting

The Council is expected to have effective governance arrangements to deliver its objectives. To this end, the publication of the financial statements is an essential means by which the Council accounts for its stewardship and use of the public money at its disposal.

The form and content of the Council's financial statements, and any additional schedules or returns for consolidation purposes, should reflect the requirements of the relevant accounting and reporting framework in place and any applicable accounting standards or other direction under the circumstances.

The Council is also required to prepare schedules or returns to facilitate the preparation of consolidated accounts such as HM Treasury's Whole of Government Accounts.

The Section 151 Officer is responsible for preparing and filing a Statement of Accounts and financial statements which show a true and fair view in accordance with CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2020/21, applicable accounting standards or other direction under the circumstances.

Our audit of the financial statements does not relieve management nor those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of materially accurate financial statements.

Use of resources

Councils are required to maintain an effective system of internal control that supports the achievement of their policies, aims and objectives while safeguarding and securing value for money from the public funds and other resources at their disposal.

As part of the material published with its financial statements, the Council is required to bring together commentary on its governance framework and how this has operated during the period in a Governance Statement.

In preparing its Governance Statement, the Council will tailor the content to reflect its own individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements of the relevant accounting and reporting framework and having regard to any guidance issued in support of that framework. This includes a requirement to provide commentary on their arrangements for securing value for money from their use of resources.

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OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities and reporting

Our responsibilities and reporting - financial reporting

We are responsible for performing our audit under International Standards on Auditing (UK) to form and express an opinion on your financial statements. We report our opinion on the financial statements to the members of the Council.

We read and consider the 'other information' contained in the Annual Report such as the additional narrative reports. We will consider whether there is a material inconsistency between the other information and the financial statements or other information and our knowledge obtained during the audit.

Our responsibilities and reporting - use of resources

We are required to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

This means that we have regard to relevant guidance issued by the National Audit Office and undertake sufficient work to be able to satisfy ourselves as to whether the Council has put arrangements in place that support the achievement of value for money and to provide an annual commentary on arrangements in the Auditor's Annual Report.

What we don't report

Our audit is not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to the Council and the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee and cannot be expected to identify all matters that may be of interest to you and, as a result, the matters reported may not be the only ones which exist.



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Those charged with governance

References in this report to 'those charged with governance' are to the Council as a whole. For the purposes of our communication with those charged with governance you have agreed we will communicate primarily with the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee.

In communicating with the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee, representing TCWG of the parent and the Group, we consider TCWG of subsidiary entities to be informed about matters relevant to their subsidiary. Please let us know if this is not appropriate.

Communication, meetings and feedback

We request feedback from you on our planning and completion report to promote two way communication throughout the audit process and to ensure that all risks are identified and considered; and at completion that the results of the audit are appropriately considered. We will meet with management throughout the audit process. We will issue regular updates and drive the audit process with clear and timely communication, bringing in the right resource and experience to ensure efficient and timely resolution of issues.

Audit Planning Report

The Audit Planning Report sets out all planning matters which we want to draw to your attention including audit scope, our assessment of audit risks and materiality.

Internal Controls

We will consider internal controls relevant to the preparation of financial statements in order to design our audit procedures and complete our work. This is not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control.

Audit Completion Report

At the conclusion of the audit, we will issue an Audit Completion Report to communicate to you key audit findings before concluding our audit opinion. We will include any significant deficiencies in internal controls which we identify as a result of performing audit procedures. We will meet with you to discuss the findings and in particular to receive your input on areas of the financial statements involving significant estimates and judgements and critical accounting policies.

Once we have discussed the contents of the Audit Completion Report with you and having resolved all outstanding matters we will issue a final version of the report.

Auditor's Annual Report

We will provide an annual commentary on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The commentary will explain the work that we have undertaken during the year and highlight any significant weaknesses identified, along with any recommendations for improvement. The commentary will also draw attention to emerging or developing issues which may not represent significant weaknesses, but which may nevertheless require attention from the Council. The Auditor's Annual Report is required to be published by the Council. At the time of drafting this Audit Planning Report the timetable for publication is not yet confirmed.

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This table indicates the latest rotation periods normally permitted under the independence rules of the FRC’s Ethical Standard.

In order to safeguard audit quality we will employ a policy of gradual rotation covering the team members as well as other senior members of the engagement team to ensure a certain level of continuity from year to year.



Independence - engagement team rotation

Senior team members	Number of years involved	Rotation to take place after
David Eagles Engagement lead	3	4 years
Alison Langridge Manager	3	7 years

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Concept and definition

The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements and the audit process and applies not only to monetary misstatements but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to appropriate accounting principles and statutory requirements.

We apply the concept of materiality both in planning and performing our audit, and in evaluating the effect of misstatements. For planning, we consider materiality to be the magnitude by which misstatements, including omissions, could influence the economic decisions of reasonable users that are taken on the basis of the financial statements. In order to reduce to an appropriately low level the probability that any misstatements exceed materiality, we use a lower materiality level, performance materiality, to determine the extent of testing needed. Importantly, misstatements below these levels will not necessarily be evaluated as immaterial as we also take account of the nature of identified misstatements, and the particular circumstances of their occurrence, when evaluating their effect on the financial statements as a whole.

Materiality therefore has qualitative as well as quantitative aspects and an item may be considered material, irrespective of its size, if it has an impact on (for example):

- Narrative disclosure e.g. accounting policies, going concern
- Instances when greater precision is required (e.g. disclosure of senior officers’ remuneration and related party transactions).

International Standards on Auditing (UK) also allow the auditor to set a lower level of materiality for particular classes of transactions, account balances or disclosures for which misstatements of lesser amounts than materiality for the financial statements as a whole could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

Calculation and determination

We have determined materiality based on professional judgement in the context of our knowledge of the Group, including consideration of factors such as industry developments, financial stability and reporting requirements for the financial statements.

We determine materiality in order to:

- Assist in establishing the scope of our audit engagement and audit tests
- Calculate sample sizes
- Assist in evaluating the effect of known and likely misstatements on the Group financial statements.

Reassessment of materiality

We will reconsider materiality if, during the course of our audit engagement, we become aware of facts and circumstances that would have caused us to make a different determination of planning materiality if we had been aware.

Further, when we have performed all our tests and are ready to evaluate the results of those tests (including any misstatements we detected) we will reconsider whether materiality combined with the nature, timing and extent of our auditing procedures, provided a sufficient audit scope.

Definition of materiality under IFRS

Information is material if omitting, misstating or obscuring it could reasonably be expected to influence decisions that the primary users of general purpose financial statements make on the basis of those financial statements, which provide financial information about a specific reporting entity.

MATERIALITY: DEFINITION AND APPLICATION

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If we conclude that our audit scope was sufficient, we will use materiality to evaluate whether uncorrected misstatements (individually or in aggregate) are material.

You should be aware that any misstatements that we identify during our audit, both corrected and uncorrected errors, might result in additional audit procedures being necessary.

Unadjusted errors

We will communicate to you all uncorrected misstatements identified during our audit, other than those which we believe are 'clearly trivial'.

Clearly trivial is defined as matters which will be of a wholly different (smaller) order of magnitude than the materiality thresholds used in the audit, and will be matters that are clearly inconsequential, whether taken individually or in aggregate.

We will obtain written representations from the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee confirming that in their opinion these uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate and that, in the context of the financial statements taken as a whole, no adjustments are required.

We will request that you correct all uncorrected misstatements. In particular we would strongly recommend correction of errors whose correction would affect compliance with contractual obligations or governmental regulations. Where you choose not to correct all identified misstatements we will request a written representation from you setting out your reasons for not doing so and confirming that in your view the effects of any uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as whole.

NEW ACCOUNTING STANDARDS, AUDITING STANDARDS AND OTHER FINANCIAL REPORTING DEVELOPMENTS

We would like to draw to your attention the following summary of key changes to standards, regulations and other financing reporting developments, their effective dates and an indication, based on preliminary discussions with management and our sector understanding, of their possible effect on the annual report.

New Accounting Standards, Auditing Standards and Other Financial Reporting Developments	Expected effect				Effective for periods beginning on or after 1 January	
	None	Low	Medium	High	2020	2021
Amendments to IFRS 3 Definition of a business		●				●
Auditing standard - audit of accounting estimates						
Increased emphasis on understanding management's processes, systems and controls estimation uncertainty and financial statement disclosures			●		●	
Auditing standard - going concern						
Increased emphasis on evaluation of management's assessment of the entity's ability to continue as a going concern			●		●	
Auditing standard - audit reports						
New audit report format with updated conclusion on going concern and reference to irregularities, including fraud			●		●	

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Overview

The FRC released their Audit Quality Review results for the 7 largest accountancy firms in July 2020 for the review period 2019/20. A copy of all of the reports can be found on the [FRC Website](#).

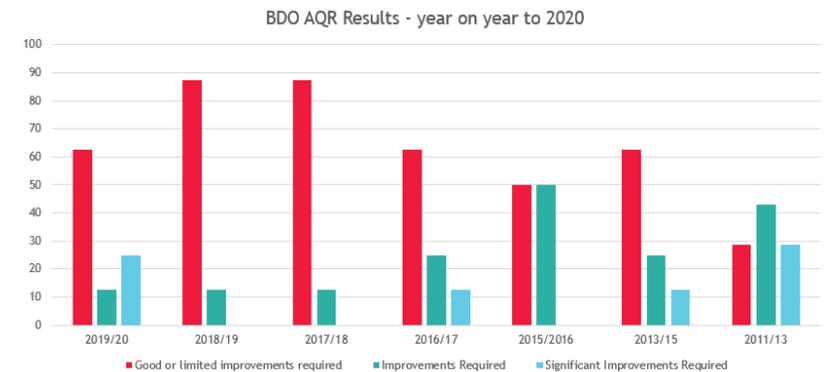
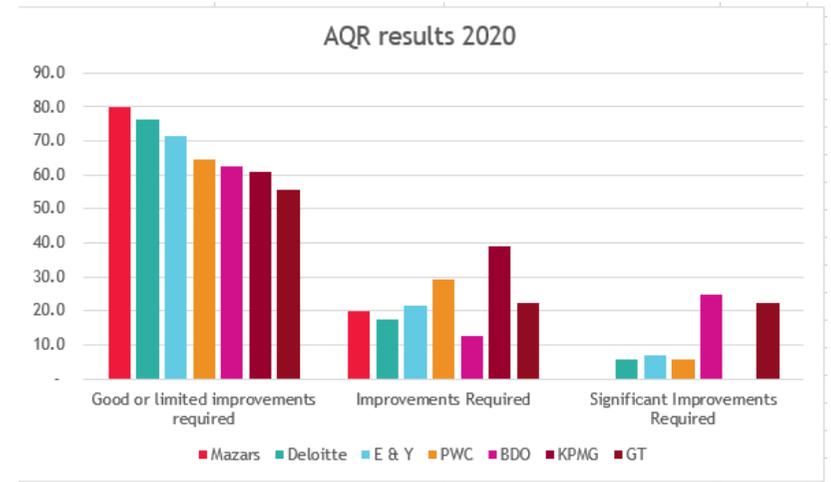
Firm's Results

The graphs demonstrates our performance in relation to the other 6 largest firms. Having topped the table for audit quality for the last two consecutive years, we are disappointed to see a decline in our results. These scores remind us we must remain committed to continuous improvements and, having carefully considered the root causes of the AQR findings, we are in the process of implementing detailed action plans where required. We have made a number of enhancements to our Audit Quality Plan to address these issues to drive our key focus of a continuous improvement in audit quality including highlighting how we will make changes to our root cause analysis process which plays a key role.

We would encourage you to read our report which includes:

- Details of the root cause analysis we have been undertaking to address issues raised
- The actions we have/are undertaking to address the issues raised by the AQR
- A number of areas of good practice the AQR review team identified whilst undertaking their review.

More details will be included in our Transparency Report which will be available on our www.bdo.co.uk

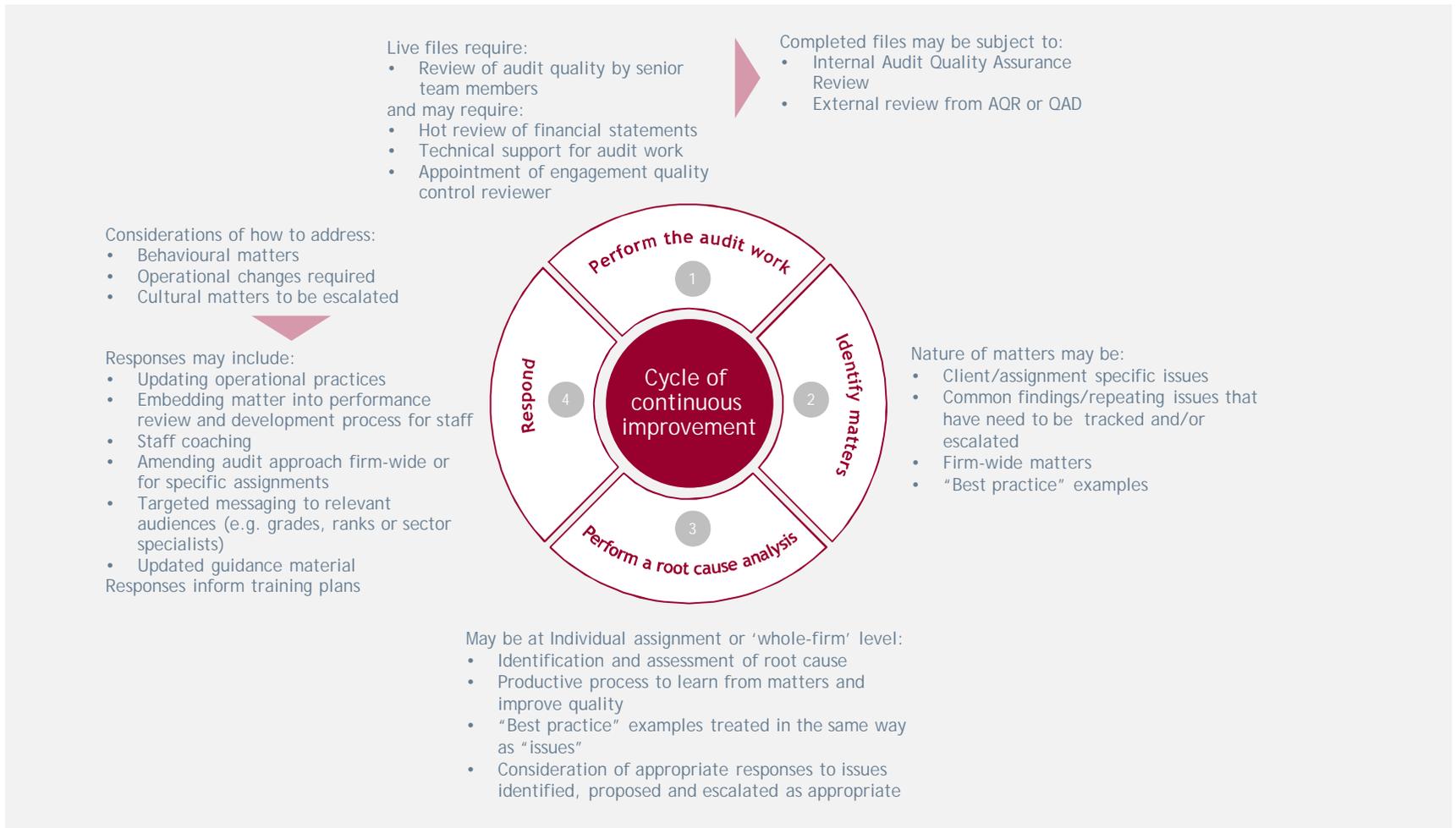


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The matters raised in our report prepared in connection with the audit are those we believe should be brought to your attention. They do not purport to be a complete record of all matters arising. This report is prepared solely for the use of the company and may not be quoted nor copied without our prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted.

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Agenda Item 4

Committee: Governance, Audit and Performance Committee

Date:

16th March 2021

Title: Internal Audit Terms of Reference – Review of Grants Governance

Report Author: Elizabeth Brooks, Internal Audit Manager

Author: ebrooks@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. The purpose of this Terms of Reference is to set out the objectives and scope for the review of the Council's governance and control arrangements for the management of Grants to recipient organisations. This review is being undertaken at the request of GAP Committee following its meeting on 4th February 2021.

Recommendations

2. GAP Committee are requested to note the scope of the review.

Financial Implications

3. The programme of audit work will be met from the Internal Audit budget.

Background Papers

4. None.

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Relevant Senior Managers were consulted by the Audit Manager during February 2021.
Community Safety	
Equalities	
Health and Safety	
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Council has a duty to maintain an effective internal provision to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance (Regulation 5 (Part

	1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015).
Sustainability	
Ward-specific impacts	
Workforce/Workplace	

Situation

6. Audit Objective

- 6.1. The objective of this audit is to provide a risk-based review of the council's current governance and internal control arrangements for awarding funding to recipient organisations and monitoring funding usage to ensure that the grants awarded constitute an appropriate use of expenditure.
- 6.2. The focus will be on the robustness of the current control framework to ensure that it is fit for purpose. Due to ongoing legal discussions, it is not appropriate for the scope of this review to cover the administration of Debden Village Hall Trust Grant at this time.

7. Audit scope

- 7.1. The key aspects of the management control framework over grant funding administration should include:
- Clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are established for the management of grants;
 - Grant funding programmes are accessible, understandable and useable by applicants and recipients;
 - A process is laid down to ensure grant programmes are designed, delivered and managed in a manner that takes account of risk and cost-effective transparent oversight and control systems exist.
- 7.2. The audit will therefore focus on key controls in place to mitigate the following potential risks:

Risk ref	Risk
1	<p>Governance</p> <p>Financial loss and/or reputational damage to the Council may occur as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants may be awarded to recipient organisations which are not aligned to the objectives of the Council's Grant Policy. • Eligibility and award criteria may not be objective, fair and/or transparent and grants may not be awarded in line with the stated criteria to ineligible/inappropriate recipient organisations. • The selection process may not be in line with documented procedures and may not be fair or transparent, with appropriate oversight, which may lead to challenge. • Due diligence may not be taken when selecting applicants, meaning that recipient organisations who do not meet the selection criteria may be successful. • Failure to consider conflicts of interest between the Council and the recipient organisation may lead to challenges of inappropriate decision making. <p>Grant funding terms and conditions may not be put in place with successful recipient organisations, may not be consistent or robust and/or may not allow for the right to audit or ensure the recipient organisation has appropriate insurances in place. This may leave the Council exposed in the event of any challenges.</p>
2	<p>Grant Disbursement</p> <p>There may be no clear service standards agreed between the Council and the recipient organisation for the delivery of commissioned services, resulting in the Council not being able to promptly identify performance issues.</p> <p>Ineligible/inappropriate/inaccurate funds may be disbursed which may not be in line with grant specifications and/or Council financial rules e.g. amount, timing and method of delivery, leading to financial loss to the Council and/or financial hardship to the recipient organisation which may impact on their service delivery.</p>
3	<p>Monitoring of Grants</p> <p>The recipient organisation may not provide valid, accurate, complete and up to date financial information to the Council which may result in underlying financial problems going undetected or services being delivered that are not in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant and may allow fraud/error to go undetected.</p> <p>Income received by the recipient organisation from the Council may not be spent in line with funding agreements, resulting in the recipient organisation not providing value for money in the delivery of its services and/or increasing the risk of reputational damage to the Council.</p> <p>Monitoring information available to the Council may be invalid, inaccurate, incomplete or out of date which may lead to performance issues not being identified and/or escalated in a timely manner.</p>

Risk ref	Risk
	Grants may be awarded by other areas of the Council, outside of the Grants scheme, which may not be in line with the Council's Grants Programme and/or may not be centrally managed allowing for the potential to pay multiple awards to the same organisation, which may not be subject to clear and transparent monitoring.

8. Audit Approach

The review will be carried out using a risk-based approach. We will:

- Obtain an understanding of the process and key controls operating across each identified area, through discussions with key personnel, review of systems documentation and by undertaking walkthrough tests;
- Evaluate the design of the controls in place to address the key risks;
- Test the selected key controls for their operating effectiveness, on a sample basis.

9. Proposed timescales

Action	Date
Agreement of terms of reference	16 th March 2021
Fieldwork start	March 2021
Fieldwork complete	April 2021
Report to GAP Committee	TBC

10. Contacts

Internal Audit **Elizabeth Brooks** – Audit Manager

Council Contacts **Jane Reynolds** – Legal

Fiona Gardiner – Communities, Health and Wellbeing

Roz Millership – AD Housing, Health and Communities

Roger Harborough – Director Public Services

Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Dawn French – Chief Executive

Members of GAP Committee

Risk Analysis

11.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Internal Audit may not deliver an effective and value-adding service	1	2	Internal Audit Manager delivers audit programme in line with its Audit Charter and in line with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Agenda Item 5

Committee:	Governance, Audit & Performance Committee	Date:	Tuesday 16 th March 2021
Title:	COVID-19 Performance Indicator Report 6		
Report Author:	Oliver Knight, PFI & Performance Officer oknight@uttlesford.gov.uk 01799 510440	Key Decision:	No

Summary

1. This report presents the outturn data for all COVID-19 performance indicators for the period Monday 4th January 2021 to Sunday 28th February 2021.
2. As we continue into 2021, continuing pressures on service delivery and service resources remain due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these challenging circumstances, data outturns attest that services have sustained performance levels since the previous report.
3. Whilst it is not possible thus far to effectively evaluate Quarter 4 2019/20 performance with outturns for Quarter 4 2020/21, where possible comparisons have been provided to PI performance during Quarter 3 2019/20. Year-on-year comparisons indicate a longer term reduction in performance during the pandemic, but many monthly indicators have still shown sustained performance during January & February 2021 in comparison to proceeding months.

Recommendations

4. To note the performance of services during the COVID-19 pandemic, as attached in Appendix 1.

Financial Implications

5. Some performance indicators measure services where income has been severely affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, monitoring their ongoing progress will aid wider budget monitoring processes.

Background Papers

6. None

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None beyond indicators reporting the work

	of the Community Shield Hub (CV 23, CV 24, CV 25, CV 26 & CV 27).
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	Any health and safety implications arising from this monitoring are assessed and addressed by the Council's Gold and Silver Command.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Any human rights or legal implications arising from this monitoring are assessed and addressed by the Council's Gold and Silver Command.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Any workforce or workplace implications arising from this monitoring are addressed and assessment by the Council's Gold and Silver Command.

Situation

8. A new set of performance indicators was introduced in April 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and has been monitored throughout the 2020/21 performance year. Whilst primarily these indicators have been introduced to monitor how COVID-19 is affecting service delivery, more broadly they also highlight how services are performing during current circumstances.
9. The indicators were originally selected through a review of the Daily Situation Reports which are provided by Service Managers to the Council's Gold & Silver Command. These reports identify impacts on normal activities and priority/critical services, alongside detailing longer-term service risks and items that need to be considered from a strategic perspective.
10. Whilst there are other methods of monitoring performance during the pandemic (for example analysing customer feedback, or FOI response times), the quantitative measures included focus specifically upon aspects of service delivery which have been identified as being particularly affected by the pandemic. Many more indicators could have been identified, but those selected were considered to be the most important in the circumstances.
11. A review of the effectiveness of all existing Covid-19 PIs was undertaken by the Performance Team during January 2021. This review focused upon whether the existing Covid-19 PIs were still effective in providing an overview of the effect of the pandemic on service delivery. To achieve this, an analysis of Quarter 3 2020/21 local performance measures monitored by the Corporate Management Team was undertaken, however no additional PIs were identified

to be brought into the Covid-19 basket for more frequent monitoring. However, given the continuing effect of the pandemic on services and further lockdowns, it was decided that the majority of indicators would continue to be reported.

12. No targets have been introduced for any of the COVID-19 indicators included here, instead they have been established as 'information-only' performance indicators.
13. The indicators cover varying services throughout both the Corporate Services and Public Services directorates, and some are cross-cutting involving service delivery from multiple departments. Frequencies of data collection vary; some are monitored weekly or daily, whilst others are monitored on a monthly basis.
14. Appendix 1 presents COVID-19 PI data for the period Monday 4th January 2021 to Sunday 28th February 2021. Alongside indicators where daily or weekly outturns are presented, data for January 2021 and February 2021 are also presented for monthly indicators where available.
15. Whilst accompanying narratives have not been requested from Service Managers, notes have been provided where relevant to contextualise performance, and explain the reasons for monitoring and relevant methods of calculation. Year-to-date comparisons where possible have been included, and longer term performance trends identified through comparing outturns to Quarter 3 2019/20 outturn values.
16. Graphical and pictorial representations of the data are also presented, which portray performance fluctuations since October 2020; the beginning of Quarter 3 of the 2020/21 performance year.
17. All data and performance notes included in Appendix 1 have been reviewed by the Council's Gold & Silver Command.
18. As we continue into 2021, pressures on service delivery and service resources remain due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these challenging circumstances, data outturns attest that services have sustained performance levels. The following points are drawn to members' attention as being of particular note:
 - a.) Data monitoring the number of Test and Trace Payments made (Statutory & Discretionary; CV 48) shows that discretionary awards continue to be made on a weekly basis. As application numbers have decreased over recent weeks, fewer and fewer awards have been made, but the majority of these awards are discretionary. Nevertheless, since the commencement of the scheme during W/C 12th October 2020, we have made a total of 193 awards (60 Statutory; 133 Discretionary).
 - b.) The total paid in Localised Restrictions Support Grants (CV 51) continues at high levels, with the most recent two weeks seeing £110,464.33 and £194,845.72 paid respectively. Since data was first collected for this PI during W/C 23rd November 2020, we have paid £5,636,823.05 in Localised Restriction Support Grants.

- c.) Data from the Community Shield Hub highlights that the service continues to be utilised on a frequent basis within the district, and exemplifies the valuable work in the community of this service. Whilst the quantities of enquiries do vary week-to-week (CV 23; CV 24), the longer term trend shows overall a slight increase over the last few weeks. Outturns are not as elevated as during beginning of January, but still a significant amount of enquiries regarding food (CV 25) and medical assistance (CV 26) are being received on a weekly basis.
- d.) Car park performance indicator information is now available for November 2020, December 2020 & January 2021, and data for previous months has also been recalculated following further updates received on Flowbird ticket machine data. Data for January 2021 highlights the significant impact of the current national lockdown on both performance measures; as year-on-year a more significant decrease is noted than comparative to previous months for both enforcement activities (CV 33) and the total pay and display sales (CV 29).
19. As we move towards the end of the 2020/21 performance year, the Performance Team intends to further review the effectiveness of the current set of Covid-19 performance indicators being monitored. The Corporate Management Team will review all Quarter 4 2020/21 performance data in April. Following this, if it is clear the pandemic is affecting other areas of performance, these will be incorporated into new performance measures.

Risk Analysis

20.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
If the performance of services is not monitored during these current unprecedented circumstances, then areas such as customer satisfaction and statutory adherence to government led requirements could be affected leading to a loss in reputation for the Council.	1 – The majority of service areas are performing well, despite pressures on resources. measures	3 – The majority of service areas in the Council are customer-facing.	The COVID-19 performance indicators are monitored by the Council's Gold & Silver command. The inclusion of data from previous weeks and months helps to identify trends.

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 1: COVID-19 PI Report – 4th January 2021 to 28th February 2021

COVID 19 Performance Indicators – Appendix 1



Report Timeframe

Start Date	Monday 4 th January 2021
End Date	Sunday 28 th February 2021

Please note:

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This report contains data for all COVID-19 performance indicators being monitored to consider the effect of COVID-19 on service delivery. Data included represents the timeframe Monday 4th January 2021 to Sunday 28th February 2021.

For indicators where data is monitored monthly, monthly data is now available for April 2020 to February 2021 (inclusive).

For indicators where data is recorded weekly, data is presented on a weekly basis from Week Commencing Monday 4th January 2021 to Sunday 28th February 2021.

Whilst accompanying narratives have not been requested from Service Managers, notes have been provided where relevant to contextualise performance and explain the reasons for monitoring and relevant methods of calculation. Comparison to attainment during previous quarters or this year's PI target are narrated where possible to contextualise performance.

- Where relevant, trend arrows have been included in accordance with guidance below for weekly & daily data. As no targets have been set for these performance indicators, these trends provide an overview of the performance trajectory for each PI. Varying graphs have been included to provide a pictorial representation of performance over time.

Trends

Short Term 	For daily and weekly data, the short-term trend arrow evaluates the most recent outturn in comparison to the preceding outturn.
Long Term 	For weekly data, the long-term trend arrow evaluates this week's data in comparison to the outturn four weeks ago. For daily data, the long-term trend arrow evaluates the most recent outturn to the same date of the previous month.

Benefits

CV 01 – Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Local Council Tax Support New Claims

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	Nov 2020	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> Claims received are becoming more complex and therefore taking potentially longer to process. ➤ For January 2021, numerator – 2,152 (number of days), and denominator - 104 (number of applications received). ➤ CV 01 is also monitored as part of UDC’s formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (KPI 06a). ➤ For Quarter 3 2019/20 KPI 06 (a) outturn was 17.1 days – numerator 4,337 (number of days) and denominator 254 (number of change events received).
13.38 days	20.7 days	16.28 days	14.95 days	18.50 days	16.70 days	12.92 days	17.59 days	17.83 days	
January 2021					February 2021				
20.69 days					TBC				

CV 02 – Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Local Council Tax Support Change Events

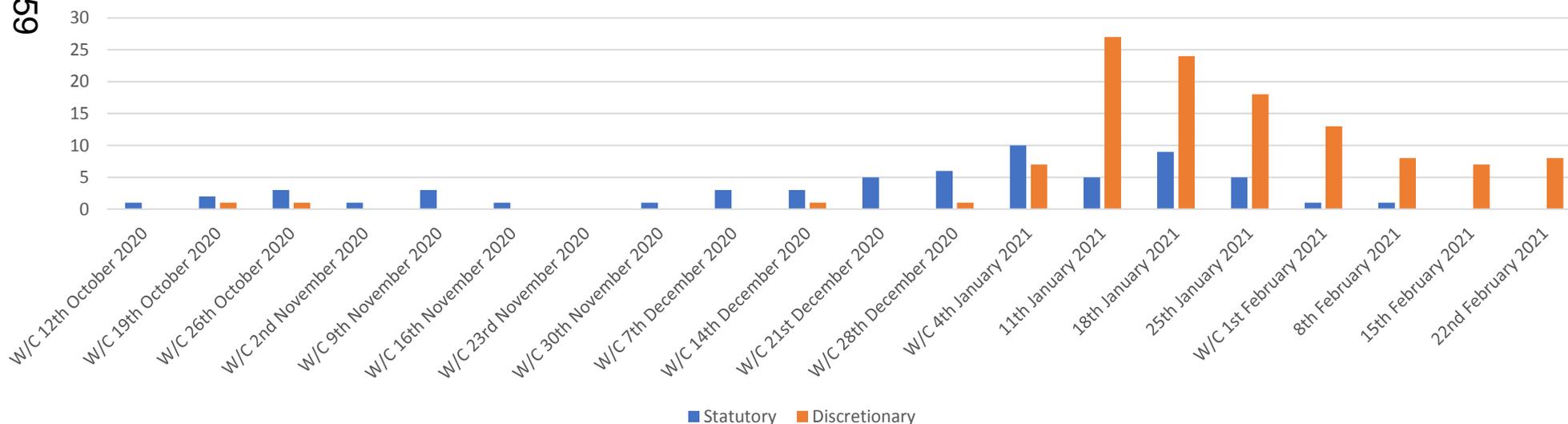
April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	Nov 2020	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> Given increasing number of universal credit applications, it is probable there will be more changes to existing Housing Benefit & Local Council Tax Support Claims. ➤ For January 2021, numerator – 17,003 (number of days) and denominator – 2,177 (number of applications received). ➤ CV 02 is also monitored as part of UDC’s formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (KPI 06b). For Quarter 3 2019/20 KPI 06 (b) outturn was 6.0 days – numerator 23,579 (number of days) and denominator 3,960 (number of change events received).
4.02 days	10.5 days	7.90 days	4.60 days	6.08 days	9.08 days	5.09 days	4.30 days	5.84 days	
January 2021					February 2021				
7.81 days					TBC				

CV 48 – Number of Test & Trace Support Payments Awarded (Discretionary & Statutory)

W/C 4 th Jan 2021					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> UDC's Benefits department is responsible for administering the award and payment of the Test & Trace Support Payments. ➤ This PI reports the number of Test and Trace Support Payments which have been awarded on a weekly basis; and the outturn reported is total of Statutory and Discretionary payments. Every award has the value £500.00. ➤ During Week Commencing 22nd February 2021, 9 applications were received; and one was refused. 8 awards were made. ➤ Since the commencement of the scheme during w/c 12th October, we have made 193 awards (60 Statutory; 133 Discretionary). 	Short Term	↑
17 (10 Statutory; 7 Discretionary)						Long Term	↓
W/C 11 th Jan 2021			W/C 18 th Jan				
32 (5 Statutory; 27 Discretionary)			33 (9 Statutory; 24 Discretionary)				
W/C 25 th Jan 2021	W/C 1 st Feb 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021			
23 (5 Statutory; 18 Discretionary)	14 (1 Statutory; 13 Discretionary)	9 (1 Statutory; 8 Discretionary)	7 (0 Statutory; 7 Discretionary)	8 (0 Statutory; 8 Discretionary)			

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CV 48 - Number of Test & Trace Support Payments Awarded



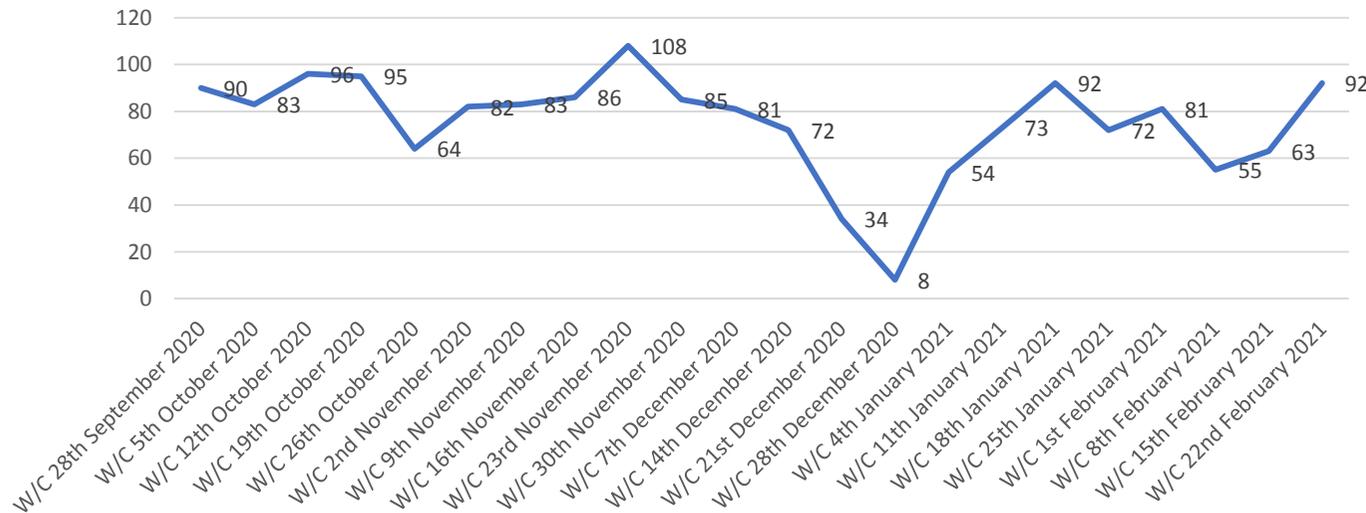
Building Control

CV 03 – Number of Building Control site visits completed

W/C 4 th Jan 2021		W/C 11 th Jan 2021		W/C 18 th Jan 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: Building Control's Inspection Service has been greatly reduced in alignment with guidance. ➤ This PI reports the number of site visits completed by the Building Control Service on a weekly basis, to portray the effect of COVID-19 on demand for the service. ➤ For week commencing 22nd February 2021, the quantity of inspections completed increased by 57.14% in comparison to the previous week. ➤ Year-to-year comparison: whilst during w/c 22nd February 2021, 99 site visits were completed, during the comparable week in the 2019/20 year 103 site visits were completed. As such, the amount of site visits completed during w/c 22nd February 2021 represents 96.12% of the site visits completed during a comparable week in the 2019/20 year.
54 site visits completed		73 site visits completed		92 site visits completed		
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021		
78 site visits completed	81 site visits completed	55 site visits completed	63 site visits completed	99 site visits completed		

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CV 03 - Number of site visits completed



Short Term	↑
Long Term	↑

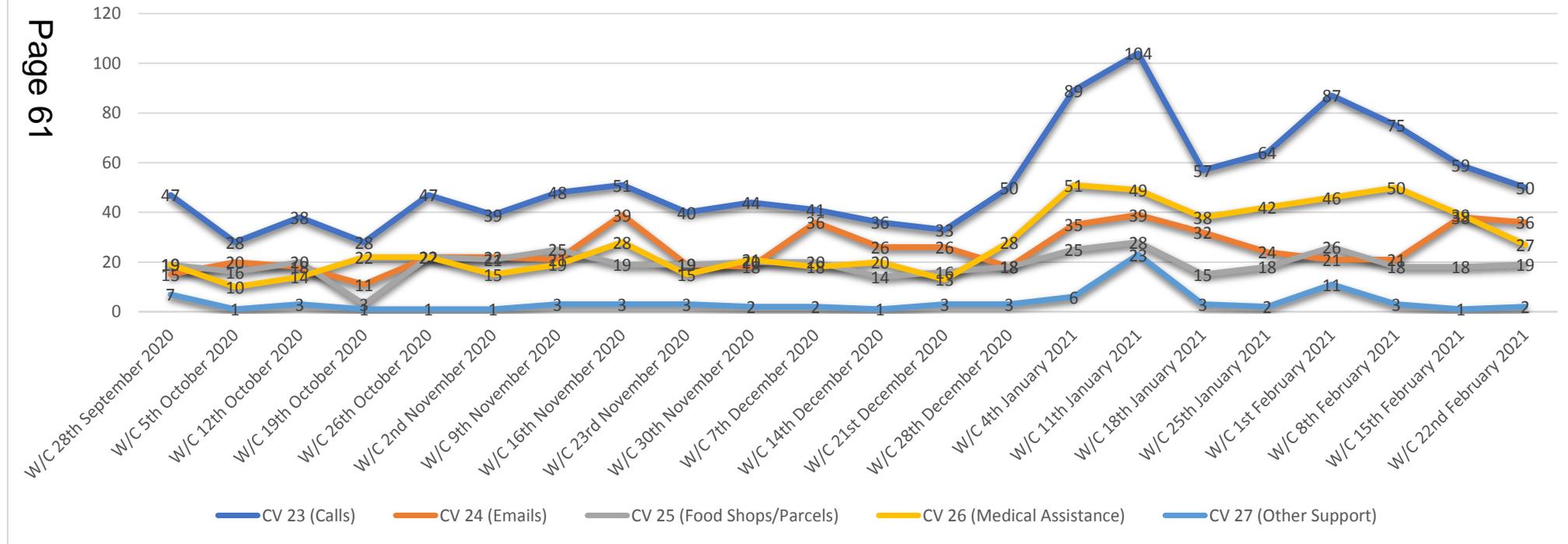
CV 50 – Percentage market share for Building Control work in the District

October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021
79%	65%	88%	76.6%	78.22%

- Reason for monitoring: to monitor the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the Building Control work in the district.
- CV 50 is monitored as part of UDC's quarterly performance monitoring as BC 01. For Quarter 2 2020/21, outturn was 78.49% and target was 82.00%.
- For February 2021, numerator was 79, and denominator was 101. Therefore outturn value is 78.22%.

Communities

Community Shield Hub



CV 23 – Number of calls received directly into the Community Shield hub

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
89		104		57	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> Provides an overview of the number of people directly contacting the hub by telephone for support.
64	87	75	59	50	

Short Term	
Long Term	

CV 24 – Number of emails received directly into the Community Shield hub

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
35		39		32	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> Provides an overview of the number of people directly contacting the hub by email for support.
24	21	21	38	36	

Short Term	
Long Term	

CV 25 – Number of unique food shops/parcels delivered (food assistance)

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
25		28		15	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> Provides an overview of the number of people requiring food assistance due to the pandemic.
18	26	18	18	19	

Short Term	
Long Term	

CV 26 – Number of pharmacy unique collections/deliveries (medical assistance)

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
51		49		38	
W/C 18 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> Provides an overview of the number of people requiring medical delivery assistance during the pandemic.
42	46	50	39	27	

Short Term	
Long Term	

CV 27 – Number of people requiring 'other' support (transport, posting mail, dog walking, gardening)

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
6		23		3	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> Provides an overview of the number of people requiring miscellaneous support during the pandemic.
2	11	3	1	2	

Short Term	
Long Term	

Customer Services

CV 04 – Calls answered as a percentage of calls received

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
99%		99%		98%	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> to ascertain effect of COVID-19 on call volumes. ➤ Outturn values represent the percentage of calls answered by the Customer Services Team as a percentage of total calls received. As an example, during week commencing 22 nd February 2021, 2,035 calls were answered out of 2,074 calls received.		

99%	98%	99%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ During Quarter 3 2019/20, 25,870 calls were answered out of 26,200 calls received, equating to 98.74% of calls answered. Comparatively therefore, answer rates now appear to be broadly similar to performance before the COVID-19 pandemic; albeit there are daily fluctuations.
W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021		
97%	98%		

CV 05 – Calls abandoned as a percentage of calls received

W/C 4 th January 2021	W/C 11 th January 2021	W/C 18 th January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> to ascertain effect of COVID-19 on call volumes. ➤ As an example, during week commencing 22nd February 2021, 39 calls were abandoned out of a total of 2,074 calls received. ➤ CV 05 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (CS 08). During Quarter 3 2019/20, 330 calls were abandoned out of 26,200 calls received. As such, it appears abandoned rates are similar year-on-year, albeit there are daily fluctuations. ➤ <i>Please note – an issue with the phone system prevented some calls being presented correctly through IVR during week commencing 16th November 2020.</i>
1%	1%	2%	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	
1%	2%	1%	
W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021		
3%	2%		

CV 06 – Number of Out-Of-Hours Calls Received (excluding Housing Repairs)

W/C 4 th January 2021	W/C 11 th January 2021	W/C 18 th January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> to understand use of out-of-hours service during the pandemic. ➤ Outturn values report the total of all out-of-hours calls for all services, apart from Housing Repairs.
7	3	6	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	
9	6	0	

W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	
2	3	

CV 07 – Number of emails received into UConnect & WasteAware email boxes

W/C 4 th January 2021	W/C 11 th January 2021	W/C 18 th January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: To ascertain effect of COVID-19 on email queries. ➤ Outturn values represent total of all emails received to Uconnect & WasteAware email boxes relating to all service areas.
527	513	633	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	
628	533	664	
W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021		
845	953		

CV 08 – Percentage of payments received via ATP or website

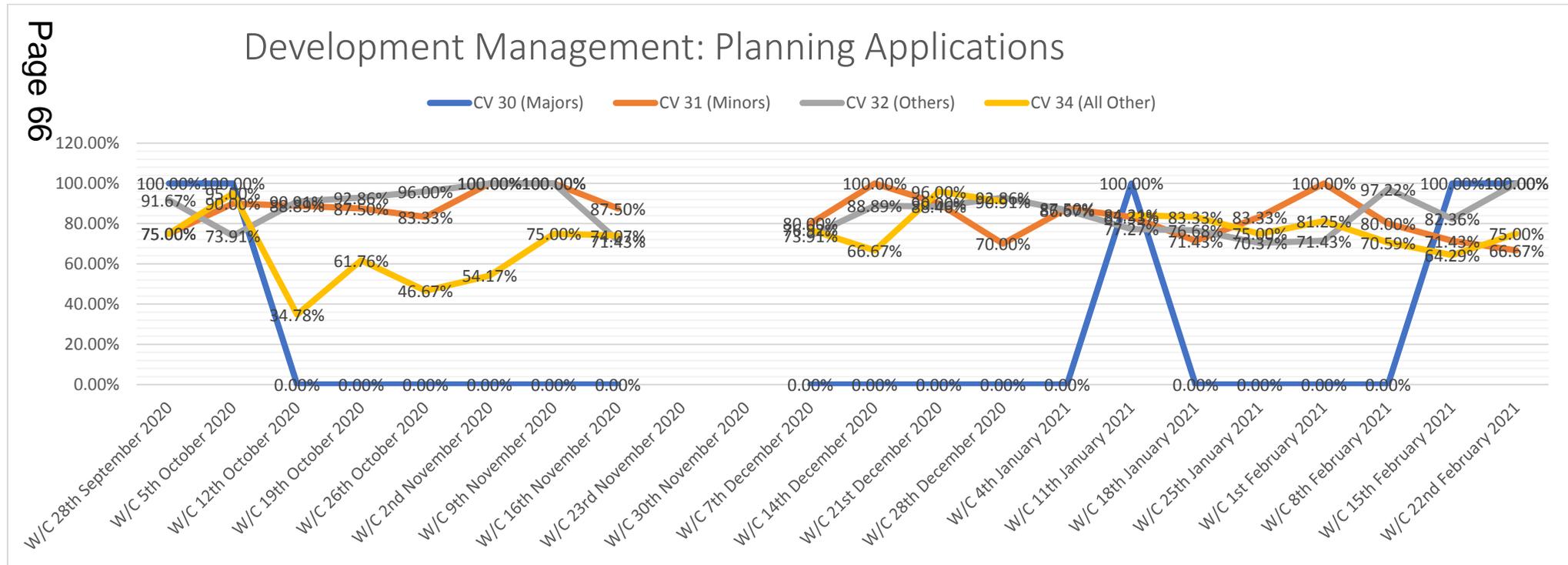
W/C 4 th January 2021	W/C 11 th January 2021	W/C 18 th January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: to comprehend the use of ATP and online payments through the website. ➤ From week commencing 12th October 2020, this performance indicator has been changed so that it reports the percentage of payments received via ATP or website as a proportion of total payments received.
67% (731 of 1,093)	53% (395 of 741)	42% (333 of 795)	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	
56% (454 of 813)	62% (641 of 1,026)	51% (151 of 277)	
W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021		
61% (546 of 896)	58% (596 of 1,034)		

Democratic Services

CV 49 – Percentage of minutes from meetings published within 10 working days

October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	
50.00%	50.00%	83.33%	100%	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: the monitor the percentage of minutes from meetings published within 10 working days. ➤ CV 49 is monitored as part of UDC's quarterly performance monitoring as PI 21. For Quarter 2 2020/21, outturn was 78.00% and target was 95.00%. ➤ During January 2021, 6 sets of minutes were published, of which 6 were within 10 working days. Therefore, 100.00% of minutes were published within 10 working days.

Development Management



CV 30 - Processing of Planning Applications: Major Applications (within 13 weeks or including any agreed extension of time)

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to process planning applications to required timescales. CV 30 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (KPI 11). ➤ For week commencing 22nd February 2021, 1 application decision was sent out in time out of a total of one application decision in total. Since 1st July 2020, 13 applications decisions were sent out, of which 13 were in time (100%). During Quarter 3 2019/20, 2 out of 5 (40%) applications were decided within time. Performance therefore seems improved. ➤ It should be noted that this PI only monitors the timeliness of the decisions made during this specific week (i.e. w/c 22nd February 2021). Another 19 other application (for major/minor/other/all other applications) decisions went out of time during week commencing 22nd February 2021. 	Short Term	
No decisions made		100%		No decisions made			Long Term	N/A
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021				
No decisions made	No decisions made	No decisions made	100.00%	100%				

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CV 31 - Processing of Planning Applications: Minor applications (within 8 weeks or including any agreed extension of time)

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to process planning applications to required timescales. ➤ CV 31 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (KPI 12). ➤ For week commencing 22nd February 2021, 6 out of 9 applications were decided in time. During Quarter 4 2020/21 thus far, 396 out of 482 applications (82.16%) have been decided on time. ➤ It should be noted that this PI only monitors the timeliness of the decisions made during this specific week (i.e. w/c 22nd February 2021). Another 19 other applications (for major/minor/other/all other applications) decisions went out of time during week commencing 22nd February 2021. 	Short Term	
87.50%		83.33%		71.43%			Long Term	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021				
83.33%	100.00%	80.00%	71.43%	66.67%				

CV 32 – Processing of Planning Applications: Other applications (within 8 weeks or including any agreed extension of time)

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
86.67%		77.27%		73.68%	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	
70.37%	71.43%	97.22%	82.36%	100.00%	

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- *Reason for monitoring:* To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to process planning applications to required timescales.
- CV 32 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (KPI 13).
- 'Other applications' include applications for Listed Building Consent; Householder Applications; Adverts; Change of Use; Other LB Consents & Other Conservation Area Consents.
- For week commencing 22nd February 2021, 9 out of 9 applications were decided in time. During Quarter 4 2020/21 thus far, 131 out of 159 applications (82.39%) were decided in time. During Quarter 3 2019/20, 190 out of 271 (70.11%) were decided within time. Performance therefore thus far during Q4 20/21 is improved overall during the pandemic despite weekly fluctuations.
- It should be noted that this PI only monitors the timeliness of the decisions made during this specific week (i.e. w/c 22nd February 2021. Another 19 other applications (for major/minor/other/all other applications) decisions went out of time during week commencing 22nd February 2021.

Short Term	
Long Term	

CV 34 – Processing of Planning Applications: All other types of applications (within prescribed limits)

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
Data not available		84.21%		83.33%	

- *Reason for monitoring:* To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to process planning applications to required timescales.
- CV 33 has been introduced from Week Commencing 10th August 2020 to consider the processing of all other types of application other than major (CV 30), minor (CV 31) & other

Short Term	
Long Term	

W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	
75%	81.25%	70.59%	64.29%	75.00%	<p>(CV 32).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CV 34 therefore considers the processing of Discharge of Conditions; Certificates of Lawfulness Proposed; Certificates of Lawfulness Existing; Certificates of Lawfulness for works to Listed Building; Prior Notifications; Large Householder Extensions and Permissions in Principle. ➤ For week commencing 22nd February 2021, 12 out of 16 applications have been processed in time (75.00%). Thus far since Week Commencing 10th August 2020, 489 applications should have been decided, of which 357 were decided in time (73.01%). ➤ It should be noted that this PI only monitors the timeliness of the decisions made during this specific week (i.e. w/c 22nd February 2021). Another 19 other application (for major/minor/other/all other applications) decisions went out of time during week commencing 22nd February 2021.

CV 35 – Number of outstanding applications

W/C 4 th January 2021	W/C 11 th January 2021	W/C 18 th January 2021							
Data not available	639	644	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 69</div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to process planning applications to required timescales. ➤ At the end of Week Commencing 22nd February 2021, 697 applications were outstanding. This includes applications both in and out of time. ➤ 270 applications are out of time, but can request Extensions of Time (82 North & 188 South). ➤ An additional 34 applications went out of time during Week Commencing 22nd February 2021; 3 Major, 2 Minor, 4 Other and 10 Everything Else. ➤ 35 decisions were sent out during week commencing 22nd February 2021; during a comparative week during 2019/20 28 decisions were sent out. ➤ 18 application decisions were awaiting sign-off by the delegated officer at the end of the week. ➤ There are currently more working days per week in the North than the South team i.e. 36 days per week in the North and 27 days per week in the South a recommendation is that the work is shared between the teams. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Short Term</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Long Term</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;"></td> </tr> </table> </div> </div>			Short Term		Long Term	
Short Term									
Long Term									
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021					
616	641	656	655	697					

CV 39 (DC 02) Percentage of non-major decisions sent to delegated officer within 7 weeks of validation (Max)

W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021		
22.22%		53.85%		
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021
38.8%	41.6%	48.48%	50.00%	62%

Short Term	↑
Long Term	↑

- *Reason for monitoring:* To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to process planning applications to required timescales.
- CV 39 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (DC 02).
- For week commencing 22nd February 2021, 18 out of 29 Decisions were sent to the delegated officer within 7 weeks of validation. During Quarter 4 2020/21 thus far, 76 out of 167 applications (45.51%) decisions were sent to the delegated officer within 7 weeks of validation. During Quarter 4 2019/20, 70 out of 329 (21%) were decided within time. Performance therefore thus for during Q4 20/21 is improved overall during the pandemic despite weekly fluctuations.

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CV 40 (DC 06) Percentage of Pre-Application Responses Completed within 28 Days (Max)

W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021		
28.57%		0.00%		
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021
0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	60.00%	20.00%

Short Term	↓
Long Term	↑

- *Reason for monitoring:* To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to process pre-planning applications to required timescales.
- CV 40 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (DC 06).
- For week commencing 22nd February 2021, 1 out of 5 Pre-application responses were completed within 28 days. During Quarter 4 2020/21 thus far, 6 out of 26 responses (23.08%) were completed in 28 days. No comparative data is available for the 2019/20 year, as this PI was not collected until the 2020/21 year.

CV 45 (PI 46) Quality of Decisions: Percentage of Appeals Upheld for Major Planning Applications as a Proportion of Appeals Raised

W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to decide upon major planning applications effectively. ➤ CV 45 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (PI 46). ➤ For week commencing 22nd February 2021, no appeals were decided upon. During Quarter 4 2020/21 thus far, out of the 2 appeal decision made, zero have appeals have been upheld (0.00%). ➤ During Quarter 4 2019/20, 2 out of 6 appeals were upheld (33.33%). Performance therefore thus far during Q4 20/21 appears to be worse during the pandemic. 	Short Term	N/A
0.00%		No appeals decided				Long Term	N/A
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021			
0.00%	No appeals decided	No appeals decided	No appeals decided	No appeals decided			

CV 46 (PI 47) Quality of Decisions: Percentage of Appeals Upheld for Non-Major Planning Applications as a Proportion of Appeals Raised

W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> To assess the impact of the pandemic on authority's ability to decide upon non-major planning applications effectively. ➤ CV 46 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (PI 47). ➤ For week commencing 22nd February 2021, no appeals decisions were received. Thus far during Q4 20/21, 3 out of 7 (42.86%) of appeals were upheld. ➤ During Quarter 4 2019/20, 27 out of 37 (62.16%) were decided within time. Performance therefore thus far during Q4 20/21 is improved overall during the pandemic despite weekly fluctuations. 	Short Term	N/A
50.00%		100.00%				Long Term	N/A
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021			
No appeals decided	No appeals decided	No appeals decided	0.00%	No appeals decided			

Economic Development

CV 29 – Car Parks: Percentage decrease in total Pay & Display sales (year-on-year comparison)

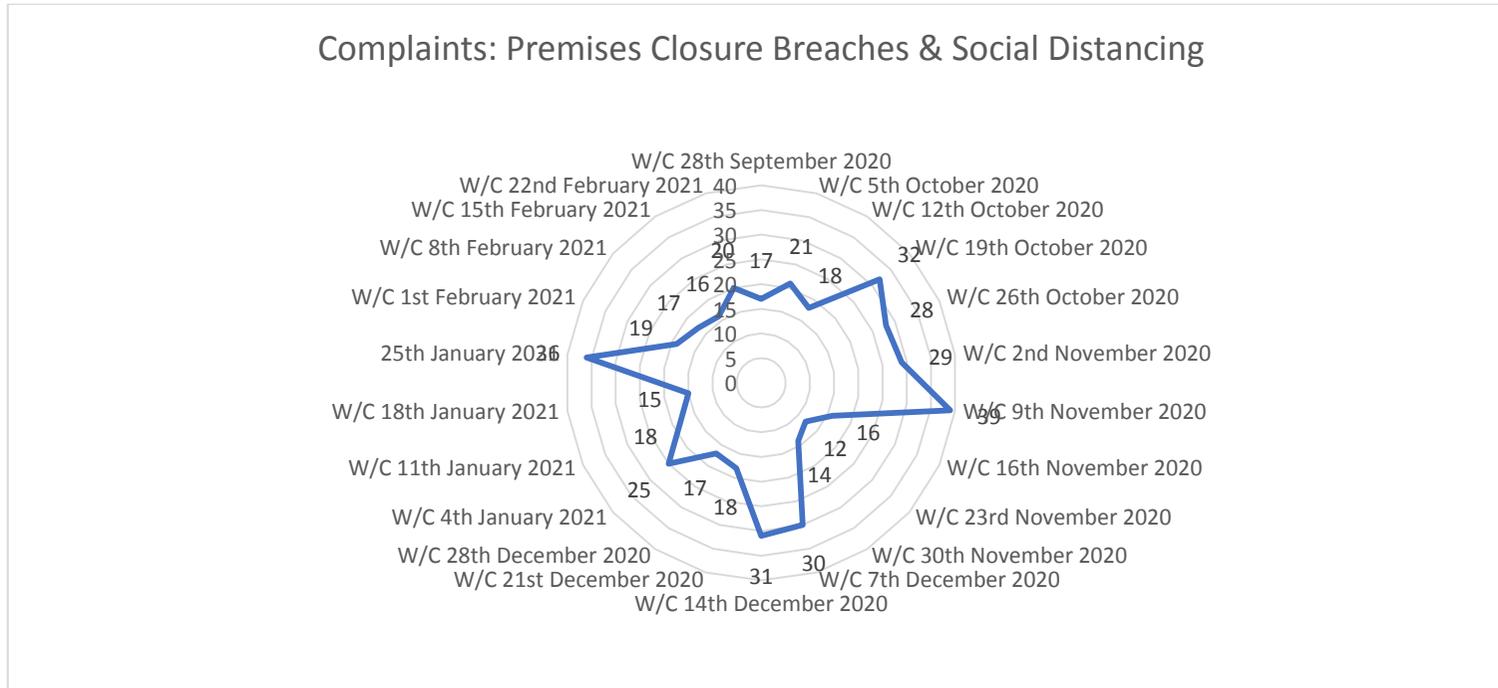
April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	
-90.83%	-87.06%	-69.65%	-40.50%	-34.65%	-24.8%	-26.93%	-51.01%	-29.29%	
January 2021									
-71.2%									<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> To ascertain how COVID-19 is affecting income from the car parks across the district. ➤ These year-on-year comparisons are calculated using the total of MiPermit ticket sales via the MiPermit app, and cash sales through Flowbird car park ticket machines. Whilst the amounts used in calculation are the exact amounts reported to UDC, it is important to note that the reliability of cash sales from the Flowbird car park ticket machines can vary as they are dependent upon both car-park WIFI connections and Flowbird systems functioning accurately.

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CV 33 – Percentage change in Penalty Charge Notices issued (year-on-year comparison)

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	
-100%	-100%	24.9%	40.32%	36.17%	46.59%	-15.06%	-86.63%	-2.37%	
January 2021									
-53.45%									<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> To ascertain how COVID-19 is affecting the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) across the district. ➤ Data on PCNs issued is supplied directly by the North Essex Parking Partnership's Enforcement department.

Environmental Health (Commercial)

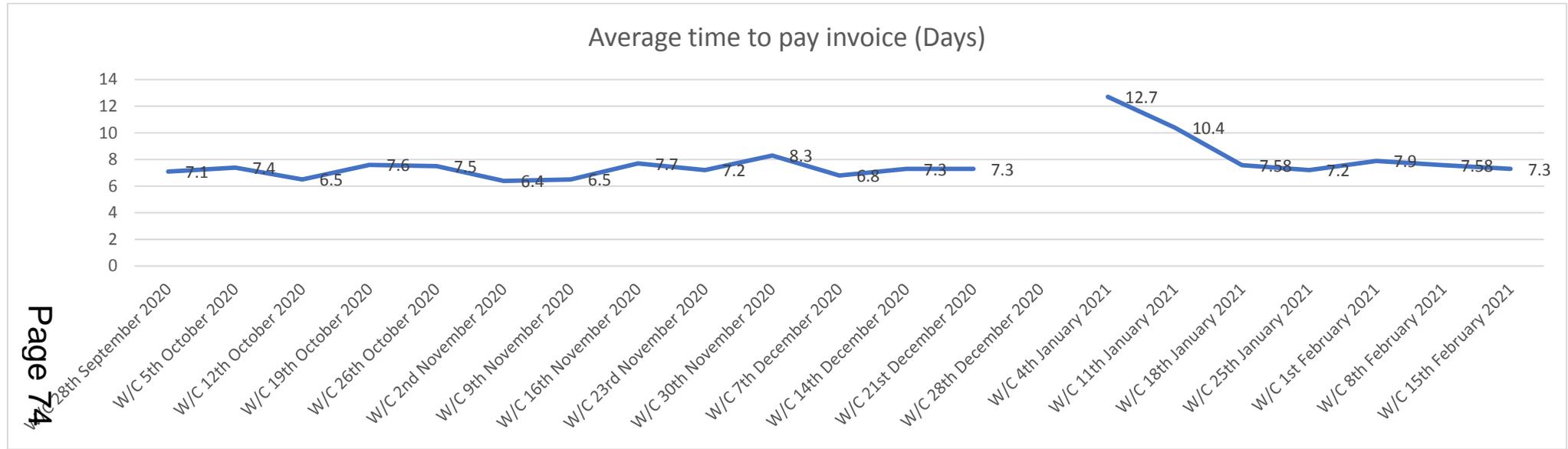


CV 09 – Number of enquiries/complaints received regarding potential premises closures breaches, and social distancing (including proactive contact with businesses by Environmental Health/Licensing).				
W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021
25		18		15
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021
36	19	17	16	20

- Reason for monitoring: to ascertain compliance across the district with government guidance relating to closure of restaurants/pubs and also social distancing.
- The outturn represents total of enquiries received; including complaints relating to social distancing/premises closure breaches (8 for W/C 22nd Feb), and Covid-19 case advice/action (0 for W/C 22nd Feb). Data now also includes proactive contacts with businesses and advice (20 for W/C 22nd Feb); including the Licensing Team.

Short Term	↑
Long Term	↓

Finance



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CV 12 – Average time (Days) to pay supplier invoices

CV 12 – Average time (Days) to pay supplier invoices					<input type="button" value="Short Term"/>  <input type="button" value="Long Term"/> 	
W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: to indicate compliance with the Cabinet Office’s guidance to pay suppliers as quickly as possible during the pandemic. ➤ For week commencing 15th February 2021, numerator was 1,057 (number of payment days), and denominator 144 (number of invoices paid); averaging at 7.3 days per invoice. During Quarter 3 2019/20, the average time to pay invoices was 6.3 days. As such, this week’s outturn represents an increase in payment time in comparison to last year.
12.7 days		10.4 days		7.6 days		
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021		
7.2 days	7.9 days	7.58 days	7.3 days	TBC		

CV 52 – Average Time Taken to pay supplier invoices, from when received by departments to paid date

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
21.5 days		32.5 days		30.0 days	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: to indicate compliance with the Cabinet Office’s guidance to pay suppliers as quickly as possible during the pandemic. ➤ Unlike CV 12 which monitors average time to pay an invoice between when received by creditors to paid date, CV 52 monitors the average time taken between when received by <i>individual departments</i> to paid date. This will therefore highlight if there are any other factors within UDC (external to Finance) which are affecting the processing of payments. ➤ For week commencing 15th February 2021, numerator was 2,699 (number of payment days), and denominator 134 (number of invoices paid); averaging at 20.1 days per invoice.
34.7 days	25.5 days	31.41 days	20.1 days	TBC	

Short Term	
Long Term	

Housing Strategy & Operations

CV 13 – Number of people making homelessness approaches

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
8		5		12	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: People who are homeless may find it more difficult to self-isolate and therefore may be more at risk from COVID-19. ➤ CV 13 is also monitored as part of UDC’s formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (HSG 44a). During Quarter 4 2020/21 thus far, 78 people have made homelessness approaches. ➤ Given that during Quarter 3 2019/20, we received a total of 44 homelessness approaches it therefore evident that the trend during Quarter 2 2020/21 and Quarter 3 2020/21 will continue, and we have seen an increase during Q4 20/21 in the number of homelessness approaches in comparison to the 2020/21 year.
8	12	14	10	9	

Short Term	
Long Term	

CV 14 – Number of people registered on HomeOptions

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20		
1,034	1,054	1,128	1,166	1,203	1,209	1,231	1,271	1,216		
January 2021					February 2021					
1,248					1,293					

➤ Reason for monitoring: Freesheets on HomeOption have been suspended as we have suspended the allocation of voids until property sign-ups can recommence and voids turned around.

CV 15 – Rent lost on voids available to let (excluding development opportunities)

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021		
£1,932.37		£2,301.95		£2,836.35		
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021		
£3,268.66	£3,022.28	£4,010.32	£3,856.39	£2,902.99		

➤ Reason for monitoring: This performance indicator is intended to quantify the amount of rent lost for properties which are vacant. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all property letting has been suspended until property sign-ups can recommence and voids turned around.

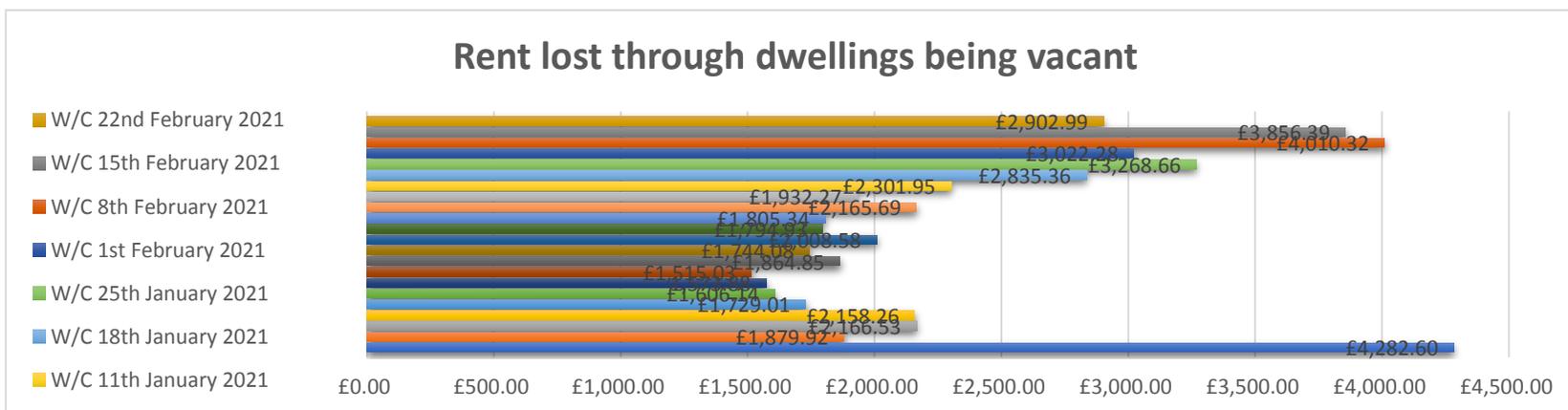
➤ For the purposes of clarity, properties which are part of UDC's development programme are not included in this calculation.

➤ For w/c 22nd February 2021, £2,902.99 rent (24 properties) was lost due to voids. Thus far, since week commencing 30th March 2020, £152,381.29 rent has been lost due to void properties.

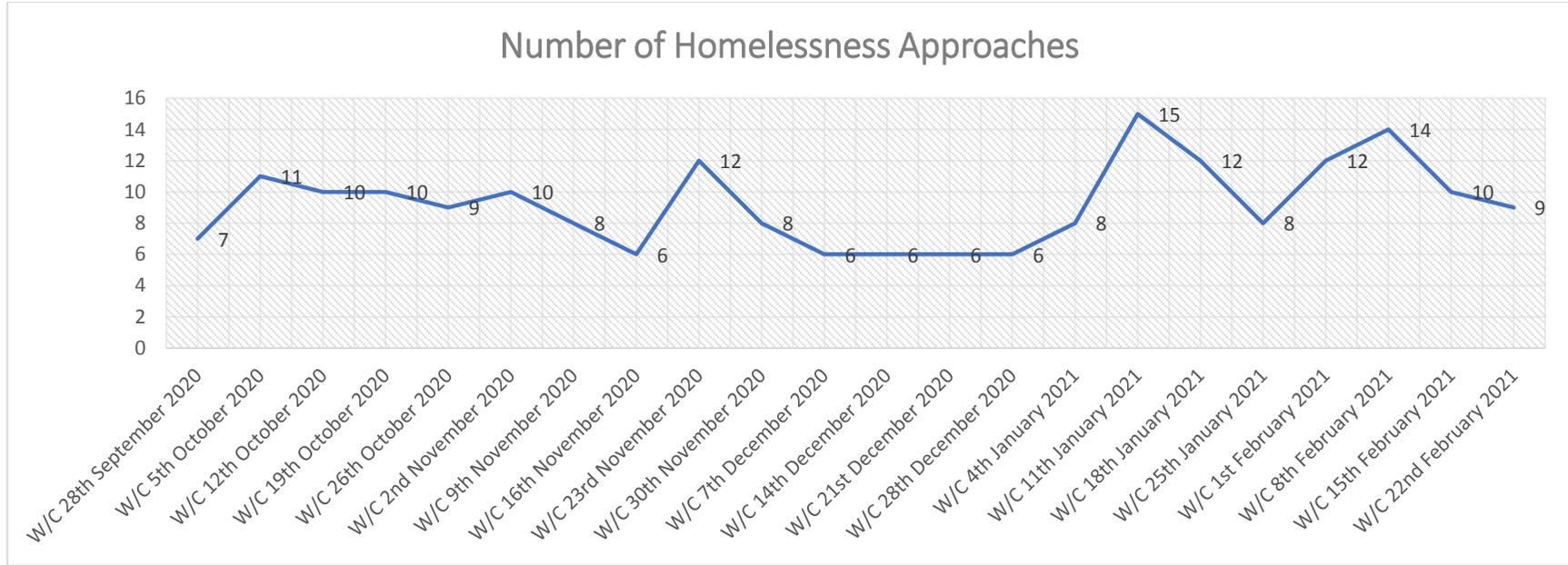
Short Term

Long Term

Rent lost through dwellings being vacant



Number of Homelessness Approaches



Information Communication Technology

CV 16 – Percentage of IT Helpdesk Calls which relate to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. due to change in working arrangements, procedures and processes).

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021	
28% (37 calls)		31% (48 calls)		35% (36 calls)	
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: to consider the impact on IT helpdesk service. ➤ For week commencing 22nd February 2021, out of a total of 161 helpdesk calls raised, 74 related to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. change in working arrangements). Outturn for this week therefore highlights that a significant reduction in the amount of Helpdesk calls relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the most previous two weeks showing a significant increase.
41% (52 calls)	35% (47 calls)	30% (48 calls)	36% (34 calls)	46% (74 calls)	

Short Term	↑
Long Term	↑

Revenues

CV 17 - Percentage of non-domestic rates collected

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020		
4.39%	13.05%	19.62%	27.84%	36.78%	44.88%	55.36%	64.37%	68.10%		
January 2021					February 2021					
80.33%					86.53%					

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- *Reason for monitoring:* To ascertain how COVID-19 is affecting UDC's high collection rates.
- For February 2021, numerator is £30,580,997.41 and denominator £35,342,997.23.
- February's outturn does not represent as significant an increase in comparison to December to January, however nevertheless is more significant than increase than previous months.
- CV 17 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (KPI 03). By the end of Quarter 3 2019/20, we had collected £38,318,526.19 out of £45,308,859.54 (84.57%). As such, it was clear that the collection of non-domestic rates had drastically during December 2020, however this may have significantly improved during January 2021 and February 2021.

CV 18 - Percentage of council tax collected

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020		
10.35%	19.23%	28.42%	37.97%	47.00%	56.15%	65.57%	74.81%	83.98%		
January 2021					February 2021					

- *Reason for monitoring:* To ascertain how COVID-19 is affecting UDC's high collection rates.
- For February 2021, numerator is £66,683,309.57 and denominator £69,989,097.28. February's outturn follows the pattern of previous months, showing a continual steady increase in the total Council Tax collected.
- CV 18 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (KPI 05). By the end of Quarter 3 2019/20, we had collected £57,399,478.91 out of £66,815,927.24 (85.91%). In comparison to Quarter 3 2019/20, it appears that collection has only been slightly affected during Quarter 3

92.92%	95.28%	2020/21; reduced by 1.97% year-on-year. Following on from this, January's and February's outturns shows a continual steady increase in collection rates in comparison to December's outturn.
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CV 20 – Percentage of sundry debtor income overdue

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020		
2.40%	4.24%	8.36%	8.15%	9.24%	12.26%	2.43%	0.90%	0.93%		
January 2021					February 2021					
2.39%					1.77%					

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- *Reason for monitoring:* To ascertain effect of COVID-19 on debtors' ability to pay.
- For February 2021, numerator is £10,530.92 and denominator £595,226.23. Following January's outturn, it is clear that performance has improved comparatively during February, however not as significant an improvement as noted during November & December 2020. Given the outturn at the end of Quarter 3 2019/20 was comparatively 1.2%, it appears current performance is now slightly worse year-on-year, but does still represent a significant improvement to other months during the pandemic.
- CV 20 is also monitored as part of UDC's formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (PI 03).

CV 21 – Local Council Tax Support Collection Rate

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020		
8.84%	15.95%	23.56%	30.72%	38.30%	46.17%	55.41%	61.91%	68.62%		
January 2021					February 2021					
76.94%					79.54%					

- *Reason for monitoring:* As deductions from DWP have been suspended for 3 months, it is possible that council tax collection rates for LCTS claimants may be affected.
- For February 2021, numerator is £693,219.36 and denominator is £871,491.68. February's outturn follows the pattern of previous months, showing a steady increase in the total collected; albeit with slight monthly fluctuations.
- Comparing year-on-year, collection rates have decreased but only by a small margin. February 2021's outcome supports this trend.

CV 51 – Amount paid in Local Restrictions Support Grants

W/C 4 th January 2021	W/C 11 th January 2021	W/C 18 th January 2021	W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021					
LRS (Closed) - £23,342.00 LRS (Closed) Tier 4 - £229,462.39 LRS (Open) Pre-Lockdown - £19,811.00 LRS (Open) Post-Lockdown - £68,663.87 ARG - £6,000 Wet Led Pubs - £10,000	LRS (Closed) - £24,340 LRS (Closed) Tier 4 - £9,561.80 LRS (Open) Pre-Lockdown - £7,532.00 LRS (Open) Post-Lockdown - £8,603.99 ARG - £64,000 Wet Led Pubs - £8000	LRS (Closed) - £13,340 LRS (Closed) Tier 4 - £5,240.70 CBLP - £1,877,000 ARG - £290,000	LRS (Closed) - £48,018 LRS (Closed) Tier 4 - £18,864.16 LRS (Closed) Lockdown 3 - £72,027 CBLP - £144,000 LRS (Open) Pre-Lockdown - £9,283 LRS (Open) Post-Lockdown - £5,603.99 ARG - £14,000 Wet Led Pubs - £7,000	LRS (Closed) - £38,684 LRS (Closed) Tier 4 - £15,197.28 LRS (Closed) Lockdown 3 - £58,026 CBLP - £116,000 LRS (Open) PreLockdown - £2,804 LRS (Open) PostLockdown - £3,202.28 ARG - £45,000	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Short Term</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Long Term</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Short Term		Long Term	
Short Term									
Long Term									
Week Commencing 8 th February 2021			Week Commencing 15 th February 2021						
LRS (Closed) - £17,338 LRS (Closed) Tier 4 - £6,811.30 LRS (Closed) Lockdown 3 - £26,007 CBLP - £52,000 LRS (Open) PreLockdown - £3,505 LRS (Open) PostLockdown - £4,002.85 ARG - £17,000			LRS (Closed) -£14,674 LRS (Closed) Tier 4 - £5,764.77 LRS (Closed) Lockdown 3 - £22,011 CBLP - £44,000 LRS (Open) PreLockdown - £5,608 LRS (Open) PostLockdown - £6,404.56 ARG - £12,000						
Week Commencing 22 nd February 2021									
LRS (Closed) - £29,674 LRS (Closed) Tier 4 - £11,657.58 LRS (Closed) Lockdown 3 - £47,511 CBLP - £95,000 LRS (Open) PreLockdown - £1,402 LRS (Open) PostLockdown - £1,601.14 ARG - £8,000									

- Reason for monitoring: To ascertain the value of relief granted by UDC to businesses in alignment with government guidance.
- Total value LRS paid since W/C 23rd November 2020 - £5,636,823.05

CV 28 – Rent Collected as a Percentage of Rent Owed (excluding arrears b/f)

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020		
97.24%	96.10%	99.75%	99.80%	97.96%	99.45%	99.83%	98.79%	98.99%		
January 2021					February 2021					
98.80%					99.19%					

- *Reason for monitoring:* Measures the effectiveness and efficiency of rent collection service, and identifies the impact of the pandemic on collection.
- For February 2021, numerator is £14,026,100.78 and denominator is £14,140,580.66.
- CV 28 is also monitored as part of UDC’s formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (RB 02).
- February 2021’s outturn represents a similar outturn to recent months, however does show some improvement if minimal.

Street Services

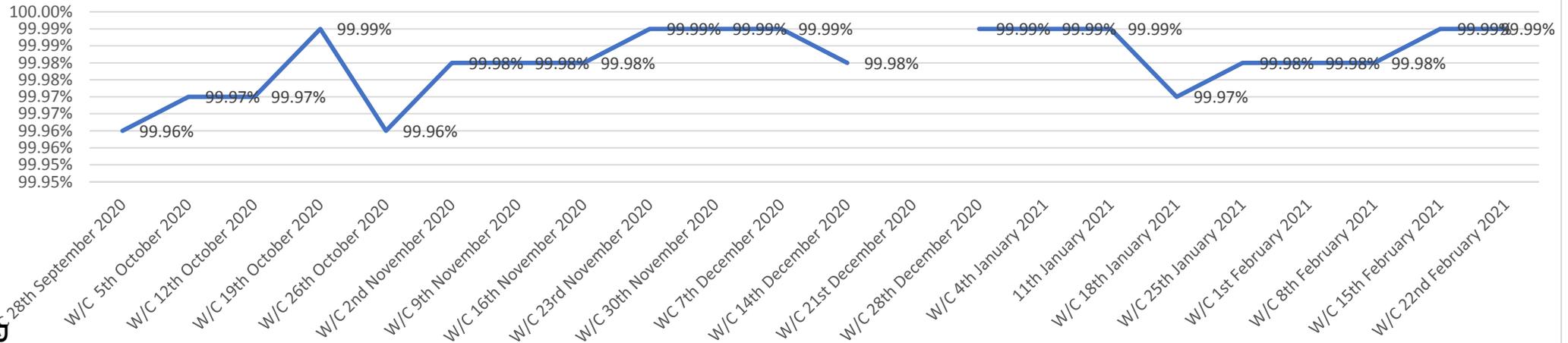
CV 11 – Percentage of collections of waste and recyclables successfully made on first visit

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 11 th January 2021		W/C 18 th January 2021		
99.99%		99.99%		99.97%		
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021		
99.98%	99.98%	99.98%	99.99%	99.99%		

- *Reason for monitoring:* to ascertain the effect of COVID 19 on both service provision and crews. This PI follows calculation metrics of KPI 15(b), and therefore does not include garden waste collections.
- For week commencing 22nd February 2021, out of a total of 38,329 bins to be collected, a total of 38,325 were collected.
- CV 11 is also monitored as part of UDC’s formal quarterly and annual performance monitoring processes (KPI 15b). To achieve target at the end of Quarter 2 2020/21, the minimum outturn should be 99.99%. Given this, and that during Quarter 2 2019/20 the outturn was 99.96%, recent data outturns show performance has been largely sustained despite the pandemic.

Short Term	▬
Long Term	↑

Percentage of waste and recyclable successfully collected on first visit (Max)



CV 41 – Number of accidents reported (Min) #

October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	
1	2	0	1	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: to monitor the number of accidents reported during the Covid-19 pandemic. ➤ CV 41 is monitored as part of UDC’s quarterly performance monitoring as SS 02. For Quarter 2 2020/21, outturn was 5 and target was 2. ➤ Within January 2021, one accident was reported.

CV 42 – Percentage of vehicles passing MOT without additional work (Max)

October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	
100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reason for monitoring: to monitor the percentage of vehicles passing MOT without additional work during the Covid-19 pandemic. ➤ CV 42 is monitored as part of UDC’s quarterly performance monitoring as SS 15. For Quarter 2 2020/21, 92.85% and target 100.00%. ➤ Within January 2021, the successful number of MOT tests carried out was 1 out of 1 tests completed.

CV 43 – Percentage of defects reported which are not rectified or signed off during the quarter (Min)

October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> to monitor the percentage of defects reported which are not rectified or signed off during the Covid-19 pandemic. ➤ CV 43 is monitored as part of UDC’s quarterly performance monitoring as SS 20. For Quarter 2 2020/21, outturn was 4.40% and target was 0.00%. ➤ Within January 2021, 21 defects out of 220 reported were not rectified or signed off during the month. This equates to 9.55%.
4.17%	4.02%	1.78%	9.55%	TBC	

CV 44 – Percentage of overweight vehicles tipped (Min)

October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> to monitor the percentage of overweight vehicles tipped during the Covid-19 pandemic. ➤ CV 44 is monitored as part of UDC’s quarterly performance monitoring as SS 19. For Quarter 2 2020/21, outturn was 6.31% and target was 0.00%. ➤ Within January 2021, 34 overweight vehicles were tipped out of 455 vehicles tipped overall. Therefore, percentage of overweight vehicles tipped during January 2021 was 7.47%.
4.18%	6.55%	6.54%	7.47%	TBC	

CV 47 – Percentage of Fly Tips cleared within 4 days report

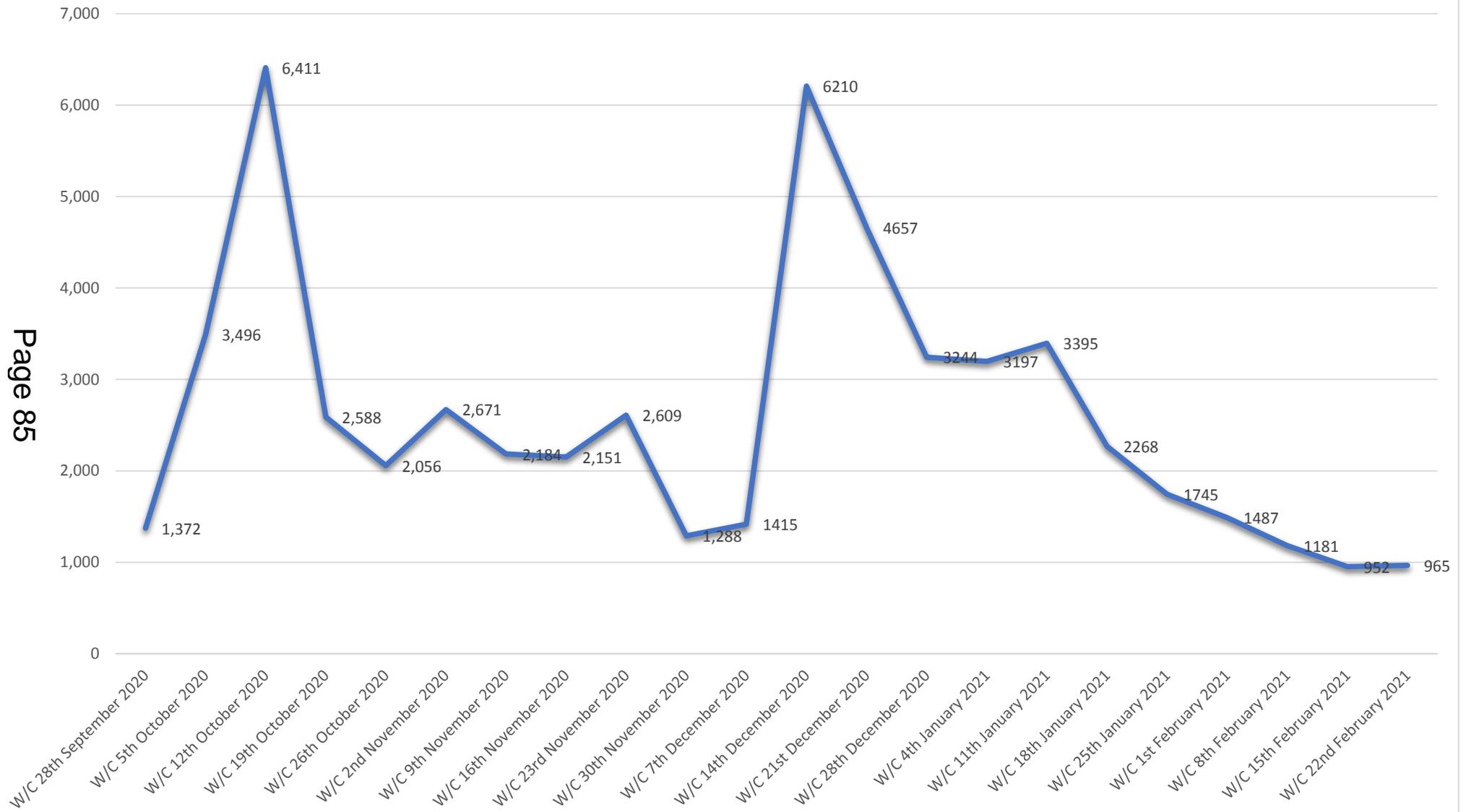
October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> to monitor the percentage of overweight vehicles tipped during the Covid-19 pandemic. ➤ CV 47 is monitored as part of UDC’s quarterly performance monitoring as SS 12. For Quarter 2 2020/21, outturn was 0% and target was 82%. ➤ Within January 2021, 14 flytips were cleared within four working days out of a total of 35 flytips reported. Therefore the percentage of flytips cleared within 4 working days is 40.00%.
62.96%	57.78%	80.00%	40.00%	TBC	

Website & Consultation

CV 22 – Number of visits to UDC website pages with Coronavirus information from all devices

W/C 4 th January 2021		W/C 8 th January 2021		W/C 15 th January 2021					
3,197 As local people get used to national lockdown (instigated at the start of this reporting period) our site traffic has levelled out. Our coronavirus landing page however still achieved a significant number of hits during the week and serves as a useful directional platform to a wide range of services.		3,395 There has been marked interest in a number of our support pages, most notably the information on getting a test which claimed nearly 24% of all the traffic in this section. Interest was no doubt driven by the publication of information on the two local test centres in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.		2,268 Test and trace support payments are now one of the most visited pages in this section followed by information on where and when to get a test.					
W/C 25 th January 2021	W/C 1 st February 2021	W/C 8 th February 2021	W/C 15 th February 2021	W/C 22 nd February 2021	<div style="text-align: right;"> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Short Term</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Long Term</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reason for monitoring:</i> Provides an overarching impression of public engagement with UDC via the website during the COVID 19 pandemic. ➤ Outturn data provides the number of UDC's coronavirus pages from all devices. Pages included are ones which contain substantial coronavirus content only. Alongside these quantities, text in italics cites the most-visited pages. ➤ Week Commencing 22nd February 2021: This week sees just the tiniest increase of 1.4% in visits to the coronavirus resource pages. 	Short Term		Long Term	
Short Term									
Long Term									
1,745 As we further settle into lockdown and with the closing down of the two PCR testing stations in the district, visitor interest in Coronavirus resources continues to drop away. Information on test and trace support payments and how to get a test are still the most visited pages and are indicative of the still relatively high levels of infection in the district.	1,487 Information on test and trace support payments and how to get a test are still the most visited pages accounting for over a third of all the coronavirus-related traffic.	1,181 Information on test and trace support payments continues to be one of the most used pages. By contrast, business support resources and grant funding are now little used.	952 Test and trace support payments and information on booking a test continue to be the most popular resources, whilst those pages on business grants and support have seen a meteoric decline as funding schemes close or businesses migrate onto automatic payments.	965 Two grant schemes - the Christmas support for pubs and Additional Restrictions Grant closed at the end of this period and a peak in visits to the application forms for these two payments is evident.					

CV 22 - Number of visits to UDC website pages with COVID-19 information



Agenda Item 6

Committee:	Governance, Audit and Performance Committee	Date:	Tuesday, 16 March 2021
Title:	Council Procedure Rules: time permitted for questions to the executive and Committee Chairs		
Report Author:	Ben Ferguson, Democratic Services Manager bferguson@uttlesford.gov.uk		

Summary

1. At the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee meeting held on 4 February 2021, Members established a Task & Finish Group to review the time permitted for questions to the executive and Committee Chairs (Rule 2.4: Section 2, Part 4), and to make a recommendation to the Committee in regards to amending Rule 2.4.
2. The Group was composed of Councillors Driscoll, Barker, Isham, Jones and Khan.
3. The Group met on Friday, 26 February to consider a number of approaches to questions to the executive and Committee Chairs, with a particular focus on the Essex County Council model. The Group's recommendation is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

Recommendations

4. That the Committee recommends to Council that it amend Rule 2.4 of the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix 1 to this report on a trial basis.

Financial Implication

5. None.

Background Papers

[Uttlesford District Council - Constitution: Section 2, Part 4](#)

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	The Task & Finish Group met on 26 February to discuss the options available.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None

Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Notice of questions will allow for advance consideration of any legal implications.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

7. Under the Council Procedure Rules (Rule 2.4: Section 2, Part 4), the time permitted for questions to the executive and Committee Chairs is limited to 15 minutes:
 - *For a period not exceeding 15 minutes for the Leader, members of the executive and Chairmen of committees to receive questions from members, to permit the Leader, members of the executive or Chairmen to reply and for the questioner to ask a supplementary question but without any debate on the issues raised;*
8. Comments have been made at Full Council regarding the increased number of Cabinet members under the current Administration and the subsequent need to extend the question time permitted. At the Committee meeting on 4 February, a Task and Finish Group was established to review the issue.
9. The Task & Finish Group met on 26 February. The report and associated appendices considered by the Group have been attached at Appendix 2.
10. Members discussed the rules in place at South Lakeland District Council, Tendring District Council, Norfolk County Council and Essex County Council. Councillor Barker spoke of her experience at Essex County Council (ECC), with specific focus on how question time worked on a practical level.
11. Members highlighted the following issues during their discussion:
 - The majority view was that question time should be extended to 30 minutes, to allow effective questioning of the executive. It was vital that Cabinet Members were held accountable, and a time extension was justifiable due to the higher number of Cabinet Members under the current Administration. It was noted that if the 30 minutes were not required in full, the meeting would simply move onto the next item.
 - In addition to an increase in time, it was agreed that questions should be submitted in writing well in advance of meetings, in order that written responses be provided in advance of the meeting.
 - There was particular interest in the ECC model, as described by Councillor Barker. At ECC meetings, only questions of clarification could be asked; Members did not read out the written questions or answers, and there would be no opportunity to ask supplementary questions.

- The culture, working behaviour and tone of Full Council meetings required addressing. There was agreement that question time could be perceived as antagonistic. Members felt that by supplying questions and answers in advance of these meetings, a more professional and dignified tone could be conveyed.
- Rule 2.4 only applied to the standing item ‘Questions to the executive and Committee Chairs’; Members would still be free to ask questions during their statements on any report when the appropriate agenda item was under consideration.
- Oral questions could be asked but only on matters that had arisen in the past eight working days, and providing the Chair had given their consent that the matter was urgent. Notice of oral questions was required to be given by 9.00am on the day of the meeting.
- Any changes to Rule 2.4 should be implemented on a trial basis before amending the Constitution. It is recommended that Council adopt the changes on a trial basis for two meetings in order that any potential problems can be identified and addressed before final approval. .
- Exceptions should be put in place for the budget setting and Annual Council meetings. These meetings should be dedicated to the business on the agenda and questions would not be permitted.

12. Appendix 1 sets out the proposed arrangements for ‘Questions to the executive and Committee Chairs’. Primarily, the proposal is based on the ECC model, although it has been amended in order to incorporate the Group’s comments.

13. Members are asked to recommend to Council that Rule 2.4 be amended as set-out in Appendix 1 of this report, subject to a trial period of two Full Council meetings.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the current Rule provides elected members insufficient time to ask questions of the executive and Committee Chairs.	3	3	To trial the proposed amendments to Rule 2.4

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 1 – Proposed amendment to Rule 2.4

2.4.

For a period not exceeding 30 minutes for the Leader, members of the executive and Chairs of committees to receive questions from members, to permit the Leader, members of the executive or Chairs to reply and for the questioner to ask a question of clarification but without any debate on the issues raised, in accordance with the protocol for Member Questions to the Executive and Committee Chairs at Council meetings contained in Part 5 of the Constitution;

Protocol for Member Questions to the Executive and Committee Chairs at Council meetings

1. Written questions asked by Members of the Council

Members will be required to submit their questions in writing to Democratic Services before 10:00am eight working days before the Council meeting. The questions should be concise and indicate to whom the question is directed (the Leader, a Cabinet Member or a Chair of a Committee). The question should relate to any matter in respect of which the Council has powers or duties. The written question will be published with the agenda for that meeting in the order in which the questions were received, unless the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and/or Section 151 Officer considers the question should be restricted in accordance with the rules applicable to access to information procedures.

No amendments are permitted to questions once they have been published, unless they are put forward by the questioner for the purpose of clarification, and members can withdraw their questions but may not substitute them.

Responses to these questions will be provided in writing and circulated to all Members no later than 10.00am on the working day before the meeting.

1.1. Supplementary question

If after a reply is given to a written question the Member who asked the question considers that the reply requires clarification, they may ask once for clarification but otherwise no supplemental questions will be permitted except by leave of the Chair.

1.2 Restriction on number of questions

The number of written questions which may be asked by any one Member at any one meeting will be limited to two.

1.3 Urgent oral questions

A Member may put an oral question to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs regarding any urgent matter that has arisen in the 8 working days preceding the meeting, subject to attaining the consent of the Chair of Council. The question should be provided in writing to Democratic Services, and copied to the relevant member from who a response is requested, no later than 9.00am on the day of the meeting.

Urgent questions permitted by the Chair will be taken before all other questions.

1.4 Form of answer to oral questions

An answer may take the form of:

(i) a direct oral answer; or

(ii) where the desired information is contained in a publication of the Council, a reference to that publication; or

(iii) where the Chief Executive considers that the reply to the question can conveniently be so given, by a written answer circulated to the Members of the Council present at the meeting.

1.5 Time permitted

The time allotted at each meeting for the putting and answering of questions under this paragraph shall not exceed 30 minutes, without the leave of the Chair of the Council.

1.6 Exceptions

Questions will not be permitted at Annual Council or budget setting meetings.

Appendix 2 – Report and appendices of the Task & Finish Group held on 26 February 2021

Committee: Task & Finish Group: time permitted for questions to the executive and committee chairs
Date: 26 February 2021

Title: Council Procedure Rules: time permitted for questions to the executive and committee chairs

Report Author: Ben Ferguson, Democratic Services Manager
bferguson@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. The Council Procedure Rules stipulate that at every ordinary meeting of Full Council an item is dedicated to the questioning of executive Members and committee chairs.
2. The time period provided for in the Constitution states that this question time will not exceed 15 minutes.
3. At the GAP Committee meeting held on 4 February 2021, Members established a Task & Finish Group to review Rule 2.4 (Section 2, Part 4), and to make a recommendation to GAP in regard to amending Rule 2.4. The Group is composed of Councillors Driscoll, Barker, Isham, Jones and Khan. Councillor Barker was nominated to the Group in an advisory capacity.

Recommendations

4. To comment on the examples relating to the time permitted for questions to the executive and committee chairs as outlined in this report, and to make a recommendation to the GAP Committee regarding Rule 2.4.

Financial Implication

5. None.

Background Papers

[Uttlesford District Council - Constitution: Section 2, Part 4](#)

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None

Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

7. Under the Council Procedure Rules (Section 2, Part 4 – Rule 2.4), the time permitted for questions to the executive and committee Chairs is limited to 15 minutes:
 - *For a period not exceeding 15 minutes for the Leader, members of the executive and Chairmen of committees to receive questions from members, to permit the Leader, members of the executive or Chairmen to reply and for the questioner to ask a supplementary question but without any debate on the issues raised;*
8. Comments have been made at Full Council regarding the increased number of Cabinet members under the current Administration and the subsequent need to extend the question time permitted.
9. As the number of Cabinet members has increased from five, in 2017, to the current ten, a straightforward proposal would be to increase the permitted time for questions from 15 to 30 minutes.
10. A number of other authorities allow up to 30 minutes' question time to members of the executive at their respective Full Council meetings. Examples include [South Lakeland](#), [Tendring DC](#) and [Norfolk County Council](#).
11. However, it is worth noting that while the above examples all allow up to 30 minutes to question the executive, they each have unique procedures in terms of giving notice of such questions. At Norfolk CC, notice is not required to ask questions of the executive, but the process is largely built around the Cabinet Members producing a written report at Council (although members are free to ask any question relating to a Cabinet Member's portfolio). There is also an additional 15 minutes set aside for questions to the Leader that do not relate to matters contained in the Cabinet reports published with the agenda. These questions do require notice.
12. At Tendring DC, 8 days notice is required to submit a question in writing, although there is provision for the submission of urgent questions, and questions are published with the agenda in the order in which they were submitted. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a written response to these questions must be produced in writing and sent to the Democratic Services Manager no later than midday on the day of the meeting.

13. South Lakeland DC provides another variation of this model. Questions submitted in writing require 24 hours notice, and all written questions are dealt with first during the 30 minutes permitted for question time. If there is time remaining following responses to the written questions, oral questions to Members of the executive are allowed.
14. Members are asked to consider the procedural examples at Appendix A and to consider whether an extension in time should be accompanied by further amendments, such as changing the way in which questions are submitted, stipulating how responses to such questions are given and whether any meetings should be exempt from question time (e.g. Annual Council, Budget setting meeting).
15. Members may feel that an alternative, more time effective solution is required. For example, all questions could be submitted in advance of the meeting and published with the agenda papers, thereby negating the need to read the question out and saving time in the process.
16. At the GAP meeting on 4 February 2021, Members expressed interest in the Essex County Council model, as highlighted by Councillor Barker. The relevant section of the ECC Constitution has been attached at Appendix B.
17. The report author found the following of note:
 - Written questions are required to be submitted 7 days in advance of the meeting itself. However, there is a degree of flexibility providing the Chairman has given consent that the question is urgent and notice is given by 9.00am on the day of the meeting. Furthermore, responses to the written questions are provided in writing and circulated with all members on the day before the meeting.
 - Restrictions apply in terms of the number of questions each member can submit and in relation to supplementary/follow-up questions.
 - There is also provision to ask oral questions at the meeting. There is a 20 minute time limit for such questions.
18. At Appendix C, Members can see examples of the written questions and responses as published by ECC.
19. Councillor Barker, an ECC Cabinet member, has extensive experience with this model and is asked to provide comment on how this procedure works in practice.

Conclusion

20. Members are asked to consider the aforementioned procedures relating to the time permitted for questions to the executive and committee chairs, and to determine which elements, if any, should be implemented at Uttlesford District Council. The examples outlined above are by no means exhaustive, nor are they mutually incompatible. It has become clear to the report author that an extension of the time permitted *and* the implementation of new procedures in terms of submitting and responding to questions are worthy of consideration.
21. The primary issues, in the mind of the report author, appear to be:
 - Should the time permitted for questions be extended; if so, by how much?

- Should additional procedures be put in place in regard to the submission of questions; if so, how prescriptive should these be, and should a degree of flexibility be built in (e.g. discretion of the Chair to extend the available speaking time)?
- Should the way in which Cabinet members/Committee chairs respond to such questions be stipulated in the Constitution?
- Should the recommendations be trialled on a temporary basis?

Risk Analysis

22.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the current Rule provides elected members insufficient time to ask questions of the executive and committee chairs.	3	3	To review the current Rule and amend as required.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix A – Constitutional examples of Questions to the Executive and Committees Chairs

Norfolk CC

8. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

8.1 QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

A Member of the Council may at a full Council meeting ask the Leader or the chair of a committee any question without notice concerning an item within the report of the Cabinet or committee, when that item is under consideration by the Council. A maximum overall period of 30 minutes shall be allowed for questions to Cabinet Members, with a maximum of 5 minutes for questions to an individual Cabinet Member, both periods to be extendable at the discretion of the Chair. Questions to Cabinet Members can relate to anything within the remit of the Cabinet Member's portfolio and are not limited to items in the Cabinet reports.

8.2 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

At each Council meeting, there shall be a 15-minute Leader's Question Time session during which Members may ask questions that do not relate to items covered in the reports from Cabinet. Questions shall not require prior notice. The Leader may ask Cabinet Members to answer questions where appropriate.

8.3 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

A Member of the Council may ask:

- the Chair;
- the Leader or relevant Cabinet Member;
- the chair of any committee

a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects Norfolk.

8.4 NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

A Member may only ask a question under Rule 8.3 if they have given at least 4 working days' notice of the question in writing to the Head of Democratic Services. However, if a question relates to urgent matters and a Member has obtained the consent of the Chair of the Council, then the question may be asked provided that the content of the question is given to the Head of Democratic Services by 9.30 a.m. on the day of the meeting.

8.5 RESPONSE

Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer will be sent to the questioner within 7 days of the meeting and a copy appended to the minutes.

8.6 If the Member who has given written notice of the question is not present when the question is to be put, that question may, with the consent of the Chair, be asked by any other Member present.

Tendring DC

Scope of Questions on Notice at Full Council and Time Allocated in the Meeting

Subject to Rules 11.3, 11.4 and 11.5 a Member of the Council may ask:-

- the Chairman;
- a Member of the Cabinet; and
- the Chairman of any Committee;

a question on any matter, which is within their area of responsibilities as set out in Part 3 of the Constitution, in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Tendring District.

Questions from Members will be set out in the agenda in the order in which they were received.

The time allocated for receiving and disposing of questions shall be a maximum 30 minutes.

Any question not disposed of at the end of this time shall be the subject of a written response, copied to all Members the following working day unless withdrawn by the questioner.

Questions shall not be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council or to an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council or to the Budget and Council Tax setting meeting of the Council.

11.3 Notice of Questions

A Member may only ask a question under Rule 11.2 if either:

(a) notice has been given by delivering it in writing (or by personal e-mail) to the Committee Services Manager no later than midday 8 (eight) working days before the day of the meeting; or

the question relates to urgent matters, he has the consent of the person to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Committee Services Manager by noon on the day of the meeting.

11.4 Number of Questions

At any one meeting no Councillor may submit more than two questions.

11.5 Reasons for rejection of Questions

- (a) the question is not about a matter for which the local authority has responsibility or which affects the District;
- (b) The Monitoring Officer will reject a question if in their judgement it could be considered to be defamatory or offensive or requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information (as defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules);
- (c) the Monitoring Officer will reject a question if in their judgment it is substantially the same as a question already received to be put to the ordinary meeting of the Council in question;
- (d) The Monitoring Officer will reject a question if in their judgement it is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months;
- (e) The Monitoring Officer will reject a question if in their judgement it is likely to lead to a breach of the Members' Code of Conductor; or
- (f) the question is about a matter that is subject to call in or ongoing legal proceedings.

11.6 Response

An answer may take the form of:

- (a) a direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where a reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer given later to all Members.

The Member giving the response must provide an electronic or written copy of that response to the Committee Services Manager by Noon on the day of the meeting in order to enable the response to be circulated to the Questioner, the Chairman of the Council, the Leader of the Council and relevant Officers.

South Lakeland DC

10.2 Cabinet Question Time

A period of 30 minutes will be allocated at each ordinary meeting of the Council, excluding the Annual Meeting and Extraordinary Meetings, during which Members may ask questions of the Executive on any topic that is within the jurisdiction or reasonable influence of the Council and is relevant to the Leader or the Portfolio Holder's area of responsibility in accordance with the procedure set out in Rule 10.3.

As set out in paragraph 2(h) above, at least three times a year Council will be asked to consider a composite report of the Cabinet. This will form part of the Cabinet Question Time agenda item with a combined time period of up to a maximum of one hour being allocated.

10.3 Procedure for putting Questions during Cabinet Question Time (Rule 10.2)

The following procedure will be followed for putting questions during Cabinet Question Time:-

- Questions which are submitted in writing will be taken first.
- Written questions should be submitted in writing to the Legal, Governance and Democracy Lead Specialist (Monitoring Officer) with at least 24 hours prior to the date of the relevant Council meeting.
- The Leader and/or the Leader or Portfolio Holder will be notified as soon as possible of the receipt of a written question.
- Written questions will be taken in the alphabetical order of the name of the Member putting the questions. This will be alternated from meeting to meeting.
- Where a Member submits more than one question for a meeting, he/she will be able to ask his/her first question in accordance with the alphabetical order of receipt. His/her subsequent questions(s) will be taken after all other Members have asked their first or sole questions. If more than one Member falls into this category then the subsequent questions will be asked alternatively until all questions have been asked or the 30 minute period has expired.
- In the event that it is not possible to ask a written question due to lack of time, the Leader or relevant Portfolio Holder will provide a written answer to the question following the meeting. This will also be circulated to all Members.
- Once all written questions have been dealt with, and subject to time remaining within the 30 minute period, Members will be able to put questions from the floor to appropriate Portfolio Holders present in the room, provided that they comply with the criteria in paragraph 10.2 above. If more than one such question is asked the procedure set out in Rule 10.2(a) shall apply.
- Once a response has been given to the question, the Member who asked the question may ask one supplementary question without notice, to the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

10.4 Response

An answer to either a written question, supplementary question or oral question put during Cabinet Question Time may take the form of:

(a) a direct oral answer;

(b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or

(c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner and all other members.

Appendix B – Essex County Council

16.12 Questions at Council meetings

16.12.1 Written questions asked by Members of the Council

A Member may, if notice has been given in writing to the Chief Executive before 9:00am seven calendar days before the Council meeting, ask the Leader, Cabinet Member or Chairman of a Committee any question on any matter in respect of which the Council has powers or duties.

Where he considers the matter urgent, the Chairman may allow any member to put to the Leader, Cabinet Member or Chairman of any committee any question of which the above notice has not been given; but a copy of any such question shall, if possible, be delivered to the Chief Executive not later than 9:00am on the day of the meeting.

16.12.2 Editing of questions

Any written question may be edited both to bring it into proper form and to secure reasonable brevity.

16.12.3 Supplementary question

If after a reply is given to a written question the Member who asked the question considers that the reply requires clarification, he may ask once for clarification but otherwise no supplemental question shall be put except by leave of the Chairman.

16.12.4 Restriction on number of questions

The number of written questions which may be asked pursuant to notice given in accordance with paragraph 16.12.1 above by any one Member at any one meeting shall be limited to two.

16.12.5 Questions on reports

A Member may ask the Leader, Cabinet Member or Chairman of a committee any question on any report of the Cabinet or a committee (other than a report which is for information only) when that item is under consideration by the Council.

16.12.6 Other oral questions

A Member may ask any oral question of:

(i) the Chairman

(ii) the Leader

(iii) a Member of the Cabinet

i (iv) the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee or

ii (v) the Member appointed by Essex County Council as its representative on the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects Essex but which is not capable of being dealt with under paragraph 16.12.5.

The time allotted at each meeting for the putting and answering of questions under this paragraph shall not exceed 20 minutes, without the leave of the Chairman of the Council.

16.12.7 Form of answer

An answer may take the form of:

(i) a direct oral answer; or

(ii) where the desired information is contained in a publication of the Council, a reference to that publication; or

(iii) where the Chief Executive considers that the reply to the question can conveniently be so given, by a written answer circulated to the Members of the Council present at the meeting.

The person to whom a question has been put may, on reasons stated, decline to answer.

Essex County Council

8 December 2020

Answers to Written Questions

Agenda Item 13

1. By Councillor Mitchell of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate, Culture and Communities

'As a Royal Navy Veteran myself, I've recently been made aware of the Veterans Railcard scheme.

As a Climate Action Commissioner, I'm very keen to encourage more sustainable transport options for all, especially for those who have stepped up to serve their Country in times of conflict.

I would therefore ask if the Cabinet Member could share details with all Members so they can also support this honourable initiative throughout their Divisions?'

Reply

'Essex County Council proudly hosts the Essex Civilian Military Partnership Board (CMPB) which offers strategic direction to the county's shared Armed Forces community covenant commitments. The Board is made up of representatives from the armed forces, Veterans' charities, Essex councils, and a range of public sector bodies.

As part of the work we do with Board members, we have shared with them, and promoted through our channels, details of the new Veterans Railcard scheme. This is a fantastic new initiative that helps enable Essex veterans and their families to have access to cheaper rail travel, in order to visit family and friends or simply enjoy a day out (covid restrictions permitting). It also encourages the use of more sustainable transport.

The Railcard is now on sale and is available to those that have served for at least one day or more in Her Majesty's Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve) and can be purchased for an introductory price of just £21 for one year until 31 March 2021.

Like other Railcards, the Veterans Railcard offers savings of 1/3 on most rail travel. It can be purchased online at: <https://www.veterans-railcard.co.uk/>.

I would encourage members to share these details throughout their divisions to enable as many veterans to take advantage of the introductory offer.

More information about what support is available to veterans can be found here: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/essex-armed-forces-community-covenant>

2. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

‘Given that suicide rates in Tendring and Colchester appear to be higher than other districts, please can you let me know the levels of spending on mental health services by this authority every year during the past ten years and whether additional resources are going to be made available to target Colchester and Tendring and other areas with a high number to try to improve things?’

Reply

‘Suicide is a devastating and tragic event which, although comparatively rare, has profound impacts on families and communities. The latest suicide data, covering 2019, was published in September 2020 by the Office of National Statistics. This shows that Essex has a higher rate of suicides than the national average and has had so for the past five years. Suicide rates in Tendring and Colchester are higher than the norm, based on their socio-economic ranking nationally and the reasons are unclear. On average, between 150 and 165 people die by suicide in Essex each year and every one of these deaths is a tragedy. This calendar year there have very sadly been four suicides in the under 18 population. Two of the young people were from Colchester; one from Basildon; and one from Braintree.

Essex invests significant funds in mental health services for both children and adults across the County. It is not possible to provide the full ten years of data. However, the previous five years, plus the committed funding for this financial year is available. The figures for children’s services include the contribution that Essex County Council makes to the collaboratively commissioned Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS) and funding for early intervention programmes. Within the figures for 2020/21 is included the committed funding for a pilot project which commences for a period of 18 months from January 2021. This project establishes a new multidisciplinary team, which will be focused on Tendring and provide mental health support alongside drug and alcohol misuse support. The spend on Adults’ services includes our spend on Assessment and Case management, Care and Support and commissioned services.

Financial Year	Children’s Mental Health Service	Adult’s Mental Health Services
2015/16	£2,768,727	£19,318,000
2016/17	£2,115,319	£19,507,000
2017/18	£2,137,242	£19,407,000
2018/19	£1,957,634	£18,960,000
2019/20	£1,984,684	£19,495,000
2020/21	£2,557,081	£21,182,000

Suicide is very complex and most individuals who take their own lives have a history of mental illness, especially depression, and there are often a range of additional underlying risk factors, such as unemployment, debt, or other adverse life events. Services do play a role, but it is important to note that the national data shows that only about one in four of those who take their own lives are known to mental health services. Therefore, investment in broader, early intervention and prevention and awareness campaigns are paramount. Essex County Council

commissions a range of early intervention and prevention support, including our Family Innovation Fund services for children and families and the Futures in Mind community support offer for adults. The Essex Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Team also provides direct, early help to adults in Essex who are beginning to experience poor emotional wellbeing who do not meet the threshold for statutory services. Essex County Council has also recently run an Adult Mental Health communications campaign across social and mainstream media and are continuing to develop and publish content to highlight the services available and encourage anyone who is experiencing poor emotional wellbeing or mental health to access help.

There are specific interventions already in place in Colchester and Tendring, with two mental health hubs in those areas. There is targeted work to support Veterans and the 'Never too late Mate' campaign is focusing on improving the knowledge and understanding of local providers and businesses in the area to be more mental health and suicide aware. Other services include the two crisis cafes in Colchester and Clacton, commissioned by Essex County Council and North East Essex CCG, and the Men's Mental Health Community Fund, which is being run by Tendring CVS. There is also a task and finish group being established to cover both Tendring and Colchester to carrying out a deep dive into the suicide rates there to get a better understanding of the issues and potential mitigations.

Finally, suicide was a major topic of discussion at the most recent Essex Health and Wellbeing Board, reflecting the concern felt across the whole system, and where we were grateful to the office of HM Coroner for Essex for their engagement.'

3. By Councillor Harris of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'Could I ask the portfolio holder for an update on the Review of the Essex Speed Strategy mentioned at last Full Council meeting please. How is the review going for 20mph Policy please, and will the LHP be consulted in the next few months?'

Reply

'I thank the member for Maypole for his question on the review of the Essex Speed Strategy.

Since the last full council, I have had a meeting with officers to discuss the Essex Speed Strategy to start the review process and make it fit for purpose. We will also be bringing in Hertfordshire County Council Officers in the new year to discuss how they changed their policy to be more effective with their strategic aims such as sustainable transport and clean air.

We currently intend to formally consult with the LHPs in the spring but of course we first need to make sure we have looked into all the options as we normally do before consulting on topics.'

4. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

‘One of my constituents has raised the important issue of malnutrition of the elderly. She has urged us to review the council’s spending on food for older and disabled people in the Wivenhoe area and in the rest of Essex, and in particular to ensure that funding for meals on wheels services is made available.

Across the country, numerous community groups have started providing meal delivery services for those in need during the initial lockdown. But to be sustainable, these groups need financial backing as well as support to integrate with adult social care so that they can access regular and appropriate referrals.

My constituent has requested that Essex County Council takes the following action;

- protects or reintroduces and enhances a local meals on wheels service,
- promotes a ‘more than meal’ approach where services include welfare checks, links to other support, and a lifeline of regular contact and
- champions innovative and strategic approaches that recognise the long-term benefits and cost-savings of meals on wheels for older people, for communities, and for the public purse.

Please can I request that an urgent review is conducted focusing on the existing arrangements and addressing these specific points.’

Reply

‘Essex County Council mobilised the Essex Welfare Service (now known as the Essex Wellbeing Service) in March 2020 with the aim of deploying food and medical supplies and supporting people’s wellbeing during lockdown and in recovery from COVID-19. This involved:

- Deploying emergency supplies to those people identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable who had not received food supplies from Central Government
- Working with over 3,000 volunteers to provide shopping for people who were unable to do so themselves
- Working with the district, borough and city councils through community hubs to connect people to volunteers and services that provided support with food, (be it through shopping or direct food bundles)
- Funding foodbanks to support the most vulnerable members of our community.

It must be remembered that ECC moved away from providing a ‘meals on wheels’ service because of the falling demand from residents, which led inevitably to the meals merely being delivered without the social interaction that residents so appreciate. We are working with local communities to promote the ‘more than meals’ offering to which you refer, as evidenced by the grant schemes that have been announced. One of these provides a facility for local councillors to provide funding to organisations and community groups in their own area, for the very purposes you describe. We believe that councillors, faith groups and other

community organisations are the best placed to identify where the hidden needy are.'

5. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

'Two-thirds of schools have students who are self-isolating. Government statistics reveal that almost two in three secondary schools in England had at least one student self-isolating as a result of potential contact with Covid-19 last week. Nearly two-thirds of secondaries are sending pupils home and we have a chaotic system rota system by default.

Schools need to give the latitude to move to a planned system. Teacher absence also mean many schools face closures. The impacts of loss of schooling over the pandemic is going to have an enormous impact on those students who are taking exams this year.

Can we as a County Council put pressure on the Government to decide what form of attainment is going to be used in England (Scotland and Wales students already know what they will be assessed on) so that students can feel more confident about their expectations and teachers know what they are going to base the assessments on.'

Reply

'I share the concerns raised about the impact of further loss of in school learning on pupils this year, especially on those taking exams in the summer of 2021. As a result I wrote to the Secretary of State for Education on 13 November 2020 to request urgent information is provided by the DfE in respect of the contingency arrangements that will need to put into place to ensure a fair and equitable examinations system for all pupils next summer. The letter was copied to the Schools' Minister and Children's Minister. We are awaiting a response to my letter.

In addition, the government last week issued further information around their plans for exams for 2021 to address the disruption faced by students during the pandemic.'

6. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

'Home schooling numbers are up by 38%. A survey of 151 councils by the Association of the Director of Children's Services (ADCS) has found that the number of home-schooled children in England has risen by 38% year-on-year from 54,656 on 1 October 2019 to 75,668 on the same date this year.

Councils have reported that fears around Covid-19 were the top reason given by parents for home-schooling their children with many parents saying that they would send their children back to school once they feel it is safe to do so.

The ADCS 'want to be able to support these families to make an informed choice

and are equipped to offer a good and broad education' but cautioned that without a statutory register it is impossible to know every child or young person who is being electively home educated.

We know the impacts of the pandemic will be far reaching for all of us and especially for our young children. We realise this also will come with safe-guarding issues. Over this period, we feared an invisible crisis and that abuse and other issues were going unnoticed behind closed doors and it has been reported that since the first lockdown has ended, we have seen a rise in referrals to Children's Social Care.

Can we put pressure on the Government to revisit, at the earliest convenience, the response to a 2019 Department of Education consultation on setting up a register of children and young people who are not educated in school?'

Reply

'The Education Select Committee recently conducted an Inquiry/Call for Evidence, specifically linked to the topic of 'home education'. Essex County Council submitted, at the start of November 2020, a thorough response to this Inquiry and, on the matter of setting up a mandatory register of all home educated children and young people, we stated the following:

To reiterate some of the points made within our responses to previous DfE consultations/calls for evidence on this exact point, Essex County Council would welcome a duty to maintain a register of ALL children and young people who are home educated within our jurisdiction for the following reasons:

In Essex a voluntary registration scheme is in operation and we do not believe that this has been fully utilised by our local home education community. Our available data shows that on 1 October 2020, we had 2018 children and young people, falling within cohorts Reception through to Year 11 registered in Essex as home educated. This is compared to 1,578 on the same date in 2019 and 1,510 on the same date in 2018 - an increase of 33.64% over two years.

It is our view that the advantages of mandatory registration of children educated at home (with duties on both local authorities and parents in this respect) would be:

- all children and young people will be known to the local authority whose jurisdiction within which they reside. Local authorities will be better-equipped to safeguard their children and to ensure that the right level of school places are available, should parents elect to return their children to the school system at any point;
- the local authority would be in a position to ensure that all key services available to children and young people are aware of every child that is eligible for their services. Currently, much information is shared by these services via schools but children and young people not on roll at a school are not in receipt of information which may be of use to them. By introducing mandatory registration, a fairer system can be introduced by local authorities to address this current issue.
- Currently, home educating families are able to move from the jurisdiction of

one local authority to another, without any expectation that they notify each relevant authority of their move. This leads to families 'falling off the radar' and causes significant work for local authorities who are forced to follow their 'children missing education' procedures in attempts to locate families who are found to have left their jurisdiction, often after some time has passed. By placing joint duties on both local authorities and parents, in respect of mandatory registration, any such provisions should include the need for families to alert their local authority when any significant changes to contact details take place e.g. address, email address, telephone contact number, etc.

I hope that the above information evidences that, as a local authority, we continue to urge the Department for Education to review existing practices and systems that are in place in respect of elective home education. We are taking every available opportunity to share our views in respect of the need to introduce a mandatory register to allow all local authorities to be better-informed regarding the size of their local home educated cohort and to enable them to plan, resource and safeguard this specific cohort as effectively as possible.'

7. By Councillor Davies of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'Will the Cabinet Member commit to reviewing the parameters and methodology for Essex speed surveys, in order to bring in lower speed limits and traffic calming measures based on safety?'

Reply

'I thank the member for Laindon Park and Fryerns for his question on Essex Speed Surveys.

The methodology for Essex Speed surveys is designed purely to collect accurate data which then can inform decision making. The Essex Speed Strategy sets out the policy for that decision making and it is in the process of being reviewed.

Since the last full council, I have had a meeting with officers to discuss the Essex Speed Strategy to start the review process and make it fit for purpose. We will also be bringing in Hertfordshire County Council Officers in the new year to discuss how they changed their policy to be more effective with their strategic aims such as sustainable transport and clean air.'

8. By Councillor Scordis of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'Could I ask the portfolio holder to confirm the extent of ongoing works to resolve the flooding of Haven Road, Colchester at high tide?'

Reply

‘I thank the member for Abbey for his question on Haven Road, Colchester.

This is a longstanding problem and not one that can be solved by highways alone. ECC have a coordinating role as the Lead Flooding Authority and we have investigated several potential mitigation measures to try and address this issue over the last few years. After extensive feasibility studies, we delivered a flood alleviation scheme immediately upstream of Haven Road which has reduced flood risk to several residential properties. This involved reinforcing and ‘straightening’ an existing culvert to make it more hydraulically efficient. However, in relation to the flooding of Haven Road itself (downstream of our scheme), none of the proposed solutions were financially viable, meaning we have been unable to resolve this issue.

Water is constantly running through the whole system and discharging into the River Colne. When the tidal flap is shut, the water cannot outfall into the river meaning, backs up and floods Haven Road. We’ve explored the possibility of increasing the number of outfalls discharging into the River Colne, installing pumping stations to get the water away from the low point on Haven Road and increasing the capacity of the upstream Distillery Pond. All of these would be extremely difficult to deliver and very costly.

Officers continue to look into this issue and work collaboratively with partners to explore what options there are to solve this longstanding issue.’

9. By Councillor Durham of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate, Culture and Communities

‘Can I ask the Cabinet Member to confirm that library membership is open to all Essex children free of charge and that Essex County Council will continue to offer the Book Start programme throughout the county.’

Reply

‘Library Membership is open to all Essex children and adults free of charge and we are committed to continuing to offer the Bookstart Programme across the county. Bookstart is a national book gifting programme that offers free book packs for every child and guidance materials for parents and carers. The packs help families develop a daily reading habit at home and give every child a flying start in life.

In 2019-20 we gifted 15,006 Baby book packs (91% of the birthrate of 16,550) and 19,808 Treasure book packs, for children aged 3 (100% of eligible children). Despite a small pause as a result of COVID, we have continued to run the Bookstart programme this year.’

10. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

‘Local school, Thomas Lord Audley has reported the good news that more students

than ever are cycling to school. It does create an issue for them though, as their existing storage facility for 60 bikes is insufficient. They've also said that they have limited money to match-fund anything that external funders such as ECC might contribute, claiming the money needs to be focused on the education of disadvantaged students.

A new cycle shelter is needed. They range in value from about £9,000 up to £21,000, both without VAT.

Are there any funding streams that the portfolio holder is aware of, other than the Local Highways Panel, which could contribute to this cost? Is there anyone else you would recommend asking about funding or could Essex County Council portfolio holders provide assistance?

Reply

'It is really positive that more children are cycling to school than ever before at Thomas Lord Audley.

I have made some enquiries, there is, however, no funding available for such projects within the education portfolio. As the school is an academy it receives its funding directly from government and is responsible for its own budgeting.

One thing to consider is whether Cllr Harris might want to use some of the £10k County Council members locality funding that he received for local projects to help with the school's expenses.'

11. By Councillor Scordis of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

'Can the portfolio holder provide me with an update on the local test and trace scheme please? Specifically, how effective is it? And what could be improved about the system moving forward?'

Reply

'Essex and Southend Contact Tracing Service (ESCTS) was set up to work closely with PHE Local Health Protection Teams to manage exposures, clusters and outbreaks in settings such as schools, universities, businesses, care homes and health care settings.

It is well thought of regionally and nationally and was asked to support Norfolk County Council around poultry farm outbreaks some weeks back.

The service also took over responsibility for what are called the 'Lost to Follow Up' cases (LTFU) from the national team on the 24/10/20. In doing so, ESCTS has improved the rate of positive cases successfully closed from 69% on the 24/10/20 to 86% on the 27/11/20

The number of settings and 'Lost to Follow Up' cases has significantly increased

over time; the service dealt with in excess of 1,800 incidents in different settings in November. A number of service developments are currently underway including increasing capacity, providing backward contact tracing and welfare calls to all positive cases, and contacting all asymptomatic contacts of positive cases and encouraging them to get tested. This involves an additional £1.6m investment by Essex County Council.'

12. By Councillor Mackrory of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'Can the Cabinet Member explain the process for determining the order of repair for the '50 Worst pothole' procedure within a Division? The question arises after potholes were repaired in one road in my Division on one day but another group in an adjacent road were repaired a week later and others mid-way between are still waiting as are others elsewhere in Springfield?'

Reply

'I thank the member for Springfield for his question on the Member-Led Pothole Scheme.

The County Member might remember that this was covered in my note that launched the scheme where I advised that the highways teams would look to assess the requests to be delivered alongside other highways activities until the end of project which is due to finish at the end March 2021. I have added the notes that Members might find helpful below.

Members will no doubt appreciate that each defect needs to be considered for repair taking the road, speed limits and surrounding conditions into consideration. This also means that different traffic management and permitting requirements may be required.

The team are circulating a weekly email to all councillors advising them of road repairs that are happening in the following week too.

For information:

- a. Repairs will be grouped into areas that will benefit from the same method for repair, so we gain the greatest efficiency of operations. This may mean that repairs may be made at different times/dates, in different parts of your division. We will try to let you know ahead of time when repairs will be carried out so that you can attend if desired.
- b. Where your list identifies a fault that we already know is already going to be resolved through a future confirmed programme of work such as major resurfacing, we will inform you.
- c. Some faults may meet our criteria for 'making safe' urgently, in which case we will do that urgently as we cannot compromise road users' safety.
- d. Repair crews will, where possible, repair adjacent carriageway defects where the defect is also inside the marked traffic management zone, and when the gang have the right materials and equipment immediately to hand. This may mean that

- you get more defects repaired nearby in one road than you had listed.
- e. Scheduling and completion of works will be subject to prevailing weather conditions.
- f. We will maintain all necessary social-distancing guidelines related to Covid-19.'

13. By Councillor Mackrory of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'Can the Cabinet Member ensure that highways works contractors remove their signage once the works are complete? For example in Epping High Street two road works signs have been propped up against a speed camera sign for two years and at the southern end of Main Road, Great Leighs a large 'Road closed ahead' sign has been prominently displayed for well over a year. Apart from being unsightly this leads to drivers doubting the relevance of current warning signage.'

Reply

'I thank the member for Springfield for his question on removing signage after works are completed.

Under the legislation governing roadworks, and through our roadworks permit scheme, ECC is able to impose a financial penalty on any organisation that leaves signage or other materials on the highway once they have completed works. We have a team of roadworks inspectors who undertake a variety of inspections of sites, who will pick up as many of these issues as possible; however, it is always helpful if these things can be reported to us so that we can direct the inspectors to specific issues/locations.'

14. By Councillor Baker of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families

'The Chief Executive of East Anglian Children's Hospice (EACH) has publicly stated that the hospice is in need of additional funding if it is to continue to provide the high quality health care for the children and young people of East Anglia who have life-limiting conditions or who require end-of-life care.

I understand that the National Health Service (NHS) currently provides 17 percent of the necessary funding to the hospice and that the remaining 83 percent of the funding comes from voluntary giving. Due to the current pandemic, the voluntary giving has reduced drastically, and this vital service provided by the hospice for the children of East Anglia, which includes Essex, is asking the NHS to increase its funding.

My question to the Cabinet Member is:

Will Essex County Council, on behalf of the children, young people and families of Essex, write to the Secretary of State responsible for the National Health Service requesting that the NHS review its financial support for East Anglian Children's Hospice (EACH) in order to compensate for the reduced funding it is currently receiving from voluntary giving because of the pandemic, in order to maintain its

vital service of health care and support for those children and families in Essex requiring it.'

Reply

'Thank you for the question. While we have highest regard for the wonderful work that children's hospices do, we do not think it is in the remit of Essex County Council to seek to persuade the government to ask the NHS to allocate more money – particularly given the other huge strains on their resources at the present time.

We are, however, aware of considerable pots of money being made available to the voluntary sector by the government at this time and would suggest that this is where the hospices could consider looking for increased resources.'

15. By Councillor Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families

'Does this council have any concerns over the procedures to enable the Half Term Grants to be issued quickly?

Were appropriate checks on the details of the applications thoroughly checked and verified?

I do understand the necessity for speed and I'm sure the grants were welcomed by the successful charities. Many have posted photos on social media showing families eating or volunteers delivering bags of food. These tell a good story but it's not evidence.

With another funding stream now open, what checks are in place to ensure all the funding is actually spent on purchasing and providing of supplies for those families most in need?

Does this council have assurances from EALC that the successful charities will be required to provide evidence, such as invoices, on how their grants were spent?'

Reply

'The applications come from locally trusted organisations, many whom ECC teams already work with as well as the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC). Where there is an application, and the applicant is not known, then the EALC team will do additional checks and have a phone call conversation to find out more about the project.

There is a certain degree of trust as these not-for-profit organisations are going to use the funding to reach families and individuals most in need, for many they have been set up specifically to support the most vulnerable residents.

Officers have been managing the relationship with foodbanks across Essex since the beginning of lockdown and so we have a good understanding of the work they

deliver and how they target those most in need.

With the foodbank fund it is clear in the criteria what this funding is to be used for and there is a list of conditions that projects have to agree to. EALC are clear on the criteria and we get sent a list of applications each day and we have the opportunity to ask questions about any of the applications before an acceptance letter is sent out.

We check the expenditure and monitor this against the grant conditions set by the DWP to ensure that the fund is being used correctly. Third-party organisations must stipulate their estimates for target volumes they intend to achieve, and this is calculated at the end of the process to ensure that the funding is being used as it should.'

16. By Councillor Deakin of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'In Chelmsford we have a number of underpasses which link communities and key areas such as the city centre, railway station, bus station, schools and several industrial areas.

Every time there is a heavy downpour the underpasses flood and force people to have to cross some very busy roads, including Parkway, to continue their journeys.

Will the Cabinet Member expedite the clearing and cleaning of the drainage systems and associated gullies for these underpasses as the safety of our residents is paramount?'

Reply

'I thank the member for Chelmsford West for her question on underpasses in Chelmsford.

Flooding may occur after very heavy rainfall over a relatively short period means the drains don't have the capacity as water always finds the lowest point and this usually means subways flood.

Officers are aware of the importance of these underpasses and action is swiftly taken when problems occur, we are also aware that not all subways have pumps. It needs to be appreciated that a number of different agencies have a direct influence on the successful workings of the drainage systems given that Chelmsford City Council are the street cleaning authority and these systems discharge into a water authority outfall.'

17. By Councillor Abbott of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure?

'The recent closures of the A12 by Highways England for roadworks led to

significant disruption, several incidents of damage to ECC highways infrastructure (streetlights, a bridge, highway signs and verges) and damage to private property - all caused by HGVs diverting through villages including Rivenhall. The police, ECC Highways and UKPN all had to be called out several times.

Whilst the roadworks were necessary, surely the disruption and damage caused by HGVs was avoidable if better planning had been put in place?

Is ECC satisfied with the arrangements made by Highways England for the diversions - and what lessons can be learned for the future?

Reply

'I thank the member for Witham Northern for his question on Highways England's roadworks on the A12.

The A12 roadworks were part of Highways England's (HE) Concrete Roads repair programme and necessitated several periods of complete road closure. We know that disruption to local journeys was at times severe and yes, we do have some evidence of damage to assets on our network. We have to be careful here. Where it was an obvious consequence of the works, we will take these matters up with HE. However diversionary routes properly signed and used are a feature of such works, and the routes, whilst not always ideal, are the ones that have been used for many years. In some cases are the only ones available for the largest of vehicles which is why they are signed as they are. Better planning is always at the forefront of everybody's minds when things go awry, we have already spoken at member and senior officer level about the change to the road closure programme made at short notice and with ineffective on-street signing. We have reminded HE that although there are many social media and electronic means of conveying changes to programmes of work these cannot be assumed to be read by the public at very short notice. To be fair to HE, managers were attempting to compress the works programme to save on the need for further road closures later in the month. I think we have to remember that if we want an efficient programme of work that responds to circumstances that this may come with short notice changes to traffic management. The alternative is to stick to an original schedule even when it is obvious that work could be completed more efficiently and in shorter time. We will review the diversionary routes with HE especially with the road widening in mind. We will look for alternatives but ultimately in many cases the options are limited and we do have to sign routes for the largest vehicles on the network although drivers of smaller vehicles will inevitably use their sat navs to use other routes.'

18. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families

'I am sure the Portfolio Holder for Children and Families is aware of Tendring District Council's recently published 2020-25 Housing Strategy. The publication refers to Government welfare reforms in recent years and highlights how they have impacted on the lives of children and families living within the Tendring District.

The publication states that 'There have also been a number of welfare reforms in

recent years that have impacted on the housing market and the lives of residents in the district.'

Tendring has suffered disproportionality from benefit cuts, the spare room subsidy, the introduction of universal credit, the freezing of the local housing allowance and the reduction of Council Tax Benefits. Consequently, it has increased deprivation and has a high prevalence of mental health disorders in children, which is not surprising given the high levels of child poverty and deprivation in the district. Mental health disorders in children have an impact on educational attainment and Tendring generally ranks poorly compared to the rest of Essex in terms of educational attainment.

Can I ask the Portfolio Holder, having now been made aware of the hard evidence highlighting how recent welfare reforms are having a serious, lasting impact on the lives of children and families living within this county, does she still stand by her publicly made statement that: "These are promising times and it is great to see the Conservatives tackling the issues that really matter; cutting benefits..."?"

Reply

'I stand by what I said in 2015, which was a blog that I wrote in relation to the first 100 days of the Conservatives winning the general election. The government's approach through universal credit, replacing the out-dated, bloated and complicated benefits system, combined with support for return to work, has clearly developed greater opportunities for people to enter employment and be rewarded for it. Indeed, the UK employment rate was estimated at a joint record high of 76.6% between January and March 2020. This means more people able to earn a living, start careers and become more self-reliant.

In March 2020, the whole world entered a once in a century pandemic which obviously has had a vast impact on the economy, employment, needs and welfare of communities. The repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis will be felt for years to come. Using a partial quote from 2015 during an unprecedented global crisis is certainly taking things out of context.

The question appears to suggest that the challenges in Tendring have only come about since the Conservatives made changes to welfare and benefits, which we all know is not the case. Furthermore, whilst there is clearly much more to do, this administration at Essex County Council has done much to support the area and continues to do so. From building new roads to providing key programmes of intervention to help the most vulnerable.

In just the last year, we have supported families through the Working Families Programme, which is an ongoing suite of initiatives to help those families who are working or seeking employment. The summer camp scheme, which offered free childcare over the summer to families right across Essex was hugely successful and is set to be expanded further. I draw Cllr Henderson's attention to the holiday hunger programme and winter food money which is supported by vast investment from the government and the County Council. I led the introduction of a laptop scheme to provide children in need with the technology to do their schoolwork at

home. We have identified young people leaving care as a vulnerable group and are providing additional support for them and removed the need to pay council tax until they are 21. Finally, on 7 December, I will be in front of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee and will be talking to them about a new project specifically for the Tendring area, designed to focus additional resources and look at new forms of intervention for vulnerable families.'