

Public Document Pack
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date: Thursday, 11th January, 2024

Time: 6.30 pm

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Contact: Colin Gamble

Email: committeesection@southend.gov.uk

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 20 November 2023 (Pages 3 - 10)**
- 4 Minutes of the special meeting held on Tuesday, 12 December 2023 (Pages 11 - 12)**
- 5 Finance Performance Report 2023/24 - to end of November 2023 (Period 8) (Pages 13 - 82)**
Report of Executive Director (Finance and Resources)
- 6 Council Tax Base and National Non-Domestic Rates Base Setting 2024/25**
Report of Executive Director (Finance and Resources) to follow
- 7 Draft Budget Proposals - 2024/25 to 2028/29**
Report of Executive Director (Finance and Resources) to follow
- 8 Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting Report 2024/25**
Report of Executive Director (Finance and Resources) to follow
- 9 Corporate Performance Report - November 2023 (period 8) (Pages 83 - 110)**
Report of Executive Director (Strategy and Change)
- 10 Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (Pages 111 - 114)**
Report of Executive Director (Strategy and Change)
- 11 School Admission Arrangements (Pages 115 - 150)**
Report of Executive Director (Children and Public Health)
- 12 Toilet Cleaning and Light Maintenance (Pages 151 - 160)**
Report of Executive Director (Environment and Place)

13 Corporate Debt Management - Position to 30 November 2023 (Pages 161 - 210)
Report of Executive Director (Finance and Resources)

14 School Term and Holiday Dates (Pages 211 - 218)
Report of Executive Director (Children and Public Health)

15 Exclusion of the Public

To agree that, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

16 Confidential Appendix - Toilet Cleaning and Light Maintenance
Confidential appendix to agenda item 12 - circulated separately

Chair & Members:

Cllr T Cox (Chair), Cllr M Davidson (Vice-Chair), Cllr H Boyd, Cllr K Buck, Cllr J Courtenay, Cllr D Garston, Cllr D Jarvis, Cllr J Lamb, Cllr J Moyies and Cllr D Nelson

Public Document Pack
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Cabinet

Date: Monday, 20th November, 2023
Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

3

Present: Councillor T Cox (Chair)
Councillors M Davidson (Vice-Chair), H Boyd, J Courtenay,
D Garston, D Jarvis, J Lamb, J Moyies and D Nelson

In Attendance: Councillors D Cowan and L Hyde
M Marks, C Gamble, M Harvey, A Keating, A Richards, K Sawyer,
C Shuter, R Tinlin and K Waters

Start/End Time: 7.00 pm - 7.35 pm

55 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Buck.

56 Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was made:

(a) Councillor D Garston – Minute 62 (Crowstone Conservation Area Appraisal and Article 4 Direction) – A close friend lives in the proposed Conservation Area.

57 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 18 September 2023

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 18 September 2023, be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

58 Minutes of the Special Meeting held on Tuesday, 31 October 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the special meeting held Tuesday, 31 October 2023, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

59 Southend City Council Corporate Plan 2023-27

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) presenting the refreshed Corporate Plan 2023-2027.

On behalf of the Cabinet, the Leader of the Council conveyed his thanks and appreciation to both Councillors and officers for their contribution towards the production of an excellent Plan.

Recommendation:

That the Council be recommended to approve the draft Corporate Plan 2023-27, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report and that any final changes prior to publication be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Reasons for recommendation:

To ensure that the Council has a robust strategic plan which clearly articulates the priorities for the organisation enabling efficient use of resources.

Other options:

There is no requirement to have a Corporate Plan, but it is best practice and provides a helpful narrative to set the direction for the work.

Note: This is a Council Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been subject to pre-Cabinet Scrutiny by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

60 Resourcing Better Outcomes - Financial Performance Report For September 2023 (Period 6)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance & Resources) summarising the current forecast position at this half-way point of the financial year and reinforcing the need to make some difficult choices and take decisive action.

Resolved:

1. That the continued unprecedented levels of reported financial pressure and challenges right across the local government sector, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted.

In respect of the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Performance, as set out in appendix 2 to the report:

2. That the forecast outturn for 2023/24 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as at 30 September 2023, be noted.

3. That the plans and intentions to try to reduce the forecast overspend of the Council's revenue budget for 2023/24, be noted and that the Chief Executive and Executive Director (Finance & Resources) continue to explore all opportunities within their delegated powers and authority to improve the financial position by the year-end.

In respect of the 2023/24 Capital Budget Performance as set out in appendix 3 of this report:

4. That the expenditure to date and the forecast outturn as at 30 September 2023 and its financing, be noted.

5. That the requested changes to the capital investment programme for 2023/24 and future years, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.
6. That the Corporate Performance Report as at 30 September 2023, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report, be noted.
7. That the planned budget transfers (virements) of £2,710,000 from earmarked reserves, as set out in the report, be approved.
8. That a Working Group be established on a political proportionate basis to consider budget proposals for 2024/25 and future years, with nominations from Group Leaders to be notified to the Chief Executive.

Recommended:

9. That the removal of the footbridge over the Queensway highway be approved and the relevant budget be included in the Capital Investment Programme, as set out in paragraph 7.17 and Section 4 of Appendix 3 to the report, with the funding for this project coming from borrowing and that it be noted that the construction of the road layout included in the planning permission or any other major changes to the road layout will require a further Cabinet report before progressing.

Reasons for Decisions

To provide detailed financial information on the financial performance of the Council. The report sets out the key variances by budget holders and associated management action being implemented to address the identified issues.

Other Options

The Council could choose to monitor its budgetary performance against an alternative timeframe, but it is considered that the current reporting schedule provides the appropriate balance to allow strategic oversight of the budget by Councillors and to also formally manage the Council's exposure to financial risk.

Note: The decisions in resolutions 1 to 8 above constitute an Executive function and the recommendation in 9 above constitutes a Council function.

This matter is not eligible for call-in.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

61 Treasury Management Report - Mid Year (2023/24)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the mid-year Treasury Management Report covering the treasury management activity for the period from April to September 2023 and compliance with the treasury management strategy for that period.

Resolved:

1. That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Position report for 2023/24, be approved.
2. That it be noted that the Treasury management activities were carried out in accordance with the CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector during the period from April to September 2023.
3. That it be noted that the loan and investment portfolios were actively managed to minimise cost and maximise interest earned, whilst maintaining a low level of risk.
4. That it be noted that £3.130m of interest and income distributions for all investments were earned during this six-month period at an average rate of 4.41%. This is 0.32% lower than the average SONIA rate (Sterling Overnight Index Average) and 0.39% lower than the average bank rate. Also, the value of the externally managed funds decreased by a net of £0.561m due to changes in the unit price, giving a combined overall return of 3.62%.
5. That it be noted that the level of borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) (excluding debt relating to services transferred from Essex County Council on 1st April 1998) remained at £347.3m (Housing Revenue Account (HRA): £74.2m, General Fund: £273.1m) during the period from April to September 2023 at an average rate of 3.46%.
6. That it be noted that the level of financing for 'invest to save' schemes decreased from £8.22m to £8.13m during the period from April to September 2023.

Reasons for Decisions

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management recommends that Local Authorities should submit reports regularly. The Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2023/24 set out that reports would be submitted to Cabinet quarterly on the activities of the treasury management operation.

Other Options

There are many options available for the operation of the Treasury Management function, with varying degrees of risk associated with them. The Treasury Management Policy aims to effectively control risk to within a prudent level, whilst providing optimum performance consistent with that level of risk.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been the subject of pre-Cabinet scrutiny by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

62 Crowstone Conservation Area Appraisal and Article 4 Direction

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting an updated Conservation Area Appraisal for the Crowstone Conservation Area for consideration.

Resolved:

1. That the adoption of the updated Conservation Area Appraisal for Crowstone Conservation Area, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.
2. That public consultation take place on the Article 4 Direction proposed for the Crowstone Conservation Area and that a subsequent decision on confirmation of the Article 4 Direction be delegated to the Executive Director (Environment and Place), in consultation with the Executive Councillors for Arts, Culture, Heritage & Leisure and Housing and Planning.

Reasons for decision:

The Crowstone Conservation Area has been appraised as part of this work, to provide up to date evidence on the area and any issues affecting it. Public consultation was undertaken on a draft appraisal as part of preparing the current document. The appraisal provides an up to date management plan to help guide appropriate and sympathetic change within the area and highlight opportunities to enhance the character and appearance.

Other options:

Not to adopt the Crowstone Conservation Area Appraisal and take forward the Article 4 Direction. This would be contrary to the recommendations within the Appraisal, produced by independents heritage experts Purcell.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been subject to pre-Cabinet Scrutiny.

Cabinet Members: Cllr Jarvis and Cllr Garston.

63 Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses Conservation Area Designation

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting a potential new Conservation Area for designation at Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses for consideration.

Resolved:

1. That the Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses be designated as a Conservation Area.
2. That the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal for Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses and the addition of the properties within it to the Local List, be approved.

3. That public consultation take place on the Article 4 Direction proposed for the Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses and that a subsequent decision on confirmation of the Article 4 Direction be delegated to the Executive Director (Environment and Place) in consultation with the Executive Councillors for Arts, Culture, Heritage & Leisure and Housing and Planning.

Reasons for decision:

The proposed Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses Conservation Area has been appraised to provide up to date evidence on the area and make recommendations regarding designation. There have been two stages of public consultation during this process. The appraisal provides up to date management plans to help guide appropriate and sympathetic change within the area and highlight opportunities to enhance its character and appearance.

Other options:

Not to adopt the Conservation Area appraisal and take forward the Article 4 direction. This would be contrary to the recommendations of the Conservation Area Appraisal, produced by independent heritage experts Purcell.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been subject to pre-Cabinet Scrutiny.

Cabinet Members: Cllr Jarvis and Cllr Garston.

64 Healthy Lifestyles Improvement

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health seeking approval for the re-procurement of the Healthy Lifestyles services for a new contract in September 2024.

Resolved:

That the Healthy Lifestyles services go out to tender via the standard competitive procurement process to put in place a new service by 1st September 2024 at a contract value of £650,020 per annum for a maximum period of 5 years.

Reasons for decision:

If this decision was not approved, the contract would expire without replacement, likely leading to existing provider staff redundancies, and there would be a significant gap in necessary provision. The Council may not meet statutory duties and obligations regarding Public Health.

Other options:

Do nothing. This option was not recommended, as the Council would likely not meet statutory duties and obligations regarding Public Health, the contract would expire without replacement, likely leading to existing provider staff redundancies, and there would be a significant gap in necessary provision.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been subject to pre-Cabinet Scrutiny by the People Scrutiny Committee.
Cabinet Member: Cllr Moyies

65 Notices of Motion referred by Council held on Thursday 7th September and Thursday 19th October 2023

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) concerning the Notice of Motions referred to it by Council at its meetings on 7th September and 19th October 2023. These related to:

- Securing a future for Southend United Football Club
- Rail Ticket Office closures
- Enhancing practices on Animal Welfare
- Belfairs Park
- Sheltered Accommodation Heating and Energy Efficiency Improvements
- Urban Trees
- Southend Council Financial Situation

Resolved:

Notice of Motion – Securing a future for Southend United Football Club

1. That, as this matter has now been superseded given that a buyer is progressing with the purchase of the club, the Notice of Motion be noted and no further action be taken at this time.

Notice of Motion – Rail Ticket Office Closures

2. That, as the Government has asked train operators to withdraw their proposals the Notice of Motion be noted and no further action be taken at this time.

Notice of Motion – Enhancing Council Practices on Animal Welfare

3. That the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Working Party for consideration.

Notice of Motion – Belfairs Park

4. That the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Working Party for consideration.

Notice of Motion - Sheltered Accommodation Heating and Energy Efficiency Improvements

5. That the Notice of Motion be referred to the Housing and Planning Working Party for consideration.

Notice of Motion – Urban Trees

6. That the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Working Party for consideration.

Notice of Motion – Southend Council Financial Situation

7. That the Leaders of all the Groups write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor and Secretary of State of Local Government concerning the financial position facing local Councils.

Reasons for decisions:

To respond to the Notices of Motion.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function

This matter is not eligible for call-in.

Cabinet Members: Cllr Cox, Cllr Buck, Cllr Davidson, Cllr John Lamb and Cllr Garston

66 Recommendation of Traffic Regulation Working Party from its meeting held on 26th October 2023

The Cabinet considered the recommendation from the Traffic Regulation Working Party held on 26th October 2023 concerning the criteria for determining applications for Controlled Parking Zones/Schemes.

Resolved:

That the recommendation to review the criteria for determining applications for Controlled Parking Zones/Schemes to enable each scheme to be determined on its own merits rather than on safety priority order, be approved.

Note: This is an Executive Function

This matter is not eligible for call-in.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Buck

Chair: _____

Public Document Pack

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 12th December, 2023

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

4

Present: Councillor T Cox (Chair)
Councillors M Davidson (Vice-Chair), H Boyd, K Buck, J Courtenay,
D Garston, D Jarvis, J Moyies and D Nelson

In Attendance: Councillors S Aylen, R Longstaff and R Woodley
K Sawyer, C Shuter, M Harvey, J Chesterton, C Gamble and
A Richards

Start/End Time: 7.00 pm - 7.55 pm

67 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lamb.

68 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

69 Budget 2024/25 - Councillor Budget Ideas and Budget Proposals

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) setting out the ideas from Councillors to help address the financial challenges the Council is facing for 2024/25 and the medium term.

The report also drew attention to the decision of the Cabinet on 31st October 2023 to approve the increase in fees and charges from April 2024 (Minute 51, refers). It was now proposed that the implementation date for the increase in fees and charges be brought forward to 1st January 2024 to urgently assist with the in-year projected overspend reported to Cabinet on 20th November 2023.

In considering the Councillor suggestions the Cabinet noted that the idea put forward for the introduction of new parking bays (page 20 – Appendix 1 of the report) was submitted by Councillor Woodley and not Councillor Dent as indicated in the report.

Resolved:

1. That the ongoing significant financial challenges facing the Council in the medium term and the valuable contributions made by Councillors in coming forward with a range of ideas to help plan for longer term financial sustainability of the Council, be noted.

2. That it be noted that the full range of Councillor ideas and the proposed way to deal with them accordingly, as set out by category in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted.

3. That the earlier implementation date of 1 January 2024 for the increase in fees and charges, as set out in the report, subject to the normal notification and consultation periods where required, be approved.

4. That the commencement of market testing, followed by procurement as necessary for the proposed commercial operation of the Pier, be approved.

Reasons for Decisions:

1. The key intention behind the report is to seek a way forward with the Councillor ideas that have been provided as part of consideration for the Council's budget. It will also help to inform the decision making needed to ensure the Council's medium term financial sustainability is maintained and robust budget setting for future years is achieved.

2. The challenge of delivering a balanced financial outturn for 2023/24 remains significant and some of these factors are contributing to increasing the scale of the financial challenge for 2024/25. The Council continues to try to reduce all non-essential expenditure and/or generate extra income. This priority must be achieved whilst ensuring that our most vulnerable residents are looked after appropriately, and our statutory responsibilities are effectively discharged. Improving efficiency and productivity is essential but the scale of the unprecedented financial pressures will inevitably lead to a reduction in the range, quality, cost and responsiveness of other discretionary Council services, as well as challenging our approach to statutory services. There is the need to consider all suggestions put forward to help support the delivery of a robust and balanced budget for 2024/25 and beyond.

Other Options

1. Not to progress with all or some of the Councillor ideas put forward in Appendix 1 to the report. However, this would need to be considered against the significant financial challenges currently being faced by the Council.

2. Not to progress with the earlier implementation of fees and charges but this would mean foregoing an opportunity to generate income to support the 2023/24 budget position.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

Chair: _____

Title:	Finance Performance Report 2023/24 - to end of November 2023 (Period 8)
Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	11 January 2024
Classification:	Part 1
Policy Context:	All corporate priorities
Key Decision:	No
Executive Director:	Joe Chesterton, Finance and Resources
Report Authors:	Pete Bates, Director of Financial Services, Caroline Fozzard, Senior Finance Lead (Strategy, Sustainability and Governance)
Executive Councillor:	Councillor Cox, Leader and Cabinet Member for Special Educational Needs & Disability

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The finance performance report is a key tool in scrutinising the Council's overall performance. It is designed to provide an overview to all relevant stakeholders at regular stages throughout the financial year. It is essential that the Council monitors its budgets and assesses its performance regularly to ensure that it is meeting its strategic objectives and providing value for money. This approach highlights where corrective action is necessary and reasonable mitigation is required to try to deliver a balanced financial position by the end of the year.
- 1.2 Proactive action, strong leadership and decisive decision making has helped to deliver a continued improvement in the overall forecast financial position for the Council for 2023/24. Despite this positive direction of travel, the challenges of increasing service demand and cost pressures remains. It is unlikely that a balanced budget will be achieved in 2023/24, without the use of some of our earmarked reserves which have been prudently built up over the years. This report summarises the latest forecast position and highlights the need to make some difficult choices now and across the medium term.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet notes the local government sector's reaction to the Government's Provisional Financial Settlement (issued 18 December 2023) (Appendix 1).**

That, in respect of the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Performance as set out in appendix 2 to this report, Cabinet:

- 2.2 Note the forecast outturn for 2023/24 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as at 30 November 2023 (section 6).**
- 2.3 Note the plans and intentions to try to further reduce the forecast overspend of the Council's revenue budget for 2023/24 and agree that the Chief Executive and Executive Director (Finance & Resources) continue to explore all opportunities within their delegated powers and authority to improve the financial position by the year-end (section 5).**
- 2.4 Note the potential requirement to use earmarked reserves to balance the 2023/24 budget (Section 5.4 and Appendix 2).**
- 2.5 Approve the planned budget transfers (virements) of £658,000 from earmarked reserves, as set out in section 5.69.**

That, in respect of the 2023/24 Capital Budget Performance as set out in appendix 3 of this report, Cabinet:

- 2.6 Note the expenditure to date and the forecast outturn as at 30 November 2023 and its financing.**
- 2.7 Approve the requested changes to the capital investment programme for 2023/24 and future years, as set out in section 4 of appendix 3.**

3 Southend-on-Sea City Council's financial situation

- 3.1 As reported in July 2023, the Council ended the 2022/23 financial year with the largest level of overspending since it became a Unitary Authority on 1 April 1998. Following years of strong financial management, the Council had sufficient reserves to cope with the impact of this outcome for that year as a 'one-off' critical event. Despite the improved financial performance and positive direction of travel summarised in this report for 2023/24, the reduced level of forecast overspending at November 2023 (period 8) is still too high and remains a threat to its future viability.**

- 3.2 The Council's financial situation remains challenging. It is in the best interests of the Council for all Officers and Elected Members to continue to work closely and collaboratively together at pace to control all areas of identified overspending and to ensure that any adverse variances are brought back as close as possible to the approved budget for 2023/24. Without this collaborative action, this 'in-year' pressure could continue to increase the forecast budget gap for 2024/25 and the future. The Council has a statutory requirement to approve a balanced budget and set the Council Tax level for 2024/25 by 11 March 2024.
- 3.3 Despite the difficult circumstances the Council has responded positively to the severity of the financial challenge it faces and still has its financial destiny and control in its own hands. It needs to continue to reduce the revised forecast level of overspending throughout the rest of the 2023/24 financial year, approve and then successfully implement robust savings plans to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25 and the future. A series of draft future budget proposals for consideration are reported elsewhere on this Cabinet's agenda.
- 3.4 Continued action is required to try to reduce all non-essential expenditure and/or generate extra local income. This priority must be achieved whilst ensuring that our most vulnerable residents are looked after appropriately, and our statutory responsibilities are effectively discharged. Like other Local Authorities we also need to consider how we deliver our statutory responsibilities and assess if changes can be made. The same principles have been applied to the development of ideas and proposals to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25. Improving efficiency and productivity is essential but the scale of the continuing unprecedented financial pressures will inevitably lead to a reduction in the range, quality, cost and responsiveness of other discretionary Council services as well as challenging our approach to the delivery of our statutory responsibilities.
- 3.5 To help to begin to address and close the estimated budget gap over the next five years the Council will continue to aim to achieve financial sustainability by growing local income sources and relying less on grant support from Central Government in the future. The Council will continue to work collaboratively with its partners, increase its focus on the delivery or joint commissioning of services in a targeted way to ensure that those in most need and who will receive the greatest benefit are the recipients of services. It is vital that we learn from our COVID-19 experience and tailor our services and working practices accordingly. The Council will also continue to take measures to reduce its cost base through the ongoing service transformation programme.
- 3.6 This report will focus on providing some detail and commentary of the financial variances at a portfolio level that are currently forecast for 2023/24. It builds on the information that was reported as at September 2023 (period 6) and highlights what improvements have been made but clearly demonstrates that further work is still required. It should be noted that these revised forecasts have been based on the best information we currently have available.

4 Unprecedented levels of financial challenge right across the Sector

- 4.1 The current national operating environment, particularly for upper tier local authorities has never been so financially challenging with numerous Councils announcing or giving warnings of financial distress. The Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement for 2024/25 was released on 18 December 2023 and if anything, it has increased the tension and genuine financial concerns right across the sector. **Appendix 1** captures some of the initial articles that highlight the general reaction to the details within the settlement.
- 4.2 The issuing of a section 114 (s114) notice was once unheard of and whilst a lot more authorities are highlighting the possibility, it is still a major undertaking which has huge consequences for the local authority concerned. It is effectively a declaration that the organisation is forecasting that it cannot meet all its financial obligations.
- 4.3 The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) now provide an option for local authorities in financial difficulties that are deemed to be unmanageable to apply for Exceptional Financial Support. In practice, this presents an intermediate step to avoid a s114 scenario. This action inevitably results in an escalation of direct intervention by DLUHC in the Council's management, administration and decision-making.
- 4.4 The ultimate consequences of issuing a s114 notice are serious and significant and would immediately result in the cessation of all but the most essential levels of expenditure and then only to meet the statutory minimum level of service and Council liabilities. There would also be the need to develop and deliver a comprehensive Council-wide financial recovery plan. This would need to be considered by a full Council meeting within 21 days of issuing the notice.
- 4.5 There remains widespread concern and risk to the continued delivery and level of public services in many local authority areas. The unprecedented levels of demand and huge increases in costs of maintaining statutory service provision, particularly for support and intervention for vulnerable children and adults has been at such a pace that discretionary universal services are continually being squeezed and are being forced to be significantly reduced to ensure some local authorities remain financially viable.
- 4.6 Given this combination of factors and unheard-of levels of financial distress being raised right across the sector, local authority networks up and down the country will respond to the Government's consultation offer on the provisional finance settlement and continue to press hard for recognition of the scale of the underfunding problem and the impact on local areas. Authorities are requesting more transparency and a fairer longer term funding deal particularly in the more deprived areas of the country, which are suffering most from huge increases in both the complexity and cost of responding to statutory service demand.
- 4.7 The fact that this scale of financial challenge is so widespread across the country remains of little comfort currently though as all Councils, including Southend-on-Sea, wrestle with maintaining the delivery of their key statutory responsibility to operate in a financially sensible and sustainable way.

- 4.8 An urgent budget update report¹ was considered at a Special Cabinet meeting on 31 October 2023. This was then supplemented by an additional report² that summarised a range of budget ideas and suggestions from Elected Members that was considered by Cabinet on 12 December 2023. The Council needs to continue to take decisive action to ensure good local governance of financial and operational decision making and for the future of the City.

Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement - 18 December 2023

- 4.9 The Chancellor of the Exchequer shared some headlines of the Government's 'borrowing, tax and departmental spending' plans that would feature within the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement during a key Statement to the House of Commons on 22 November 2023. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement itself was published on 18 December 2023, and it confirmed that the settlement would be for one year only and that it is based primarily on the Spending Review 2021 (SR21) funding levels. All the detail contained within the provisional settlement is essentially just confirmation of previously announced national Government Departmental spending totals that have already been factored into the Council's financial planning for 2024/25. The main national headlines from the provisional settlement are included within the main budget report, which is considered elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda.

5 Southend-on-Sea City Council Revenue Position – General fund

- 5.1 Due to the combined effect of major increases in core service demand post pandemic and the impact of inflationary cost pressures, the Council ended 2022/23 with a level of overspending that was higher than at any time since it became a Unitary Authority on 1 April 1998. The cost and service demand challenges have continued into 2023/24 and the financial challenge now and for the future is arguably the biggest in the Council's history.
- 5.2 In February 2023, the Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget requirement for 2023/24 of **£143.875M**. This report provides details of the current projected outturn position for 2023/24 based on information as at the end of November 2023 (period 8). In headline terms the Council's Corporate Budgets and Service Portfolios are currently forecasting a net overspend by the year-end of **£6.284M** for 2023/24, this is an improvement of **£4.483M** on the position reported at September 2023 (period 6) (£10.767M).

2023/24	Projected Overspend £M
Feb 2023 (Budget Approved)	-
July 2023 (Period 4)	14.040
September 2023 (Period 6)	10.767
November 2023 (Period 8)	6.284

¹ [Agenda item - Budget Update \(southend.gov.uk\)](#)

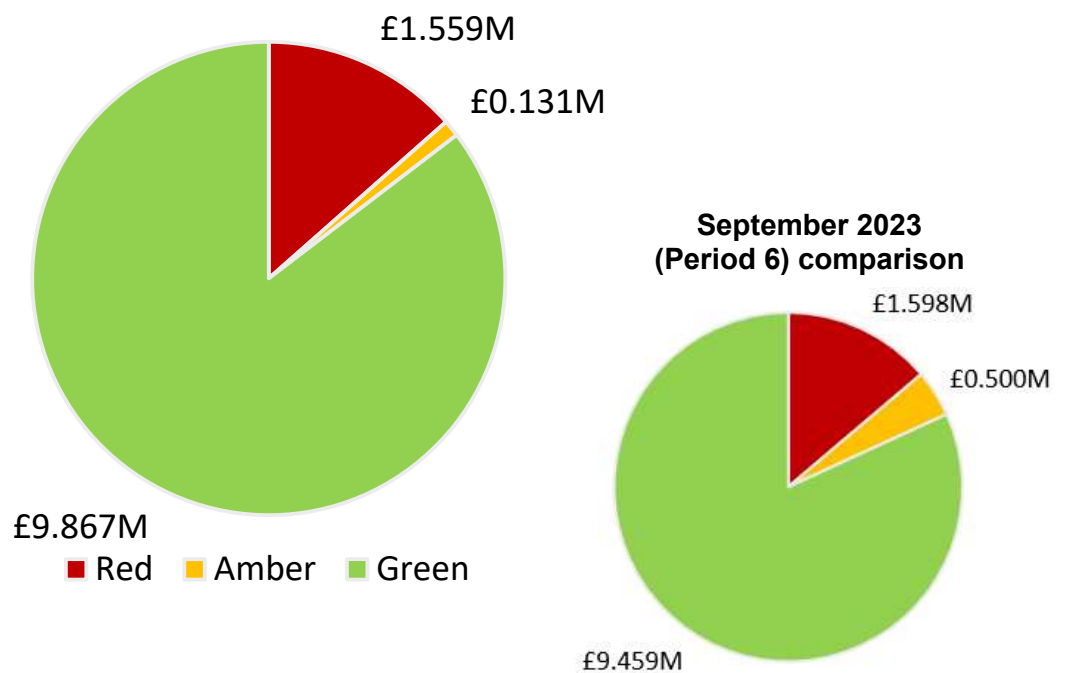
² [Agenda item - Councillor Budget Ideas and Budget Proposals \(southend.gov.uk\)](#)

- 5.3 This previous table clearly summarises a positive direction of travel, but more work is still required to try and reduce the currently predicted level of overspending within our front-line spending services as far as possible for 2023/24. Action is and will continue to be taken to further mitigate this revised potential overspend throughout the remainder of the year. The total projected overspend currently stands at around **1.8%** of the Council's gross expenditure budget. Whilst this improved position is encouraging it still represents a serious financial challenge to the Council.
- 5.4 Given the current forecast outturn position for 2023/24, the Council will have no choice but to use its earmarked reserves, which have been prudently developed over previous years, to cover any overspend that remains at the end of this financial year. The Council has proactively and intentionally established two specific risk reserves totalling £5M (£2.5M each) for Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, which will be called on first if required at the year-end, anything more than £5M will have to be taken from our corporate earmarked reserves. The total estimated impact (based on this period 8 forecast) has been reflected in the 2023/24 forecast reserves balances included in this report (**Appendix 2**). This results in an estimated total closing reserve balance for the City Council as at 31st March 2024 of **£71.2M**.
- 5.5 An initial series of Budget Challenge sessions for each Executive Director and their service leads with the Chief Executive, Executive Director (Finance & Resources) and Senior Finance Officers took place between 5th and 12th September 2023. A second round of challenge sessions took place week commencing 20 November 2023, with invites extended to include political Group Leaders. Key lines of enquiry for all services to identify opportunities for cost reduction, savings and income generation were explored. The outcome from these sessions have had a positive impact on the Council's financial performance for 2023/24 as summarised in this November 2023 (period 8) report and contributed to developing initial budget ideas and proposals for 2024/25.
- 5.6 The revised predicted financial position for 2023/24 and an evaluation of all action taken following the Budget challenge sessions has been represented in this report. A continued focus to drive down the reduced overspending levels further is still essential. Tightening the measures already introduced with even greater enforcement or changing intervention thresholds needs to be implemented safely. A range of opportunities are available to the Council to help drive down the overspend which include the following activities: -
- Target Operating Model (TOM) Changes, delayering of Management and Supervisors – full implementation of Organisation Design principles.
 - Recruitment freeze with approval for essential/critical roles only.
 - Essential spending only.
 - Close services/reduce services.
 - Continue to proactively manage service demand down where possible.
 - Driving real value from contract management, procurement and commissioning activity.

- Implementing fair and appropriate charging for all relevant services – inflationary increases where necessary.
- Removing part/all subsidy from discretionary services
- Risk managed commercial approach.
- Rationalise/reduce the overall running costs of our estate.
- Capital programme – stop, defer, pause.
- Clear service standards on highways asset management.

Summary of performance against savings and income generation initiatives

5.7 The 2023/24 approved budget included **£11.557M** of savings and income generating initiatives. Some further positive progress has been achieved from the previously reported September 2023 (period 6) position, as illustrated below. The following pie charts represent the current value of savings which have been categorised as Green – will be achieved, Amber – will be partially achieved or Red – unlikely to be achieved based on the current assessment of progress. It is critical that all approved plans are delivered, or alternative options are urgently developed.



5.8 Where savings or income generating initiatives are not currently being achieved, they have been highlighted in the relevant Portfolio service sections within this report.

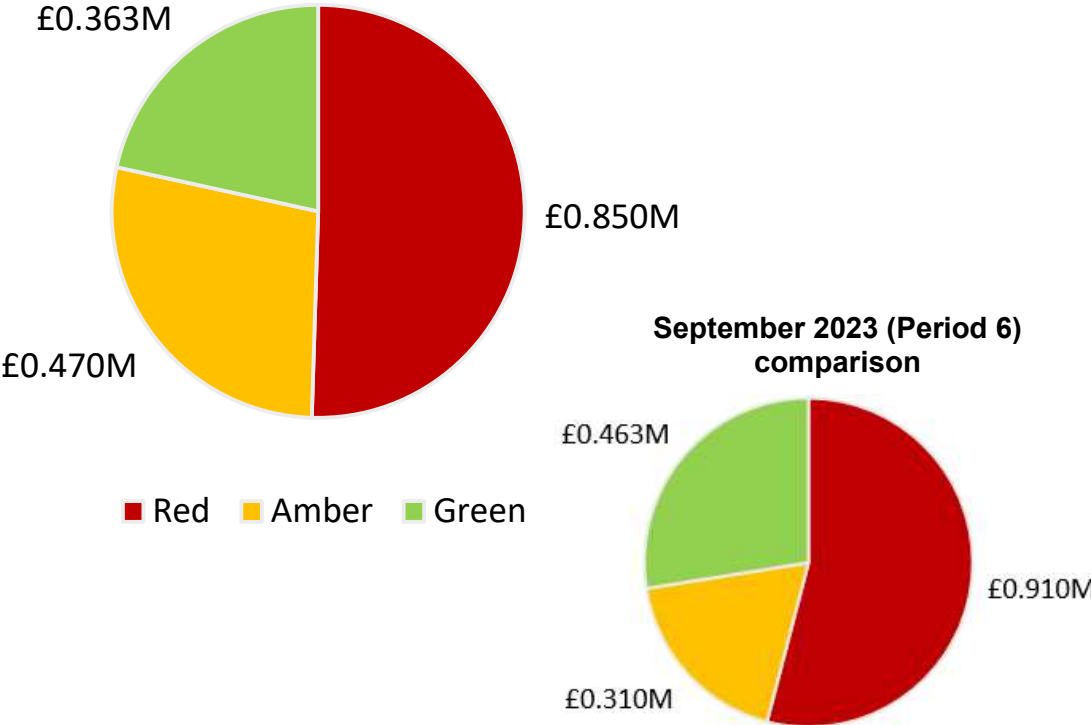
- 5.9 The following table highlights a summary of the initiatives that are currently classified as Red or Amber. Work is ongoing to try to improve the delivery of these areas and/or alternative proposals are being developed. A final summary of the performance against the initiatives will be provided in the Outturn 2023/24 report to June 2024's Cabinet meeting.

Reference	Title of Proposal	£000
EAP-01	Disabled Facilities Grant	250
EAP-06	System for management of sickness absence	25
ORE-09	Staffing Reduction – Digital & ICT	85
SOC-04	Review of public toilet offer with focus on securing external operator	150
IGC-03	Cremation and burial costs for non-residents	100
IGC-09	Sales, Fees & Charges (this includes a saving from 2022/23 ref. PY-FW06-SP)	471
IGC-11	Street Lighting Advertising Banners	40
PY-SW08	Introduce a new strengths-based refresh in 2021/22	200
PY-ES08	Better use of email for communication	3
PY-SW16-IS	Learning Disability Services Transformation	75
PY-SW17-IS	Shared Lives Expansion	10
PY-SW19-IS	Enhanced In-house Foster Care Offer	150
Red - unlikely to be achieved sub-total		1,559
ORE-04	Staffing Reduction – Revenues Service (£145k)	35
SOC-03	Review Travel Centre Operation / Closure (£40k)	27
TPP-04	Employee Assistance contract for service (£10k)	3
TPP-05	Occupational Health contract for service (£75k)	25
IGC-09	Sales, Fees & Charges (this includes a saving from 2022/23 ref. PY-FW06-SP) (£39k)	16
IGC-10	CCTV Control Room commercial activity (£25k)	20
PY-OP03	Park Sponsorship (£5k)	5
Amber – will be partially achieved sub-total*		131

** This amount is the value of the saving which has not yet been delivered, the original value of each initiative is shown in brackets at the end of the Title of Proposal. The difference of £208,000 between the original value of the initiatives (£339,000) and the undelivered amount of (£131,000) has been added to the total initiatives being reported as Green.*

Summary of performance against targeted overspend reductions.

5.10 When setting the budget for 2023/24 it was recognised that there were overspends of £1.683M which occurred in 2022/23 that would need to reduce in 2023/24 for the organisation to operate within the agreed budget. The operating environment experienced throughout the year to date has severely impacted the delivery of this ambition. The following pie charts represent the value of overspend reductions which were identified and have been categorised as Green – will be achieved, Amber – will be partially achieved or Red – unlikely to be achieved.



5.11 Where significant overspends are continuing to occur, or have increased, they have been highlighted in the relevant Portfolio service sections within this report. Most of the high values of continued pressure are within our statutory social care services for our most vulnerable children and adults.

Summary of the major factors contributing to the forecast overspend in 2023/24

5.12 The revised forecast revenue overspend at November 2023 (period 8) of **£6.284M** for 2023/24 is driven by a wide range of factors which are considered in more detail in the remainder of this section.

5.13 Budget provision for the nationally negotiated Pay Award April 2023 and inflationary increases on most existing contracts have now been applied appropriately to all services.

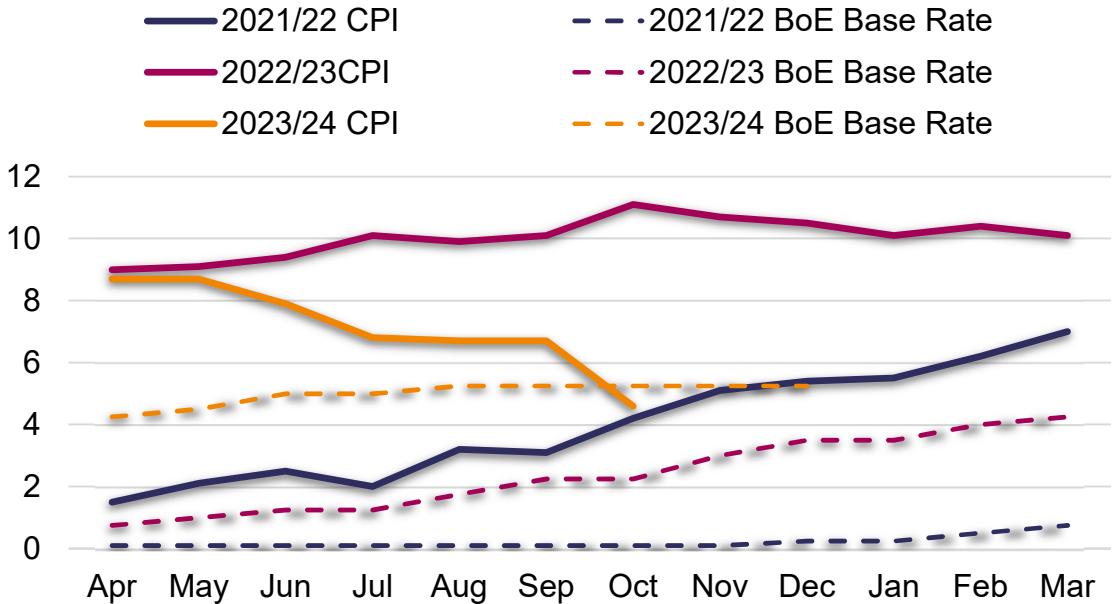
- 5.14 There is around £750,000 of the £4.425m provision for 2023/24 Pay Awards remaining, £250,000 of this is earmarked for the Senior Management pay award and some other pay scales where increases are yet to be agreed and implemented (e.g. Soulbury scale). £500,000 of the remaining provision is now being reported as an underspend within the Corporate Budgets line.

- 5.15 Inflation continues to drive costs upwards and although the price of energy has not risen as steeply as expected when the budget was set in February 2023 this has been more than offset by price increases elsewhere right across the supplier/provider market. There is around £450,000 of the £2.950m provision remaining which is being reported as an underspend on Corporate Budgets, this is a reduction of £474,000 compared to September 2023 (period 6), primarily due to the price indexation impact on the Highways contracts.

- 5.16 In October 2023 the rate of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), was 4.9%, down from 6.7% in September 2023. The largest downward contribution to the decrease in inflation came from housing and household services, where the annual rate for CPI was the lowest since records began in January 1950. The second largest downward contribution came from food and non-alcoholic beverages. Although the rates of inflation are lower than at the same time last year (see graph below) they are increases on already higher prices creating a cumulative impact that is stretching most Council budgets to breaking point.³

- 5.17 In its efforts to bring inflation back down to its target of 2% the Bank of England increased interest rates at every opportunity from December 2021 until August 2023, when the Bank of England Base Rate was 5.25%. They have decided to maintain this rate on 21 September, 2 November and 14 December 2023, meaning it will not change for a further 6 weeks, until at least 1 February 2024.

Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) and Bank of England (BoE) Base Rate



³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/october2023>

- 5.18 The increase in the base rate has driven up interest rates being paid on savings and investments. The 2023/24 budget reflected the projected increase with an additional £1.450M of income built into the budget. As at November 2023 (period 8) it is forecast that a further £2.101M will be earned, and this is reported as a favourable variance against Corporate Budgets in Appendix 2.
- 5.19 Rising interest rates are not entirely beneficial to the Council and will impact on the cost of borrowing over time. Perhaps more significantly they will affect residents' costs of borrowing (i.e. mortgages) and household bills (i.e. food and energy). It is likely that increasing numbers of residents will be pushed into a position of requiring additional Council services, advice and support over the coming months. A key risk that could add even further demand pressure on already over stretched services.

2023/24 Forecast Variance Comparison – Sept 2023 to Nov 2023

Portfolios	P6 Reported Variance £M	P8 Reported Variance £M	Movement £M
Leader: Special Educational Needs & Disability	0.780	0.672	(0.108)
Deputy Leader: Environment	0.465	0.441	(0.024)
Adult Social Care, Health, Public Health, and Constitutional Affairs	5.355	4.457	(0.898)
Arts, Culture, Heritage and Leisure	0.080	0.130	0.050
Childrens Services, Education and Learning	7.159	6.986	(0.173)
Community Safety and Public Protection	0.268	0.182	(0.086)
Economic Growth and Investment	(0.019)	(0.039)	(0.020)
Highways, Transport and Parking	0.649	0.492	(0.157)
Housing and Planning	(0.299)	(0.200)	0.099
Regulatory Services	0.312	0.385	0.073
Portfolios Subtotal	14.750	13.506	(1.244)
Levies and Precepts	0.049	0.049	0
Contingency	(0.400)	(0.400)	0
Provision for cost inflation	(0.924)	(0.450)	0.474
Provision for Pay Award	0	(0.500)	(0.500)
Financing Costs	(1.909)	(5.122)	(3.213)
Corporate Budgets Subtotal	(3.183)	(6.422)	(3.239)
TOTAL	10.767	6.284	(4.483)

The previous table clearly demonstrates a significant improvement in the overall forecast financial performance of the Council for 2023/24 since the last reported position as at September 2023. What is concerning though is the remaining high level of forecast overspending (**£13.506M**) across portfolios. This clearly means that the overall cost of delivering front line local services remains too high and it is essential that the Council successfully delivers the ambition to redesign its range of services to reduce costs in the short to medium-term. This will be essential to ensure the future sustainability of the Council. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the key pressures and status for each portfolio.

Leader: Special Educational Needs & Disability

- 5.20 Children with a special need and disability (SEND), is the main cause of the £130,000 spend pressure. There is a national shortage of Educational Psychologists (a critical statutory service supporting and advising both schools, parents and carers for children with SEND). Interim cover has therefore been required to sustain an appropriate statutory service level. These arrangements, together with increases in demand are the key contributory factors of the forecast overspend being reported. Recruitment and retention plans are in place to try to secure a permanent workforce moving forward. Smaller pressures also remain where direct SEND team cover is required for staff on maternity leave.
- 5.21 The forecast pressure in Human Resources has reduced by £113,000, this is primarily due to additional budget allocated from contingency to mitigate £104,000 of unachievable savings, the revenue base will be permanently adjusted in the 2024/25 budget to ensure the service remains on a more robust footing. A further £43,000 of savings are not expected to be achieved this year, these are deemed to be one-off pressures as the savings are part of larger projects that have experienced implementation delays but will be deliverable in the future. The service will not meet its annual income target, the final outturn for 2022/23 showed a shortfall of £74,000 and a similar pressure is forecast for 2023/24.
- 5.22 Legal Services had an approved staffing budget for the 2023/24 financial year of £1.14M. As at November 2023 (period 8) the forecast spend on permanent staff is £0.87M and the forecast spend on agency is £0.575M, giving a combined forecast overspend on staffing of £0.31M. This is an increase of £0.075m compared to September 2023 (period 6). The Legal Services team are currently undergoing a restructure within its existing budget envelope, this will hopefully lead to permanent recruitment and reduced expenditure on agency staff in 2024/25.

Deputy Leader: Environment

- 5.23 Residual waste tonnages increased significantly during the Covid pandemic but positively the tonnages the Council needs to dispose of is now forecast to return to comparable pre-pandemic levels as the volume is steadily decreasing compared to the same time period last year. However, the reduction of residual waste is not significant enough to deliver this service within its approved budget and a pressure of £700,000 is currently forecast. This amount could be decreased further by reducing the amount of residual waste presented by households which brings with it both financial and environmental benefits. This is currently being explored as part of the waste collection contract procurement.
- 5.24 The pressure of residual waste disposal is being partly offset by the income received from the disposal of food waste for which we receive an income. It is anticipated that this will be somewhere in the region of £300,000 in 2023/24.
- 5.25 Based on the income received last year within the Grounds Maintenance service and current income levels it seems unlikely that the service will achieve its income target in 2023/24. This is being offset by holding staffing vacancies and reducing the number of seasonal workers.
- 5.26 The trees and grass verges budget is forecasting an underspend due to efficiencies in merging contracts and amending the prioritisation of works across the estate with a primary focus on emergency works.

Adult Social Care, Health, Public Health, and Constitutional Affairs

- 5.27 Adult Social Care is now forecast to overspend by £4.551M, which is a reduction of £371,000 compared to what was reported at September 2023 (period 6). The primary driver of the movement is due to a review of Direct Payment account balances which are in surplus, this is resulting in an anticipated £300,000 claw back to date. The accounts have been reviewed to ensure that there is no impact on the Service User, as the underspend has been driven by the year-to-date underutilisation of their account.
- 5.28 The cost of support to Older People is forecast to be £2.776M overspent, this has remained static since September 2023 (period 6), with the pressure deriving from Home Care where several clients have a high level of complexity, which results in the need for double handed care. A range of residential placements which are costing above our contract rate, due to a lack of availability is resulting in additional cost pressures.
- 5.29 The forecast for learning disabilities has remained broadly the same as previously reported, with additional costs forecast for some transitions cases being offset by some backdated funding from Continuing Health Care (CHC).
- 5.30 A further £60,000 saving has been reported within Commissioning following the review of eligible spend against a government grant.

- 5.31 The Digital and Technology team has decreased the likely shortfall on income further since last reporting at September 2023 (Period 6), this has been offset by a small increase in the forecast for employee costs. The combined impact is an improvement of £20,000.
- 5.32 Mental Health reports a minor movement this month, predominantly due to the review of a contractual commitment with Health. There remains an ongoing pressure on the budget as the saving from the transfer of the service back from Essex Partnership Trust (EPUT) has only had a part year effect.

Arts, Culture, Heritage and Leisure

- 5.33 The September 2023 (period 6) forecast assumed the Director of Culture, Tourism and Communities post would remain vacant for the remainder of the financial year. Now the updated forecast reflects that this has been filled on a 0.5FTE basis, in addition to the inclusion of £25,000 of recruitment costs for the role. This has resulted in a £50,000 increase to the forecast.

Children Services, Education and Learning

- 5.34 As reported in both the July 2023 (period 4) and September 2023 (period 6), the significant spend pressure trend continues from 2022/23 into 2023/24 within Children Services. This is mainly due to a combination of Residential Care placement costs particularly for those cases that are most complex within a market that is stretched and short of supply (resulting in some very high prices) and the continued reliance on external foster care placements in 2023/24. The strategy remains to reduce reliance on external foster care placements by building and sustaining capacity within our own inhouse fostering service promoted by the new and improved inhouse foster care offer from April 2023. The cost of external care placements continues to be the main cause of this significant overspend pressure.
- 5.35 Whilst the safety and wellbeing of Children remain of paramount importance the Council continues to explore opportunities to reduce costs where it is safe and possible to do so. As previously highlighted the costs relating to residential care placements are significant and any further placements or net increased placement costs continues to have a risk impact on the remaining financial position reported the rest of this year.
- 5.36 Work building and sustaining capacity within the Inhouse foster carer provision continues and this is promoted by the new, improved and revised Inhouse foster care remuneration offer from April 2023, and work continues to engage regionally with the risks of the costs of the care market to Councils.

- 5.37 Other pressures within Children Services for 2023/24 (as reported previously) remain and includes continued reliance on temporary agency staff to cover critical statutory social work and certain critical social work management posts. There are further financial pressures including the national transfer scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum seekers where those children have now turned 18 and remain in supported accommodation whilst their asylum application is considered (as the Home Office grant to support their costs reduces once the child turns 18). Previously reported pressures for care and support costs for Children with Disabilities under Section 17 status are also continuing. Within the Youth Justice Service there is also a confirmed pressure on secure remand placements. This is due to the confirmed grant level now received for 2023/24, which is significantly lower than the actual costs being experienced. The HM Prison & Probation secure remand grant is based on the average of the last 3-years costs and therefore the Council expects to receive an increase in the level of grant for 2024/25.
- 5.38 Whilst significant financial pressure remains across this portfolio, within Education and Learning the position has improved further and reduced by £173,000 from September 2023 (period 6). Children Services have continued to review and where possible reduce spend pressure within supported accommodation placements where young adults 18+ who were previous care experienced children have transitioned safely into adults. Further work and detailed analysis is continuing.

Community Safety and Public Protection

- 5.39 As part of the 2023/24 budget package, it was agreed to review the public toilet offer with a focus on securing an external operator. This £150,000 saving will not be delivered this year, and the proposal is not currently being progressed. An alternative saving proposal has not yet been agreed but if one is developed and implemented then this pressure could be mitigated before the end of the year.
- 5.40 The current toilet provision also requires ongoing repairs and maintenance, it is anticipated that this will overspend by a further £45,000 this year, a reduction of £25,000 from the September 2023 forecast. The Council is exploring if it is possible to deal with some of this reported pressure through the capital budget allocated to public toilets.
- 5.41 Due to a diligent review of utility costs an investigation has been completed on the value of water bills across the toilet blocks and a credit note of circa £30,000 has been secured in this financial year.
- 5.42 The CCTV service is delivered by an established team of staff and as such staff turnover is very low. This is resulting in a budget pressure on staffing costs, due to an assumption that there would be some staff turnover. The drive to deliver services on a commercial basis is continuing but formal contracts are yet to be signed to bring in additional income.

Economic Growth and Investment

- 5.43 There has been no significant movement forecast since September 2023 (period 6).

Highways, Transport and Parking

- 5.44 Before COVID-19 there was a slow decline in the use of cash, but the pandemic sped that up considerably. As a result, a significant proportion of parking payment transactions are now made by card or phone app and the impact of that is higher costs for card transaction and processing fees. The overspend for this is expected to be in the region of £300,000 in 2023/24. Cash collection costs have not reduced to offset some of this as there is still some cash (although significantly less than in previous years) that must be physically collected from machines located across the City.
- 5.45 There continues to be a requirement to have security staff in place at the University Square car park. This is resulting in a forecast overspend of £120,000. It is intended that this security provision will be included in the new parking contract.
- 5.46 The parking enforcement contract is currently overspending by approximately £600,000 due to the volume of variable works undertaken by the contractor and changes made as part of the short-term extension whilst a new contract is procured. The main changes relate to an increase in the number of Civil Enforcement Officers and the wage increases they have received to retain staff. Alternative options will be considered as part of the procurement, including the potential for shared services opportunities.
- 5.47 Concessionary fares payments are linked directly to actual usage on local buses. Due to the reduction in journeys post-pandemic our financial contribution has continued to reduce. Based on the most up to date information the estimated position by the end of the year is currently forecast to underspend by £550,000.
- 5.48 The reported overspend at September 2023 (period 6) on the Highways (including maintenance) line has reduced due to the utilisation of an external capital grant which can be utilised for this purpose. Ongoing spend pressures in this area include a shortfall in the amount of staff time which is charged to delivering the capital investment programme which is being offset by additional staffing vacancies and an increase in income from PVX (private vehicle crossings) applications.
- 5.49 The operation of the Travel Centre in Chichester Road continues to bring with it additional cost pressures due to increased security, cleaning and utility costs totalling approximately £80,000. Contract changes have been put into effect to reduce costs, but this will only show a part-year saving.

Housing and Planning

- 5.50 The Building Control service exceeded their income budget last year due to some significant works coming into the team in early 2022/23. However, since September 2022 income has been down year on year. As this is a commercial service there is a risk that if the Authority cannot deliver the service on commercial terms the works will go to competitors in the market and we may struggle to obtain repeat business. At year end any residual shortfall in this budget will be funded via the drawdown from the Planning reserve which is earmarked to respond to this volatility in the market.
- 5.51 The Housing Benefit team (Benefits Administration and Essential Living Fund) continues to hold vacancies to try to help with the overall financial pressures across the Council whilst maintaining an acceptable level of service. The forecast has not changed since last reporting in September 2023 (Period 6) but any further significant increase in the number of Southend residents seeking support will be severe pressure on the team to maintain the statutory minimum levels of service for the rest of the financial year.
- 5.52 Following a review of the Disabled Facilities Grant and the staff time which has been capitalised to date, it has been identified that not all the work completed meets the criteria and thus must remain charged to revenue. This has resulted in an adverse movement of £87,000 this financial year.
- 5.53 There is an anticipated £186,000 overspend for provision of temporary accommodation due to the ongoing placement of a small number of rough sleepers in guest house accommodation under a non-priority power. This is funded from our Rough Sleeping Initiative grant however the overspend will be mitigated through housing reserves.
- 5.54 We continue to fund these places as each individual is vulnerable due to health, social care or other needs and finding onward affordable accommodation is a challenge however we want to prevent a return to rough sleeping. There are plans in place for each individual and we hope to seek appropriate 'move on's' to more sustainable accommodation in the new year.
- 5.55 This projected overspend is an estimate based upon current provision. The situation is very volatile, and the overspending could decrease if affordable 'move on' options can be secured sooner or increase if further pressures and requirements emerge. There are also additional pressures on statutory provision to homeless families which continues to increase compared to previous years. This is a major concern as we predict that this will continue to be a growing pressure into future financial years as demand continues to increase.

Regulatory Services

- 5.56 The Director role within Asset Management has been vacant all financial year and is earmarked for deletion as part of the 2024/25 budget setting. Acting up arrangements have been in place for much of the year and the team have been operating without backfill which has added to the staffing underspend. These reduced levels of staffing have a knock-on impact on the amount of time being capitalised against the budget, but the combination has resulted in a predicted underspend of around £190,000.
- 5.57 The refurbishment of the crematorium is underway and due for completion in March 2024 bringing with it greater efficiency, ensuring that the crematorium can function into the future and improving the environmental impact of the service. During the works and to minimise disruption services have been restricted to Tuesday - Thursday so that 4 days a week are available to deliver the scheme. Reducing the operating hours of the crematorium is resulting in a significant reduction in income over this 12-month period with current estimates forecasting a shortfall of around £635,000. This income reduction is expected to be temporary and when the crematorium is fully operational again it is expected that business and income levels will fully recover. In addition, the new equipment will be significantly more energy efficient bringing further cost avoidance by reducing future energy bills.
- 5.58 The Service Director is intentionally holding vacancies across his Financial Services teams to try and help with the overall financial pressures experienced across the Council. This is proving to be more and more difficult as the demands on the service continues to increase and the forecast underspend has reduced by £15,000 partly because of the team working additional hours.
- 5.59 The financial performance of the Property and Commercial service is forecast to remain consistent since last reporting in September 2023 (period 6).
- 5.60 Vacancies with the Regulatory Services team are intentionally being held for longer than anticipated in July 2023 (period 4) and as a result the expected underspend from these roles has increased to circa £180,000.

Corporate Budget Developments

- 5.61 The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is an amount to be set aside for the repayment of debt. The Council has a general duty to make an MRP charge to revenue which it considers to be prudent. The MRP Guidance sets out that such policies may be amended at any time, so long as the Council maintains a prudent and transparent approach whilst ensuring any changes are sustainable from a revenue budget perspective.

- 5.62 Following participation across the Chief Finance Officer networks and extensive consultation with our Treasury Management advisers, over the last few months opportunities have been explored to identify whether a more prudent MRP policy could be adopted. Our Treasury Management advisers undertook a review of the MRP policy which considered the Council's current method for calculating MRP and assessed the impact of adopting alternative options available that are fully compliant with the MRP guidance and regulations. The outcome of this analysis has only just concluded, following a rigorous assessment and evaluation of all viable alternative options.
- 5.63 The Guidance and legislation do not define what is prudent. It is for each Authority to determine a prudent repayment based on its own individual circumstances, considering its medium and long-term financial plans, current budgetary pressures, future capital expenditure intentions and funding needs. The Chief Finance Officer is content that the options to be taken forward will make an MRP charge that is both prudent and proportionate, given the severity and urgency of the Council's current financial situation.
- 5.64 A revised MRP policy for 2023/24 is included as an appendix to the main Budget Report for 2024/25 to 2028/29 elsewhere on this agenda, alongside the new MRP policy for 2024/25. The expected savings for 2023/24 (net of fees for the review) have been included in the forecast outturn in this report.
- 5.65 The forecast outturn for investment income remains higher than expected as interest rates have increased faster and by more than initially predicted. This is due to the Bank of England's response to the rate of inflation being slower to reduce than desired.
- 5.66 There have also been other movements across a range of financing transactions since the last position was reported at September 2023 (period 6), most notably for the recharges of interest receivable and payable between the General Fund (GF) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which have been affected by increasing interest rates throughout 2023/24. An updated 2022/23 final position has now been received by Essex County Council in relation to the Coroners Service, which has informed the 2023/24 forecast outturn position.
- 5.67 Other variances include: a surplus from business rates rebates regarding museums and galleries which is a one-off benefit backdated to 1 April 2017; a favourable variance regarding the amount of the original provision for the Local Government Pay Award that will now not be required; a favourable variance regarding the amount of the original provision for cost inflation that will now also not be required.
- 5.68 Altogether, this range of initiatives provide an overall net positive forecast variance for 2023/24 for corporate budgets of £6.422M. This represents an improvement of £3.239M from the position reported at September 2023 (period 6).

Budget Virements

5.69 All budget transfers (virements) over £250,000 between portfolios or between pay and non-pay budgets are considered and approved by Cabinet. These budget transfers have a net nil impact on the Council’s overall budget. The budget transfers for Cabinet approval this period are as follows.

<u>£</u>	
368,800	Improved Better Care Grant draw down carried forward from 2022/23 – one off 2023/24
289,200	Afghanistan Education Grant draw down carried forward from 2022/23 – one off 2023/24
<u>658,000</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>

6 Revenue – Housing Revenue Account

6.1 In February 2023, the Council approved a balanced 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account budget. This section of the report details the projected outturn position for this year based on actual activity and financial performance as at the end of November 2023 (period 8).

6.2 The forecast for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) at period 8 indicates that the service is forecast to underspend by £645,000 against the approved budget.

6.3 There are several areas of volatility within the forecasting of this position, including resourcing challenges on the delivery of voids work which have led to the need to use a secondary contractor resulting in a pressure of £180,000. Due to increasing interest rates the interest payable on the HRA’s share of the Council’s internal borrowing has increased by £500,000. The number of void units at Queensway had been increasing which was resulting in a higher rent loss than expected of circa £620,000. While new regeneration options for the Estate are being explored a new programme of works is now in place to bring a number of units back up to a lettable standard to meet local housing need.

6.4 The sustained requirement for rental income to be collected against a background of the continued challenging economic environment for local tenants is a key objective. Appropriate support and advice for any tenant that is struggling with keeping up with their rental payments continues to be provided. All these pressures are being offset by the interest payable on the balances held within the HRA, which due to the increased interest rates is due to bring an estimated additional £1,900,000 into the HRA by year end.

6.5 The assumptions within the budget forecast will continue to be reviewed and refined throughout the year and the key risks will continue to be monitored.

6.6 Any surplus on the HRA will be appropriated to earmarked reserves at the end of the year to be reinvested back into the housing stock.

7 Capital

- 7.1 Successful and timely delivery of the capital investment programme is a key part of achieving the Council's Corporate Plan and delivering priority outcomes. The investment contributes to the four main priorities in the following way:
- 7.2 A growing city with a strong and prosperous community – the key investment areas are: the Airport Business Park to deliver benefits for both local businesses and local communities, creating thousands of job opportunities and attracting inward investment; refurbishment works at the Victoria Centre to make a significant contribution to the attraction and amenity of the centre and improve and enhance that end of the City Centre; the Levelling Up Fund projects at Leigh Port, Cliffs Pavilion and City Beach; the refurbishment and enhancement of Southend's historic pleasure pier; the Council's ICT infrastructure to provide core services and to progress the Smart Council project.
- 7.3 A safe city with a good quality of life for all – the key investment areas are the schools' high needs and special provision programmes to enhance the facilities and number of places available for children with special educational needs and disabilities or requiring alternative provision. Key housing related investment areas include the construction and acquisition of new council homes and the refurbishment of existing ones via the decent homes programme.
- 7.4 A clean city with a resilient environment – the key investment areas are energy saving and efficiency projects; cliff stabilisation, coastal defence, flood prevention and resilience schemes; the investment in the City's highways and transport network, including Better Networks and Better Sustainable Transport projects funded via the Local Transport Plan.
- 7.5 A transforming council delivering efficient, cost-effective services – there is a project within the ICT capital investment programme to replace the My Southend system. Later phases of the project relating to system development are expected deliver efficiencies and improvements in productivity.
- 7.6 In February 2023 the Council agreed a capital investment programme budget for 2023/24 of £95.4M. The outturn for 2022/23 showed a final spend of £51.8M against a revised budget of £61.8M, an underspend of £10.0M. The proposed budget carry forwards, accelerated delivery requests and other budget re-profiles and amendments at July Cabinet resulted in a revised budget for 2023/24 of £101.7M. Budget re-profiles and other changes as a result of the review of the capital investment programme were approved at September Cabinet and November Cabinet and reduced the revised budget for 2023/24 to £97.0M, then to £59.3M respectively. Of this amount approved at November Cabinet £45.5M is deliverable directly by the Council and £13.8M is to be delivered by South Essex Homes Limited and Kent County Council.
- 7.7 This amount should be considered in the context that there is a further list of schemes that are not in the approved programme but are subject to viable business cases. This includes schemes where the costs have been estimated, totalling £87M and schemes that are yet to be costed. There may also be urgent health and safety works that might occur that are as yet unforeseen.

7.8 The Council is being impacted by the sustained and ongoing inflationary pressures which is affecting the affordability of capital schemes and therefore in some cases the Council’s ability to deliver all the expected outcomes. Given this, and the Council’s finite capacity to deliver capital schemes, the Capital Programme Delivery Board have considered how to review all capital projects and programmes and the status of their business cases. As a result all capital projects with a budget over £100k are being reviewed and assigned a RAG rating as follows:

RAG rating	Examples of the criteria to be used	Proposed outcome
Red	Project not yet started, no/very low costs incurred, low impact of stopping or pausing the project	Stop, delete the project or move it to the subject to viable business case section
Amber	A project or programme for which the scope can be adjusted, some work started and costs incurred (e.g. consultation started, planning permission sought), can be stopped or paused but implications need to be considered	Further review required
Green	Key political priority, urgent health and safety works, project underway and progressing well (i.e. materials delivered, contractors on site), time limited grant conditions	Continue

7.9 A generic approach to the programme as a whole would not be appropriate, as each project is different in its nature, extent and impact. The way that projects are funded also needs to be considered as grant and third-party funding would have to be returned if not spent or if delayed beyond the agreed expenditure timeframe. It is also recognised that these options need to be considered alongside any forthcoming capital challenge sessions.

7.10 The capital investment programme should continue to be subject to continuous review and re-prioritisation to ensure resources are aligned to the Council’s Corporate Plan, administration priorities and the need to deliver a balanced financial position. This will inevitably lead to some difficult decisions having to be made regarding the programme with the delivery of some schemes being scaled back, delivered over a longer timescale, paused or removed.

7.11 Progress of schemes will be reassessed, and some schemes may be removed from the main programme entirely and others held as ‘subject to viable delivery plans’ until it can be demonstrated that there is the capacity and resources to deliver them in the timescales indicated. Schemes can then be brought back into the main programme as and when it is appropriate to do so.

- 7.12 As this review progresses via challenge meetings, the Capital Programme Delivery Board and the Investment Board, re-profiles and other adjustments to the programme for 2023/24 and future years will be put forward for approval.
- 7.13 The results of the early stages of this review were included in the July 2023 (period 4) performance report to Cabinet in September. The review is on-going and comprehensive cross party capital challenge sessions chaired by the Leader took place in early October. This included the direction from Cabinet that if capital projects had not yet commenced this year, they would not do so (see the Red RAG rating in the table in paragraph 7.8). The resulting requested changes to the capital investment programme were included in the September 2023 (period 6) performance report to Cabinet in November. Follow up cross party capital challenge sessions chaired by the Leader then took place in early December. The resulting requested changes to the capital investment programme from those sessions have been included in this report.
- 7.14 Approximately 35% of the revised capital investment programme is financed by Government grants and external developer and other contributions and at the end of November 94% of that had been received. The rest of the programme is funded by capital receipts, the use of reserves or by borrowing. Funding schemes by borrowing has a revenue consequence of approximately £70k p.a. for every £1M borrowed.
- 7.15 This report details the projected outturn position for 2023/24 based on information as at the end of November 2023 (period 8). The report includes details of progress in delivering the 2023/24 capital investment programme and in receiving external funding relating to that year.
- 7.16 This report includes any virements between schemes, re-profiles across years, any new external funding, deletions from the programme and transfers between the main programme and the 'subject to viable business case' section.
- 7.17 The progress of schemes for 2023/24 is detailed in sections 1 to 3 of Appendix 3 with Section 4 setting out the resulting requests to:

For schemes to be delivered by the Council:

- Carry forward £4,453,000 of 2023/24 scheme budgets and £3,286,000 of 2024/25 scheme budgets into 2025/26.
- Accelerated delivery of £378,000 of 2024/25 scheme budgets and £195,000 of 2027/28 scheme budgets into 2023/24.
- Add scheme budgets of £369,000 into 2023/24 for new schemes and additions.
- Add scheme budgets totalling £268,000 into 2023/24, £591,000 into 2024/25 and £148,000 into 2025/26 where new external funding has been received.
- Delete scheme budgets totalling £2,000 from 2023/24.
- Action virements of budget between approved schemes.
- Transfer £850,000 of 2024/25 scheme budgets from the main capital investment programme to the 'subject to viable business case' section.

- Transfer £116,000 from the 'subject to viable business case' section into 2023/24 of the main programme.

For schemes to be delivered by Subsidiary Companies and Partners:

- Carry forward £500,000 of 2023/24 scheme budgets into 2024/25.

7.18 As at the end of November the capital outturn for 2023/24 is currently estimated at £42,810,000 for schemes to be delivered by the Council and £13,283,000 for schemes to be delivered by subsidiary companies and partners.

7.19 The 2023/24 capital budget is part of the wider capital investment programme spanning several years. The table below shows the revised programme if all the above requests are approved:

Programme to be delivered by the Council (GF and HRA):

	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
At November Cabinet	45,502	64,376	11,169	6,681	4,172	131,900
Amendments	(3,129)	(3,923)	7,887	0	(195)	640
Revised programme	42,373	60,453	19,056	6,681	3,977	132,540

Programme to be delivered by Subsidiary Companies and Partners:

	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
At November Cabinet	13,783	6,774	6,329	6,491	0	33,377
Amendments	(500)	500	0	0	0	0
Revised programme	13,283	7,274	6,329	6,491	0	33,377

8 Reasons for Decisions

8.1 The regular reporting of Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring information provides detailed financial information to members, senior officers and other interested parties on the financial performance of the Council. It sets out the key variances being reported by budget holders and the associated management action being implemented to try to address any identified issues.

8.2 It also informs decision making to ensure that the Council's priorities are delivered within the approved budget provision.

- 8.3 It is important that any adverse variances are addressed in order for the Council to remain within the approved budget provision or where this cannot be achieved by individual service management action, alternative proposals are developed, and solutions proposed which will address the financial impact. Members will have a key role in approving any actions if the alternative proposals represent significant changes to the service delivery arrangements originally approved by them.
- 8.4 The challenge of delivering a balanced financial outturn for 2023/24 remains significant. Continued urgent action is required to try to reduce all non-essential expenditure even further and/or generate extra income. This priority must be achieved whilst ensuring that our most vulnerable residents are looked after appropriately, and our statutory responsibilities are effectively discharged. Improving efficiency and productivity is essential but the scale of the unprecedented financial pressures will inevitably lead to a reduction in the range, quality, cost and responsiveness of other discretionary Council services, as well as challenging our approach to statutory services.

9 Other Options

- 9.1 The Council could choose to monitor its budgetary performance against an alternative timeframe, but it is considered that the current reporting schedule provides the appropriate balance to allow strategic oversight of the budget by members and to also formally manage the Council's exposure to financial risk. More frequent monitoring is undertaken by officers and considered by individual service Directors and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) including the implementation of any necessary remedial actions.

10 Financial Implications

- 10.1 As set out in the body of the report and accompanying appendices.

11 Legal Implications

- 11.1 The report provides financial performance information. It is good governance and sensible management practice for the Council to consider monitoring information in relation to plans and budgets that it has adopted.
- 11.2 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires the Council as a best value authority to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". Monitoring of financial and other performance information is an important way in which that obligation can be fulfilled.

- 11.3 The Council is required by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The Council is also required by section 28 of the Local Government Act 2003 to monitor its budget and take corrective action, as necessary. The Council's chief finance officer has established financial procedures to ensure the Council's proper financial administration. These include procedures for effective budgetary control. To comply with these best practice arrangements, it is important that Cabinet receive information and comment accordingly on the performance of the revenue and capital budgets as set out in the report.

12 Carbon Impact

- 12.1 None arising from this report.

13 Equalities

- 13.1 Some of the actions may have equality and diversity implications and these will be considered as part of our normal equalities impact assessments.

14 Consultation

- 14.1 Engagement has continued with staff, cabinet members and all councillors and this will continue as options to mitigate for 2023/24 are progressed as well as options for delivering a robust balanced budget for 2024/25.

15 Background Papers

Approved 2023/24 Budget – Report to Council 23 February 2023

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28

16 Appendices

Appendix 1 Summary of responses to the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

Appendix 2 Period 8 – November 2023 Revenue Budget Performance 2023/24

Appendix 3 Period 8 – November 2023 Capital Investment Programme Performance 2023/24

Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	18/12/2023
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	19/12/2023
Executive Director	Joe Chesterton	18/12/2023
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Cox	20/12/2023

This page is intentionally left blank

Summary of responses to the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement

Ctrl+Click on captions to follow links to online articles.

“Today’s settlement does not provide enough funding to meet the severe cost and demand pressures which have left councils of all political colours and types warning of the serious challenges they face to set balanced budgets next year.”

LGA statement on provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (18 December 2023)

“The County Councils Network... said that county authorities will be ‘bitterly disappointed’ by the announcement... [T]he absence of additional funding leaves its councils with ‘no choice but to implement more severe reductions to services and to levy higher council tax rises’, while ‘an increasing number of local authorities will struggle to deliver a balanced budget next year’.”

CCN Latest News (18 December 2023)

“Seeing the local government financial settlement... published in the last week before Christmas is not helpful. But even less welcome is the content of the settlement.

Local authorities right across England are facing unprecedented financial pressures – and all the independent analysis makes clear that the problems are systemic... The ever-growing number of councils issuing or warning of forthcoming s114 notices underlines the peril we face.”

The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (Solace Group) (18 December 2023)

“The real pain looks set to be from 2025-26 onwards.

2023–24 and 2024–25 are... tougher years financially for councils than economy-wide inflation figures would suggest.

But we’d hazard that the worst could be yet to come. ”

Institute for Fiscal Studies: The 2024–25 local government finance settlement (19 December 2023)

“Provisional local government settlement fails to ease long-term funding crisis.”

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) (18 December 2023)

“Today’s funding increase will not match inflationary and demand-led pressures... [H]alf of the increase comes from assumed council tax increases... There is nothing new to address the funding pressures in children’s services, the biggest pressure our members currently face... The final settlement in late January is now the Government’s last opportunity to provide councils with the funding and flexibility they need to stabilise their finances. If this is not done then there will be a surge of Section 114s next year.”

Special interest Group of Municipal Authorities (SIGOMA) (18 December 2023)

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2

Budget Monitoring & Reporting 2023/2024

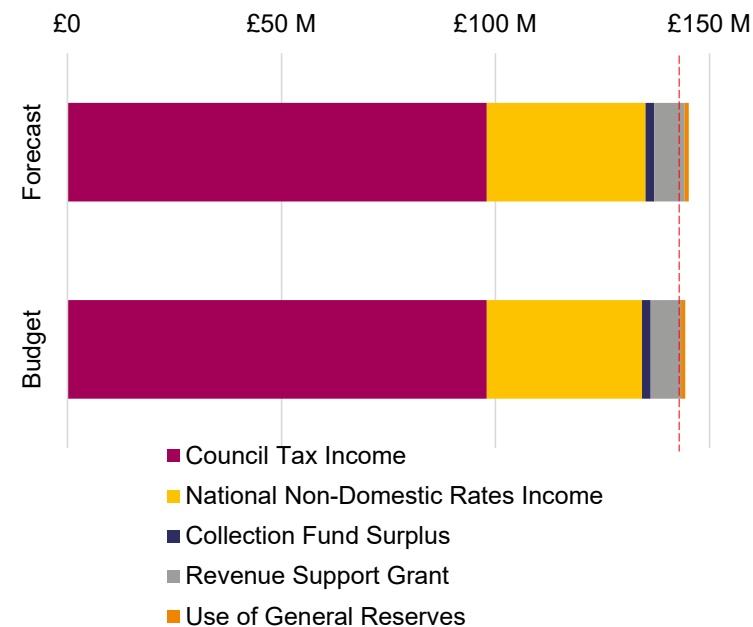
Period 08 - November 2023 Revenue Budget Performance



Summary

Last Reported Variance £M	Portfolio	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
0.780	Leader: SEND	18.006	18.678	0.672
0.465	Deputy Leader: Environment	20.618	21.059	0.441
5.355	Adult Social Care, Health, Public Health, and Constitutional Affairs	63.338	67.795	4.457
0.080	Arts, Culture, Heritage and Leisure	4.566	4.696	0.130
7.159	Childrens Services, Education and Learning	34.601	41.587	6.986
0.268	Community Safety and Public Protection	2.029	2.211	0.182
(0.019)	Economic Growth and Investment	1.263	1.224	(0.039)
0.649	Highways, Transport and Parking	0.290	0.782	0.492
(0.299)	Housing and Planning	4.286	4.086	(0.200)
0.312	Regulatory Services	2.540	2.925	0.385
14.750		151.537	165.043	13.506
(3.183)	Corporate Budgets	20.847	14.425	(6.422)
11.567		172.384	179.468	7.084
0.000	Contribution to / (from) earmarked reserves	(8.622)	(8.622)	0.000
0.000	Revenue Contribution to Capital	0.471	0.471	0.000
0.000	Non Service Specific Grants	(19.896)	(19.896)	0.000
11.567	TOTAL	144.337	151.421	7.084
(0.800)	Funding (including Collection Fund)	(143.337)	(144.137)	(0.800)
0.000	Planned contributions from reserves	(1.000)	(1.000)	0.000
10.767		0.000	6.284	6.284

Sources of funding



Portfolio services are forecast to overspend by **£13.506m**, an improvement of **£1.244m** on the position reported at September 2023 (Period 6). An analysis of these variances are explained in more detail over the following pages. The net overall forecast overspend has reduced to **£6.284m**, an overall improvement of **£4.483m** on the position reported at September 2023 (Period 6).

The VOA confirmed that, for its 2023 revaluation, it has changed the methodology it uses to calculate business rates for the majority of museums. The rateable value is now calculated by receipts and expenditure, which considers whether the property makes a net surplus, rather than the contractor's method, which assesses the cost of rebuilding the existing museum or gallery. The updated rateable values took effect from 1 April 2023 but there was also the opportunity to appeal the rateable value of the affected buildings since the 2017 revaluation. The rebate has now been received and the one-off benefit of £400,000 is shown in the Corporate Budgets line.

It is estimated that £450,000 of the provision for CPI % increases on existing contracts and rises in energy costs will not be required in 2023/24, £2.5m of the original £2.950m provision has been allocated to services.

The Local Government Pay Award April 2023 was confirmed in November; employees on salary scale points 3 to 41 received a fixed increase of £1,925, employees on salary scale point 42 and above received an increase of 3.88%. £3.659m has been allocated to services to fund this pay award and staff received their backpay on 1 December 2023. The Senior Management pay award has not been implemented yet and there are some other pay scales where the pay award is still outstanding, £250,000 is earmarked for these costs. It is estimated that £500,000 of the original £4.425m provision will not be required in 2023/24.

Forecast outturn for investment income is higher than expected as interest rates have increased faster and by more than initially expected. This is due to the Bank of England's response to the rate of inflation being slower to reduce than expected. However, there is also a forecast adverse variance arising from the effect of increased interest rates on the recharges of interest receivable and payable between the GF and the HRA. A comprehensive review of the Minimum Revenue Provision policy has highlighted savings options that can be achieved by re-profiling the provision for repayments of debt through the General Fund.

The overall net forecast favourable variance on Corporate Budgets of (£6.422m) includes all the items outlined above.

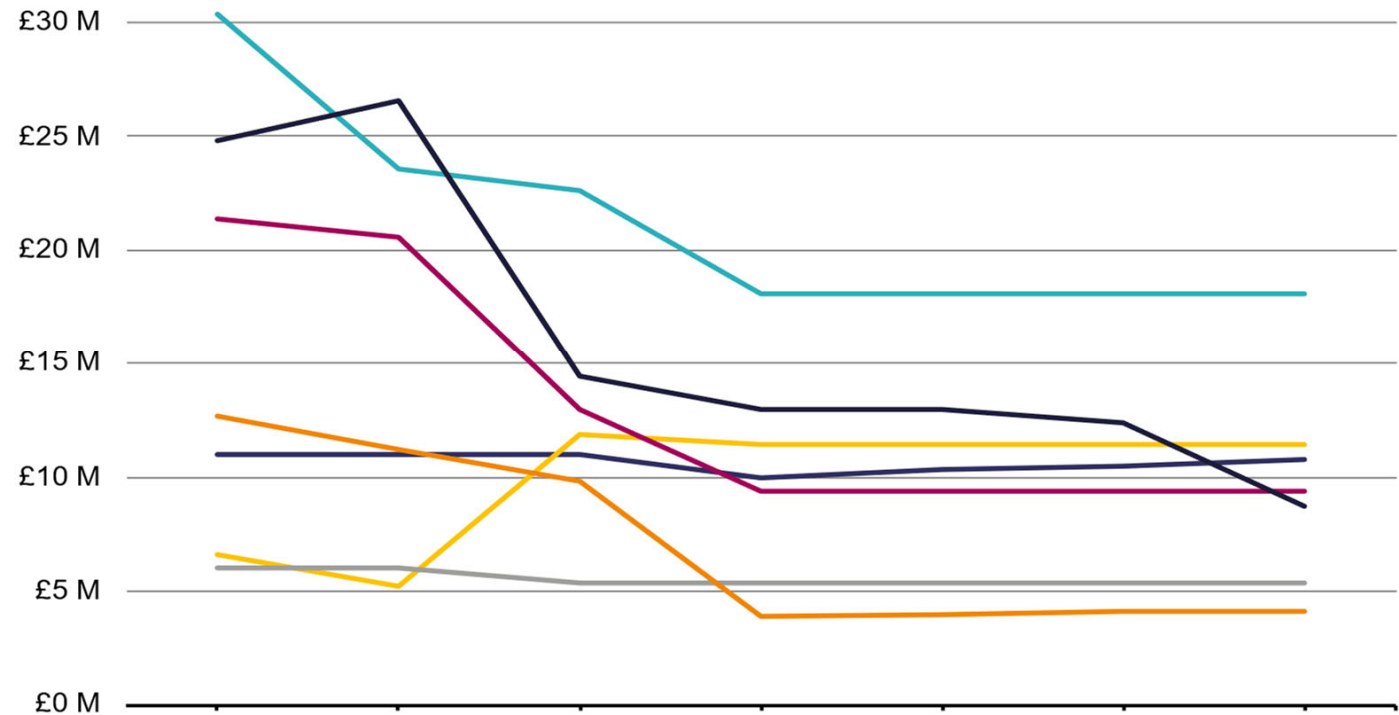
The Council is also estimating to receive a circa £800k benefit in 2023/24 as part of its continued participation in the Essex Business Rates Pool. This is shown as part of the Funding line in the table above.

Reserves

The Council maintains General Fund reserves between £10M and £12M in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This provides a working cashflow balance and allows a degree of financial security in the case of unexpected events or emergencies.

Earmarked Reserves are set aside to fund future projects and to mitigate specific risk. The level of these reserves will fluctuate as grants are received, risk is realised and projects progress.

The forecast outturn for 2023/24 has been reflected in our Reserves position with the potential use of £6.284M to meet the current forecast overspend.

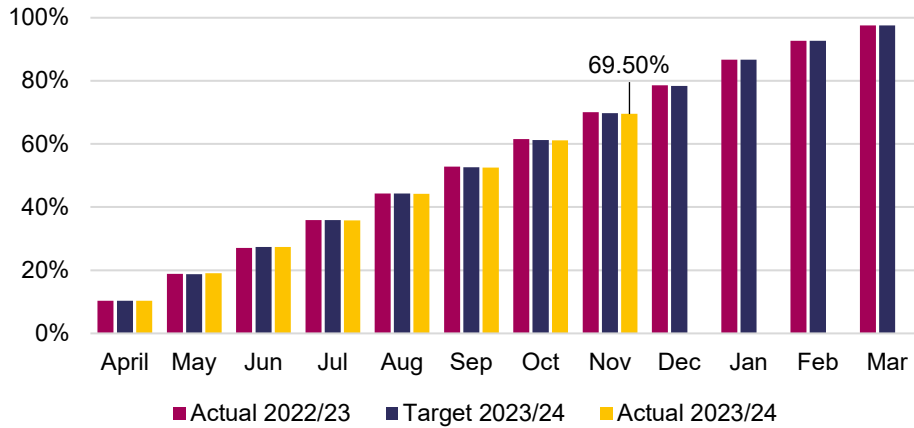


Reserves in £M	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
General Reserves	11.0	11.0	11.0	10.0	10.3	10.5	10.8
Capital Reserves	6.6	5.2	11.9	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.4
Corporate Reserves	21.4	20.6	13.0	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4
Grant Reserves	30.4	23.6	22.6	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1
Insurance Reserves	6.0	6.0	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
Service Reserves	12.7	11.2	9.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1
Technical Reserves*	24.8	26.6	14.4	13.0	13.0	12.4	8.7
	112.9	104.2	88.1	71.2	71.6	71.3	67.9

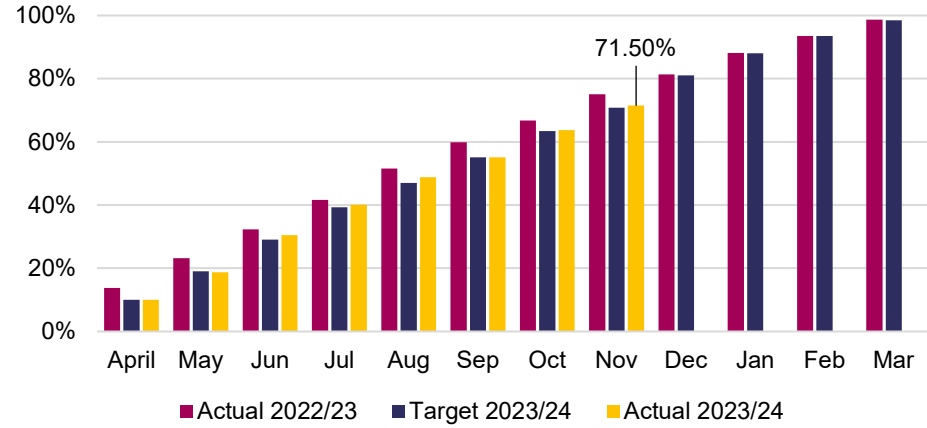
* Technical Reserves are held to even out the Council's finances and reduce in year volatility

Collection Rates

Council Tax Collection

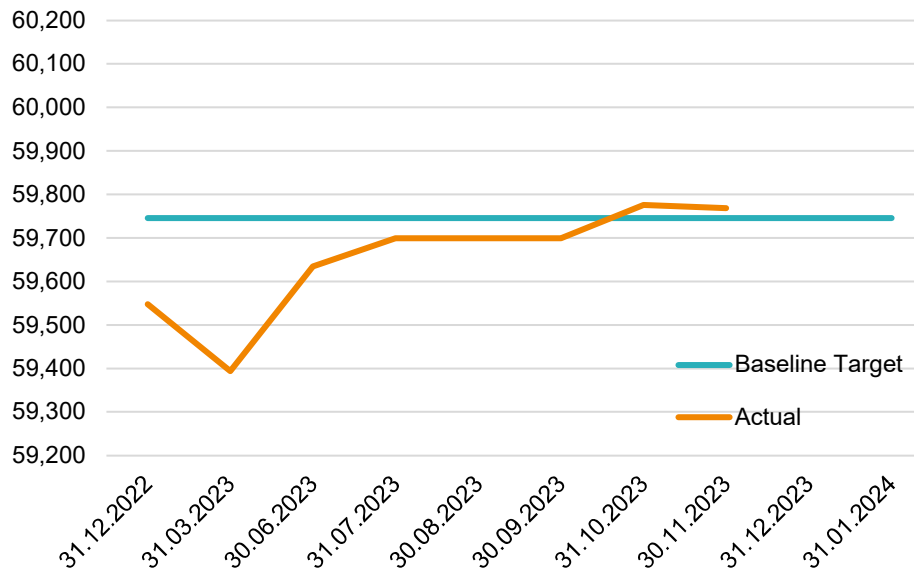


Business Rates Collection



47

Council Tax Base



The Council Tax Base reflects a slight increase in comparison to the base setting figure, with an increase of 22 Band D equivalent properties.

Council Tax collection is 0.2% (£239k) lower than the current year target for the period. This does not represent a risk of non-collection at this stage.

Business rates in year collection is 0.7% (£255k) higher than the current year target for the period, increasing confidence that the year-end collection can be achieved.

Leader: SEND

12.10%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

£0.7M

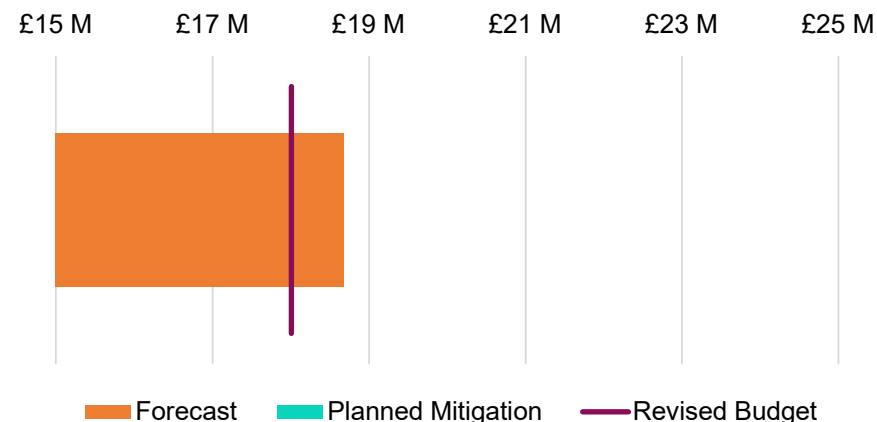
Forecast Adverse Variance

3.73%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio
Service Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
0.150	Children with a special educational need and disability (SEND)	4.061	4.191	0.130
0.000	Home to School Transport Contract	2.613	2.613	0.000
0.116	Passenger Transport / Vehicle Fleet	0.220	0.336	0.116
(0.215)	Audit	0.833	0.622	(0.211)
0.026	Civic Affairs	1.108	1.118	0.010
(0.014)	Corporate Budget and Resources Planning	0.877	0.907	0.030
0.099	Corporate Planning and Strategic Directio	1.766	1.829	0.063
0.065	Council Tax and Business Rates	0.232	0.310	0.078
48 0.301	Human Resources	1.881	2.050	0.169
(0.137)	Learning and Workforce Development	0.847	0.710	(0.137)
(0.032)	Performance Delivery	1.566	1.493	(0.073)
0.000	Transformation	0.257	0.257	0.000
0.000	Emergency Planning and Business Continuity	0.260	0.260	0.000
0.422	Legal Services & Land Charges	1.486	1.982	0.496
0.781		18.007	18.678	0.671

Last Reported Variance £M		Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
0.636	Gross Expenditure	43.845	44.536	0.691
0.145	Gross Income	(25.838)	(25.858)	(0.020)
0.781		18.007	18.678	0.671



Children with a special need and disability (SEND) pressures are continuing. There is a national shortage of Educational Psychologists (a critical statutory service supporting and advising both schools, parents and carers for children with SEND). Interim cover has therefore been required to sustain an appropriate statutory service level. These arrangements, together with increases in demand are the key contributory factors of the forecast overspend being reported. Recruitment and retention plans are in place to try to secure a permanent workforce moving forward. Smaller pressures also remain where direct SEND team cover is required for staff on maternity leave.

The internal audit team is continuing to operate with five full time vacancies which is resulting in a significant underspend, this is being partly offset by additional spend on external agencies which has remained static since the last position was reported at September 2023 (Period 6).

The forecast position for Human Resources has improved by £132,000 since the last report at September 2023 (Period 6). £104,000 is associated with the successful renegotiation of commission for the Hays contract, this benefit is distributed across the organisation through reduced commission on individual agency placements.

The interim Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer) has been in post since the beginning of September and is undertaking a full service restructure. While this goes through the necessary approval and consultation some agency costs continue to be incurred. There is also some long-term sickness in the team which is causing a budget pressure. The combined effect of these has increased the forecast by £81,000 since the last position was reported in September 2023 (Period 6).

Forecast income from Local Land Charges has remained stable since the forecast was produced for September 2023 (Period 6). The underspend on staffing to partially offset this pressure continues and the overall forecast for the service has improved by £8,000.

Deputy Leader: Environment

6.08%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

£0.4M

Forecast Adverse Variance

2.14%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service
Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
(0.022)	All matters relating to trees, plants, grass verges and other flora	0.562	0.490	(0.072)
(0.004)	Cleansing of highways and public realm	1.749	1.745	(0.004)
(0.010)	Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Energy Saving	0.201	0.200	(0.001)
0.040	Parks and Open Spaces, Grounds Maintenance	5.162	5.175	0.013
0.461	Waste collection, disposal, management, recycling & sanitation	12.945	13.450	0.505
0.465		20.619	21.060	0.441
50				
0.089	Gross Expenditure	22.043	22.095	0.052
0.376	Gross Income	(1.424)	(1.035)	0.389
0.465		20.619	21.060	0.441



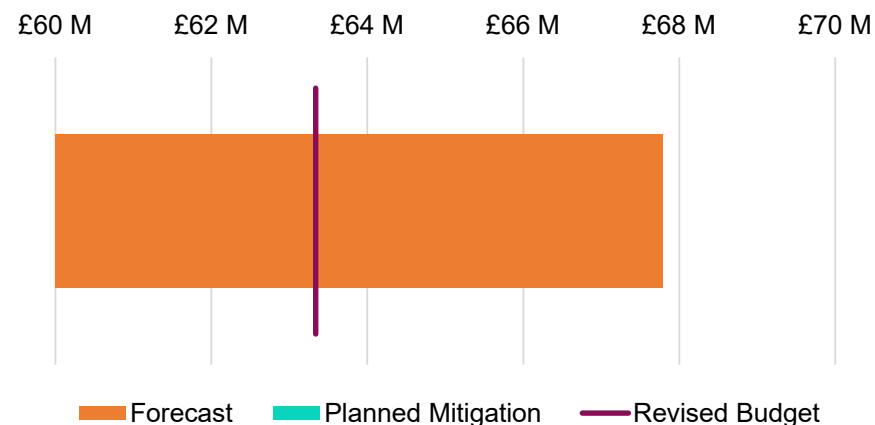
The small increase in the forecast overspend reported at September 2023 (Period 6) for waste is based on a slight increase in the estimated tonnage of residual waste and an anticipated reduction in the volume of food waste which generates an income. The cost of waste disposal continues to be the largest driver of financial pressure within this portfolio area. Although tonnages have reduced by 2% on a year on year basis, the volume of residual waste continues to be higher than the budget position can sustain. Tonnages are starting to return to levels similar to that seen pre-covid and the recent waste disposal procurement has seen the costs of disposal and haulage reduce as well as improving the environmental impact of its disposal.

The position on the trees and verges budget has improved due to the benefit of merging two contracts together and the team managing the volume of works undertaken by prioritising emergency works only.

Adult Social Care, Health, Public Health, and Constitutional Affairs

29.18% of Total Gross Revenue Service Budget **£4.46M** Forecast Adverse Variance **7.04%** Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
4.922	Adult Social Care	42.029	46.580	4.551
(0.509)	Commissioning	4.030	3.428	(0.602)
0.016	Community Cohesion and community assets	0.017	0.033	0.016
0.062	Customer Contact	5.228	5.519	0.291
0.411	Digital and Technology	5.001	5.392	0.391
0.000	Domestic Abuse (Social Aspects)	0.068	0.068	0.000
51 0.376	Mental Health Services	5.035	5.358	0.323
0.000	Public Health	0.218	0.218	0.000
0.078	Democratic Services	0.825	0.812	(0.013)
0.000	Transformation	0.888	0.388	(0.500)
5.356		63.339	67.796	4.457
6.961	Gross Expenditure	105.779	112.490	6.711
(1.605)	Gross Income	(42.440)	(44.694)	(2.254)
5.356		63.339	67.796	4.457



Adult Social Care reports a reduction in the overall forecast outturn, this is primarily due to the anticipated reclaim of un-utilised Direct Payment account balances. Due diligence is being undertaken to ensure that this has no impact on the Service User. The underlying pressure continues to relate to the provision of statutory care, particularly around the cost of support to older people, both in residential settings and home care packages. A combination of an increase in both complexity and costs of individual care packages continues.

An additional £60,000 saving is reflected in Commissioning as part of the allocation of eligible spend against government grants.

The Digital and Technology team has decreased the likely shortfall on income further since last reporting at September 2023 (Period 6), this has been offset by a small increase in the forecast for employee costs. The combined impact is an improvement of £20,000.

The Mental Health Service has now transferred back to the council and all care packages are being reviewed to ensure that they are up to date, on the Council's system and appropriate for the service users' social care needs.

At budget setting £1.0M was allocated to cover increased costs of licenses under the transformation heading, it is now estimated that £0.5m of this will not be required in 2023/24.

Arts, Culture, Heritage and Leisure

1.93%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

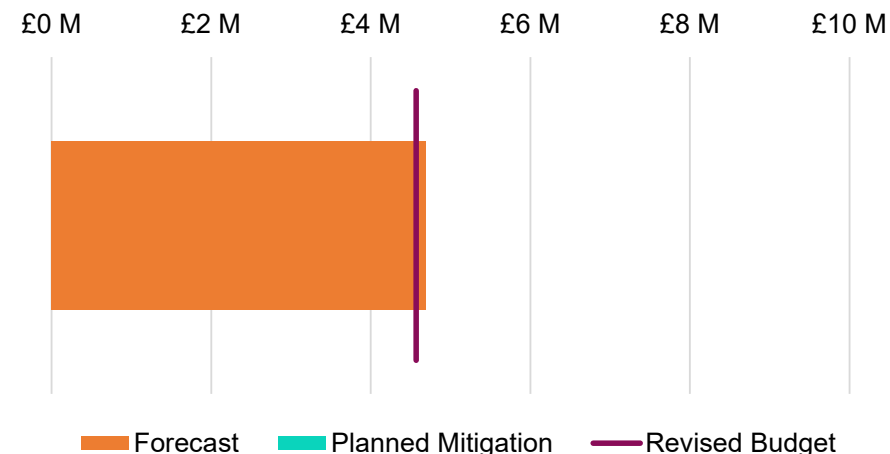
£0.1M

Forecast Adverse Variance

2.85%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service
Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
(0.002)	Museums and Galleries, Theatres and Libraries	4.249	4.297	0.048
0.074	Pier and Foreshore	0.434	0.508	0.074
0.008	Sport Development	(0.116)	(0.108)	0.008
0.080		4.567	4.697	0.130
0.080	Gross Expenditure	6.989	7.163	0.174
0.000	Gross Income	(2.422)	(2.466)	(0.044)
0.080		4.567	4.697	0.130



Museums and Galleries, Theatres and Libraries now includes a forecast of 0.5FTE of the Director role, which at September 2023 (Period 6) was forecast to remain vacant for the remainder of the year, along with £25,000 of recruitment costs for the role.

The Pier and Foreshore, which encompasses the Pier, the Foreshore, Visitor Information, Cliff Lift and the Pier Approaches continues to forecast a small overspend. This net reported position at the end of November 2023 is a result of a combination of additional Pier income due to higher visitor numbers in the summer, offset by additional staffing costs across the service and other premises related expenses.

Childrens Services, Education and Learning

22.84%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

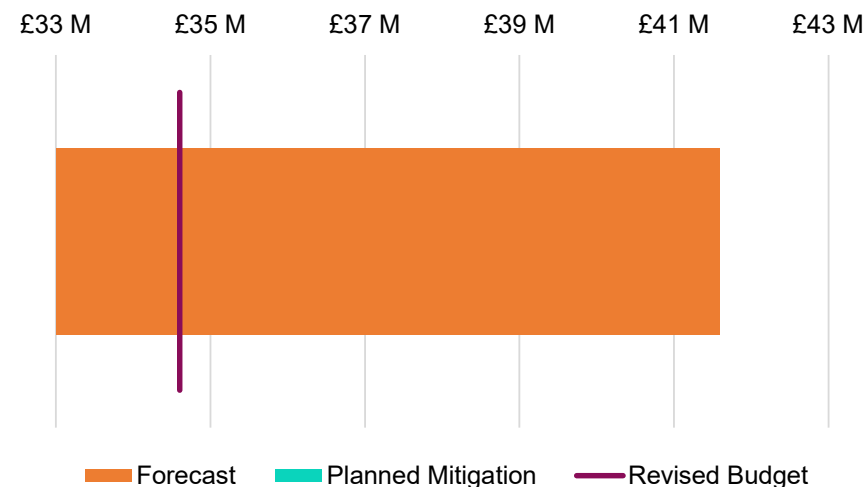
£7.0M

Forecast Adverse Variance

20.19%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service
Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
0.000	Adult and Community Learning	0.062	0.062	0.000
0.000	Children's Safeguarding	0.068	0.068	0.000
7.368	Children's Services	30.221	37.243	7.022
(0.050)	Family Centre, Early Years and Childcare	1.252	1.187	(0.065)
(0.235)	Schools, Education and Learning	1.580	1.345	(0.235)
0.050	Youth and Connexions	0.829	0.874	0.045
0.026	Youth Justice Service	0.590	0.809	0.219
7.159		34.602	41.588	6.986
54				
8.051	Gross Expenditure	82.775	90.678	7.903
(0.892)	Gross Income	(48.173)	(49.090)	(0.917)
7.159		34.602	41.588	6.986



As reported in July and September, the significant spend pressure trend continued from 2022/23 into 2023/24 within Children Services. This is mainly due to a combination of Residential Care placement costs particularly for those cases that are most complex within a market that is stretched and short of supply (resulting in some very high prices) and the continued reliance on external foster care placements in 2023/24. The strategy remains to reduce reliance on external foster care placements by building and sustaining capacity within our own inhouse fostering service promoted by the new and improved inhouse foster care offer from April 2023. The cost of external care placements continues to be the main cause of this significant overspend pressure.

Other pressures within Children Services for 2023/24 (as reported in July and September) remain and includes continued reliance on temporary agency staff to cover critical statutory social work and certain critical social work management posts. Financial pressures including the national transfer scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum seekers where those children have now turned 18 and remain in supported in accommodation whilst their asylum application is considered (as the Home Office grant to support their costs reduces once the child turns 18), and pressures for care and support costs for Children with Disabilities under Section 17 status are continuing. Within the Youth Justice Service whilst temporary vacancies remain present, there is an even further confirmed pressure on secure remand placements where the grant level now received for 2023/24 is significantly lower than the actual costs being experienced. The HM Prison & Probation service grant is based on average of the last 3 year costs and therefore the Council will be expecting to receive an increase in the level of grant in 2024/25.

Whilst the safety and wellbeing of Children remain of paramount importance the Council continues to explore opportunities to reduce costs where it is safe and possible to do so. As previously highlighted the costs relating to residential care placements are significant and do remain a very volatile spend area.

Whilst significant financial pressure remains across the portfolio directorate of Children Services, within Education and Learning the position has improved and reduced by a further (£173,000) from September 2023 (Period 6) and this is mainly due to where Children Services have continued to intensely review and reduced spend pressure within supported accommodation placements where young adults 18+ who were previous care experienced children have transitioned safely into adults, and some further pressure has also reduced on the national transfer scheme where those now young adults have achieved ^{on}status .

Community Safety and Public Protection

1.22%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

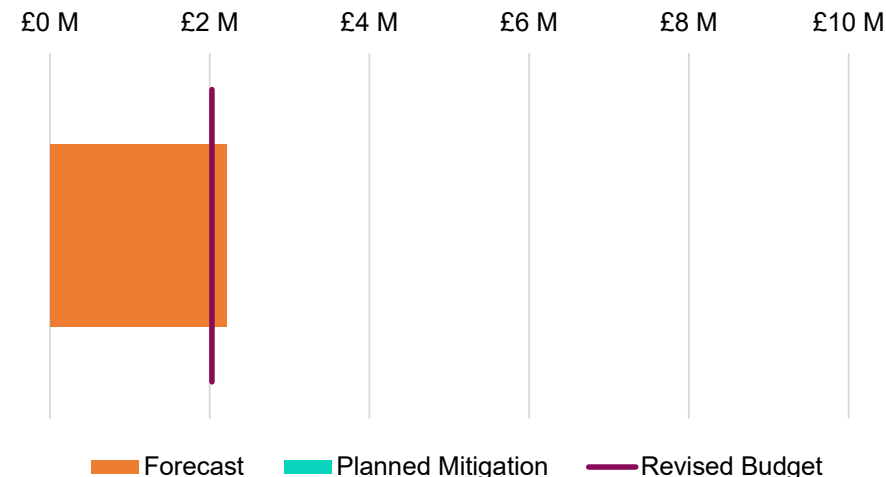
£0.2M

Forecast Adverse Variance

8.97%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service
Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
0.097	Closed Circuit Television	0.522	0.624	0.102
(0.050)	Community Safety	0.891	0.823	(0.068)
0.001	Drugs and Alcohol Service	0.096	0.096	0.000
0.220	Public Toilets	0.397	0.545	0.148
0.000	Town Centre Management	0.123	0.123	0.000
0.268		2.029	2.211	0.182
0.089	Gross Expenditure	4.426	4.440	0.014
0.179	Gross Income	(2.397)	(2.229)	0.168
0.268		2.029	2.211	0.182



The £150,000 saving associated with a review of the public toilet offer is not being progressed which leaves this service area unable to be delivered within its budget envelope for 2023/24. An alternative saving proposal has not yet been agreed but when one is developed then this pressure could be mitigated before the end of the year. The position has improved since September 2023 (Period 6) due to a reduction in the forecast repairs and maintenance pressure by £25,000 and the receipt of a credit note for water charges after investigation by the team.

The CCTV service is delivered by an established team of staff and as such staff turnover is very low. This is resulting in a budget pressure on staffing costs, due to an assumption that there would be some staff turnover. The drive to deliver services on a commercial basis is continuing but formal contracts are yet to be signed to bring in guaranteed additional income.

Economic Growth and Investment

0.38%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

(£0.0M)

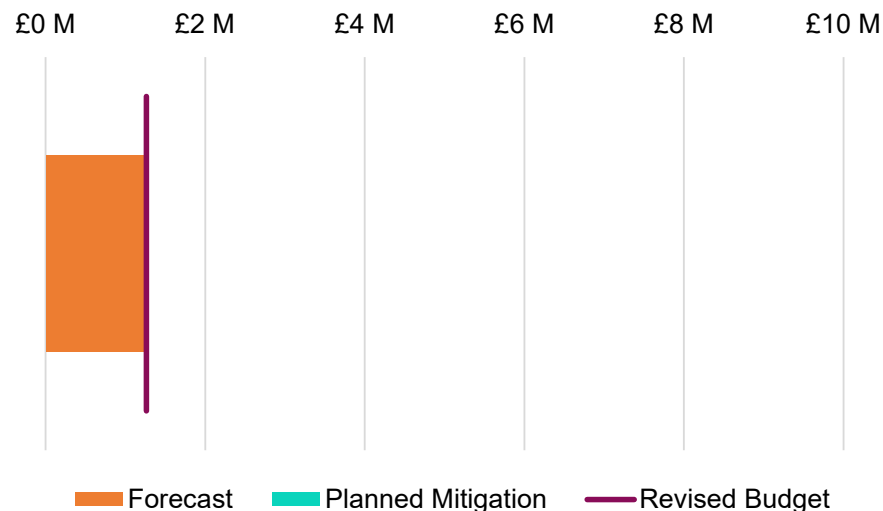
Forecast Favourable
Variance

-3.01%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service
Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
0.042	Marketing (Place Branding/Tourism)	0.460	0.491	0.031
(0.061)	Regeneration and business growth	0.803	0.734	(0.069)
(0.019)		1.263	1.225	(0.038)
(0.019)	Gross Expenditure	1.395	1.336	(0.059)
0.000	Gross Income	(0.132)	(0.111)	0.021
(0.019)		1.263	1.225	(0.038)

57



There has been no significant movement to comment on since the last report in September 2023 (Period 6).

Highways, Transport and Parking

3.53%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

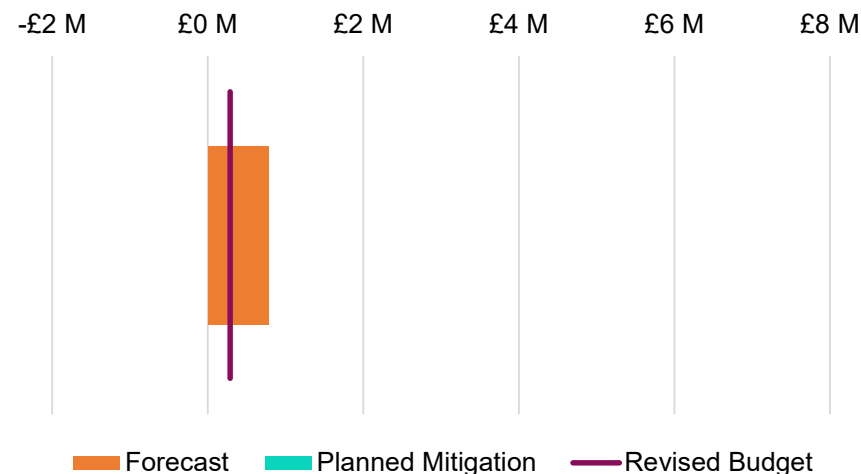
£0.5M

Forecast Adverse Variance

-170.00%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service
Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
0.987	Car parks and all car parking matters	(8.620)	(7.634)	0.986
(0.550)	Concessionary Fares	2.840	2.290	(0.550)
0.000	Engineering (Bridges and Structures)	0.051	0.051	0.000
0.097	Highways (including maintenance)	4.836	4.798	(0.038)
(0.048)	Highways and Transport	(0.294)	(0.316)	(0.022)
0.143	Public Transport	0.192	0.335	0.143
0.018	Transport (including Transport Policy and Licensing)	1.285	1.259	(0.026)
0.647		0.290	0.783	0.493
50 1.147	Gross Expenditure	12.809	13.762	0.953
(0.500)	Gross Income	(12.519)	(12.979)	(0.460)
0.647		0.290	0.783	0.493



The parking enforcement contract is currently overspending significantly due to the volume of variable works undertaken by the contractor and changes made as part of the short term extension whilst a new contract is procured. The major spend pressures include an increase in the number of Civil Enforcement Officers and the wage increases they have received in response to national living wage increases and the need to retain staff.

Car parking income to the end of September is exceeding the assumed budget profile but expenditure pressures in relation to transaction fees, bank charges and security at University Square car park are continuing to add additional cost pressures in 2023/24.

Concessionary fares payments are now linked directly to actual usage on local buses. Due to the reduction in journeys post-pandemic our financial contribution has also continued to reduce.

The reported overspend on the Highways (including maintenance) line has reduced since September 2023 (Period 6) due to the appropriate utilisation of an external capital grant to fund the replacement of damaged / broken street lighting columns. Ongoing spend pressures in this area include a shortfall in the amount of staff time which is charged to delivering the capital programme which is being offset by additional staffing vacancies and an increase in income from PVX (private vehicle crossings) applications.

The public transport service is forecast to overspend due to spend pressures on the bus shelter maintenance contract and the costs in relation to the travel centre. Plans are continuing to be developed to try to mitigate some of this additional pressures for the remainder of 2023/24.

The Transport (including Transport Policy and Licensing) position has improved since September 2023 (Period 6) due to the extended vacancy of a post in the team.

Housing and Planning

19.28%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

(£0.20M)

Forecast Favourable
Variance

-4.67%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service
Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
(0.051)	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping	0.404	0.363	(0.041)
(0.187)	Housing Benefit	1.750	1.561	(0.189)
0.000	Housing Management	0.088	0.088	0.000
0.002	Housing Strategy	0.401	0.410	0.009
(0.048)	Planning Policy and Planning Control, Building Control	0.593	0.545	(0.048)
(0.016)	Private sector housing standards and grants	0.620	0.689	0.069
0.000	Queensway Development	0.000	0.000	0.000
0.000	Sea and Foreshore Defences	0.431	0.431	0.000
(0.300)		4.287	4.087	(0.200)
(0.014)	Gross Expenditure	69.888	69.976	0.088
(0.286)	Gross Income	(65.601)	(65.889)	(0.288)
(0.300)		4.287	4.087	(0.200)



09

The Service Director continues to intentionally hold vacancies within Housing Benefit teams (Benefits Administration and Essential Living Fund) to try to help with the overall financial pressures across the Council whilst maintaining an acceptable level of service.

Following an internal audit review of the Disabled Facilities Grant, it has been identified that staff time had been capitalised where it does not fully meet the criteria. A detailed review of staff time has now identified a new £87,000 pressure on the Private Sector Housing Standards and Grants Service, that was previously assumed to be capitalised.

The Building Control service exceeded their income budget last year due to some significant works coming into the team in early 2022/23. However, since September 2022 income has been down year on year. As this is a commercial service there is a risk that if the Authority cannot deliver the service on commercial terms the works will go to competitors in the market and we may struggle to obtain repeat business. At year end any residual shortfall in this budget will be funded via the drawdown from the Planning reserve which is earmarked to respond to this volatility in the market.

Regulatory Services

3.46%

of Total Gross Revenue
Service Budget

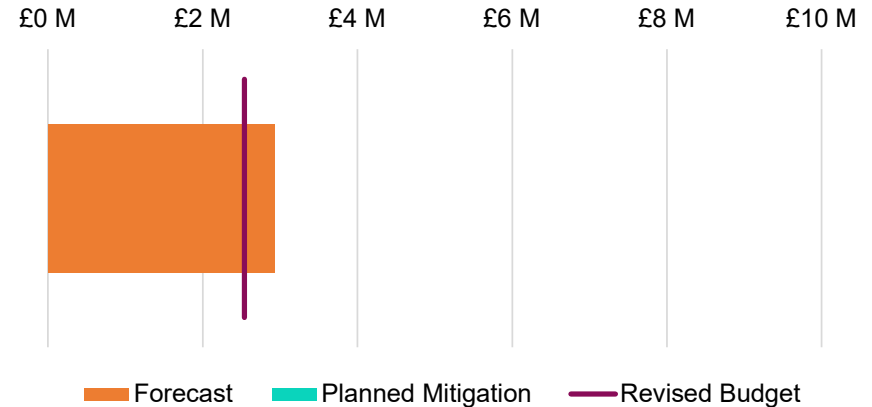
£0.39M

Forecast Adverse Variance

15.21%

Variance as % of Net Portfolio Service
Budget Envelope

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
(0.229)	Asset Management	0.637	0.450	(0.187)
0.795	Cemeteries, Crematoria and Bereavemen	(1.628)	(0.841)	0.787
0.000	Corporate Procurement	1.056	1.056	0.000
(0.170)	Financial Services (including Insurance etc.)	2.851	2.696	(0.155)
0.065	Property and Commercial	(1.495)	(1.426)	0.069
0.031	Registration Services	(0.122)	(0.091)	0.031
(0.180)	Regulatory services	1.239	1.080	(0.159)
0.312		2.538	2.924	0.386
0.909	Gross Expenditure	12.533	13.506	0.973
(0.597)	Gross Income	(9.995)	(10.582)	(0.587)
0.312		2.538	2.924	0.386



Asset Management have a reduced staffing complement due to acting up arrangements across the team operating without backfill. There is a knock-on impact of reduced levels of staff time being capitalised and the forecast for this has reduced by around £40,000 since last reporting at the end of September 2023 (Period 6). The net impact is still a substantial underspend.

The refurbishment of the crematorium is underway and due for completion in March 2024 bringing with it greater efficiency, ensuring that the crematorium can function into the future and improving the environmental impact of the service. During the works and to minimise disruption, services have been restricted to Tuesday - Thursday so that 4 days a week are available to deliver the development. Reducing the operating hours of the crematorium is resulting in a significant reduction in income over this 12 month period with current estimates forecasting a shortfall of £635,000. This income reduction is expected to be temporary and when the crematorium is fully operational again it is expected that income levels will return.

Previously reported vacancies in Financial Services are still being held to try and help with the overall financial pressures experienced across the Council. This is proving to be more and more difficult as the demands on the service continues to increase and the forecast underspend has reduced by £15,000 partly as a result of the team working additional hours.

Housing Revenue Account

(£0.7M)

Forecast Favourable Variance

-2.3%

Variance as % of Gross Operating Expenditure

Last Reported Variance £M	Service Area	Revised Budget £M	Forecast Outturn £M	Variance £M
0.180	Gross Expenditure	28.449	29.148	0.699
0.465	Gross Income	(32.556)	(33.921)	(1.365)
0.645	NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	(4.107)	(4.773)	(0.666)
0.000	Revenue Contribution to Capital	7.384	7.384	0.000
(0.645)	Contribution to / (from) Earmarked Reserves	(3.277)	(2.611)	0.666
0.000	TOTAL	0.000	0.000	0.000

HRA Reserves 2023/24	Opening Balance	Forecast Movement	Closing Balance
Capital Investment Reserve	27.614	(3.922)	23.692
Major Repairs Reserve	9.916	0.047	9.963
Repairs Contract Pension Reserve	0.760	0.000	0.760
HRA Reserve	3.502	0.000	3.502
HRA Reserves Total	41.792	(3.875)	37.917

Since the September 2023 (Period 6) monitoring report, the only anticipated changes in the HRA relate to interest paid on borrowing and interest received on balances. The value of income received is £1.4M higher than that paid out which has improved the HRA forecast position considerably and it is expected that this will be transferred to earmarked reserves at the year end.



Budget Monitoring & Reporting 2023/24

Period 8 – November 2023 Capital Investment Programme Performance



Capital Investment Programme Performance Report

1. Overall Budget Performance by Investment Area

The revised Capital budget for the 2023/24 financial year which includes all changes agreed at November 2023 Cabinet is as follows:

Schemes	Revised Budget 2023/24 £'000	Proposed Budget at January Cabinet 2023/24 £'000
Total Schemes Delivered by General Fund	32,550	30,999
Total Schemes Delivered by General Fund Funded by the Levelling Up Fund	2,738	1,600
Total Schemes Delivered by Housing Revenue Account	10,214	9,774
Total Schemes Delivered by Subsidiary Companies and Joint Ventures	13,783	13,283
Total Capital Programme	59,285	55,656

Actual capital spend as at 30 November 2023 is £28.733 million representing approximately 48% of the revised budget. This is shown in section 5. (Outstanding creditors totalling £0.128 million have been removed from this figure).

The expenditure to date has been projected to year end and the outturn position is forecast to reflect the Project Manager's realistic expectation. This is broken down by type of investment area on the following pages.

Total Schemes Delivered by General Fund

Investment Area	Revised Budget 2023/24	Outturn to 30 November 2023	Current Variance to 30 November 2023	Expected outturn 2023/24	Latest Expected Variance to Revised Budget 2023/24	Amended Budget 2024/25 to 2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund Housing	635	417	(218)	830	195	6,377
Social Care	64	437	373	501	437	199
Schools	2,759	1,050	(1,709)	1,497	(1,262)	6,960
Enterprise & Regeneration	1,612	905	(707)	1,542	(70)	1,175
Southend Pier	1,499	913	(586)	1,499	0	6,741
Culture & Tourism	906	602	(304)	922	16	35
Community Safety	142	100	(42)	142	0	0
Highways & Infrastructure	14,107	7,653	(6,454)	13,853	(254)	21,878
Works to Property	6,251	3,380	(2,871)	6,080	(171)	3,796
Energy Saving	231	58	(173)	231	0	636
ICT	3,367	2,045	(1,322)	3,614	247	4,828
S106/S38/CIL	977	73	(904)	725	(252)	948
Total	32,550	17,633	(14,917)	31,436	(1,114)	53,573

Total Schemes Delivered by General Fund – Funded by the Levelling Up Fund

Investment Area	Revised Budget 2023/24	Outturn to 30 November 2023	Current Variance to 30 November 2023	Expected outturn 2023/24	Latest Expected Variance to Revised Budget 2023/24	Amended Budget 2024/25 to 2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Enterprise & Regeneration	2,738	684	(2,054)	1,600	(1,138)	22,100
Total	2,738	684	(2,054)	1,600	(1,138)	22,100

Total Schemes Delivered by Housing Revenue Account

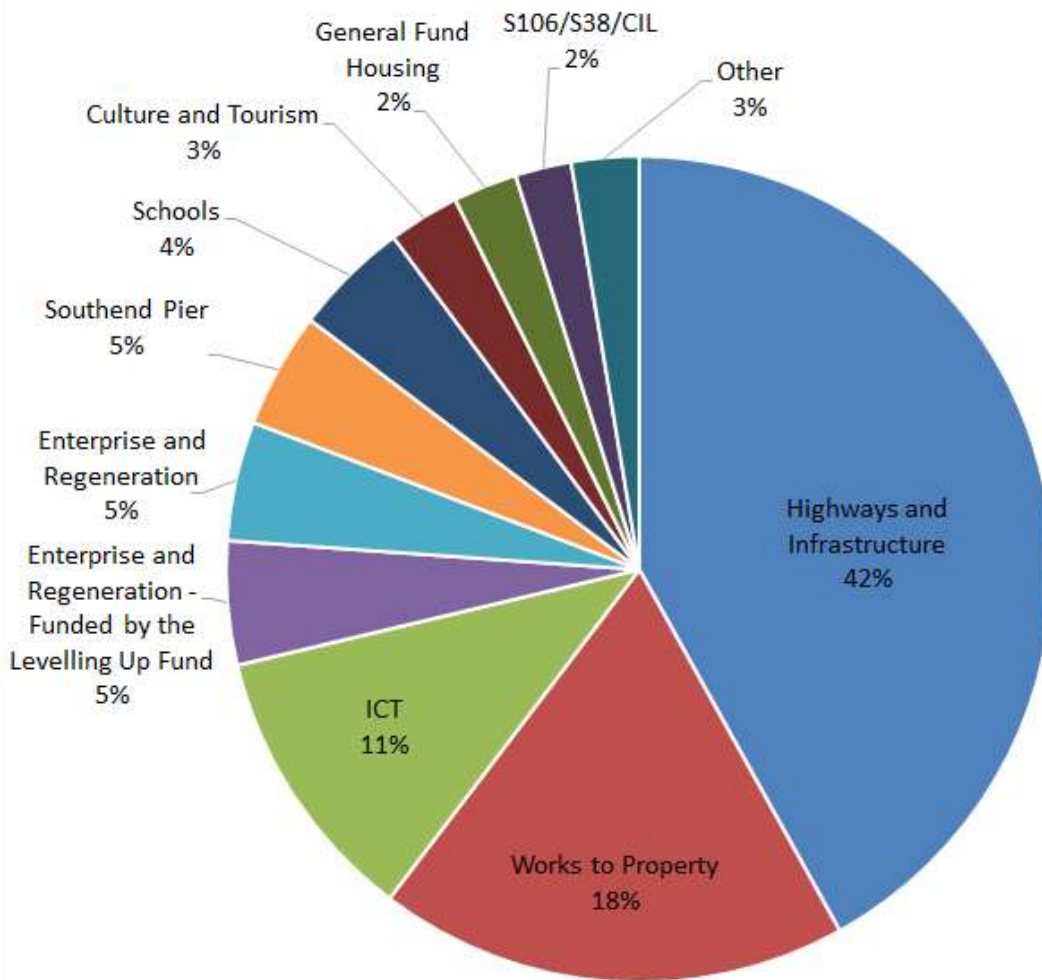
Investment Area	Revised Budget 2023/24	Outturn to 30 November 2023	Current Variance to 30 November 2023	Expected outturn 2023/24	Latest Expected Variance to Revised Budget 2023/24	Amended Budget 2024/25 to 2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Housing New Build Programme	1,523	288	(1,235)	1,513	(10)	9,933
Council Housing Acquisitions Programme	8,041	4,592	(3,449)	7,611	(430)	3,408
Council Housing Refurbishment – Disabled Adaptations	650	337	(313)	650	0	1,153
Total	10,214	5,217	(4,997)	9,774	(440)	14,494

Total Schemes Delivered by Subsidiary Companies and Joint Ventures

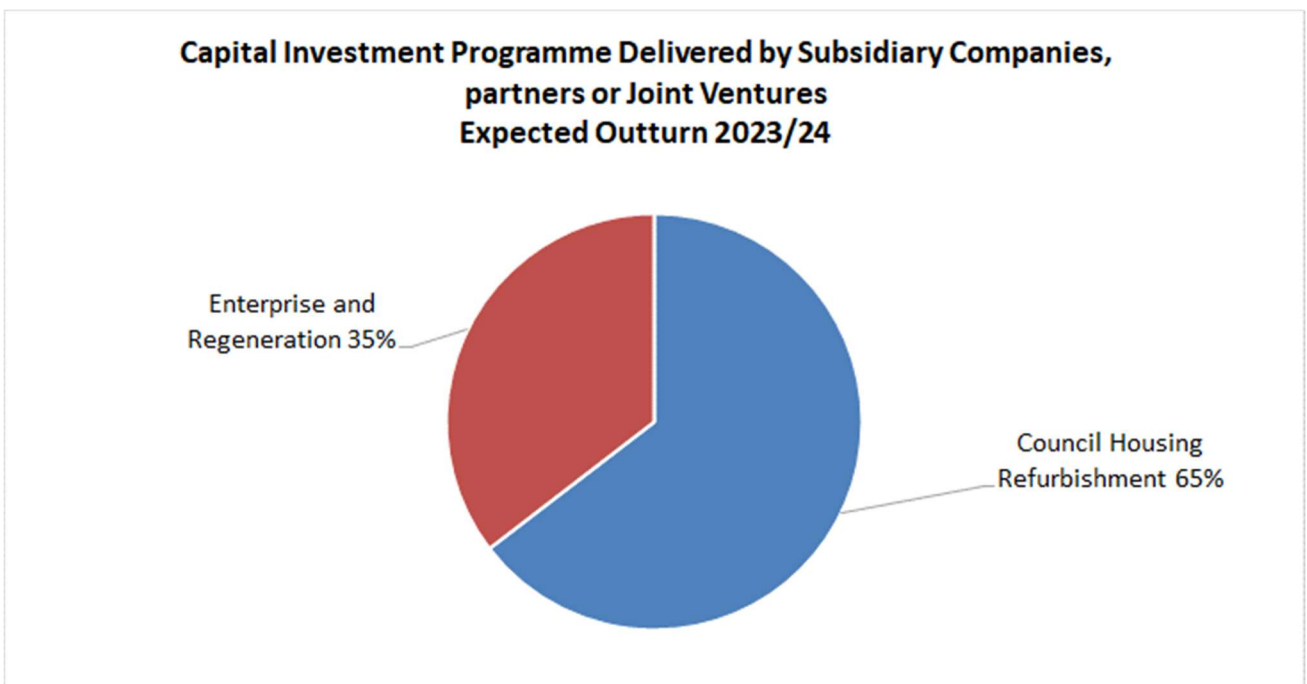
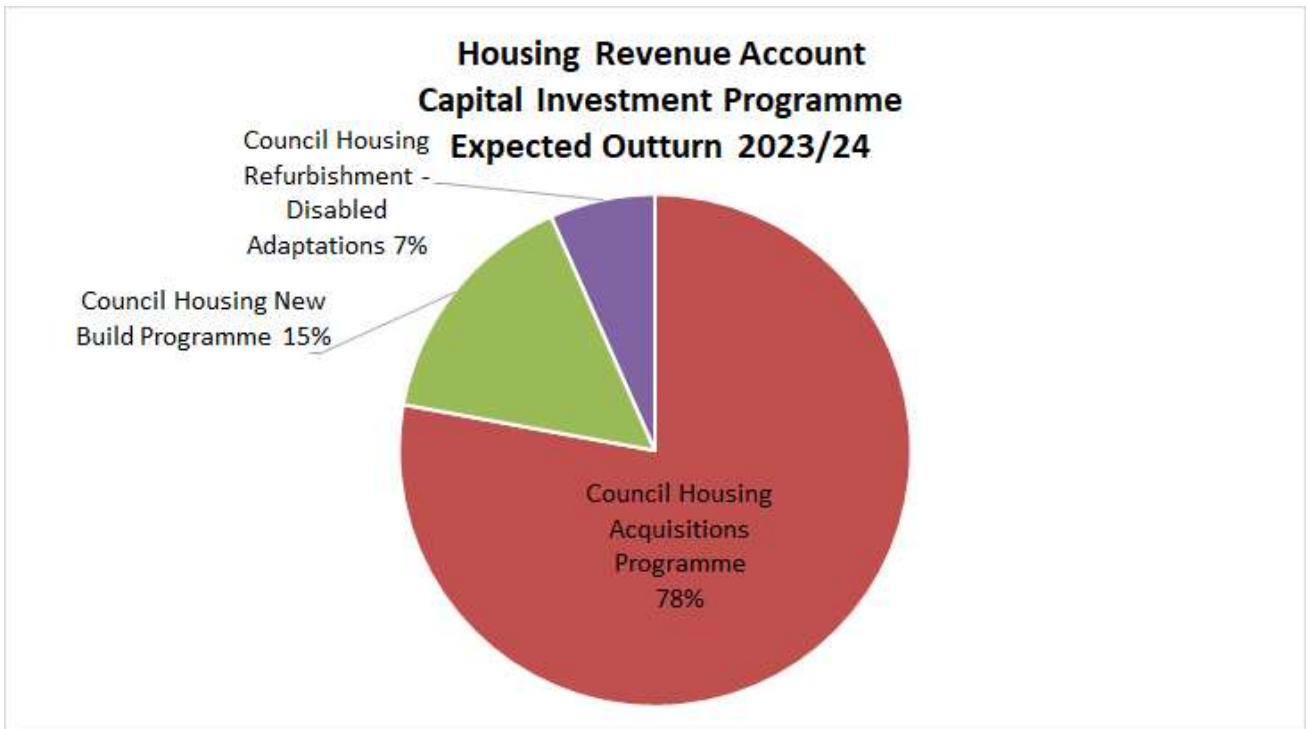
Investment Area	Revised Budget 2023/24	Outturn to 30 November 2023	Current Variance to 30 November 2023	Expected outturn 2023/24	Latest Expected Variance to Revised Budget 2023/24	Amended Budget 2024/25 to 2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Housing Refurbishment	8,578	4,425	(4,153)	8,578	0	19,094
Enterprise and Regeneration	5,205	774	(4,431)	4,705	(500)	1,000
Total	13,783	5,199	(8,584)	13,283	(500)	20,094

Total Capital Programme	59,285	28,733	(30,552)	56,093	(3,192)	110,261
--------------------------------	---------------	---------------	-----------------	---------------	----------------	----------------

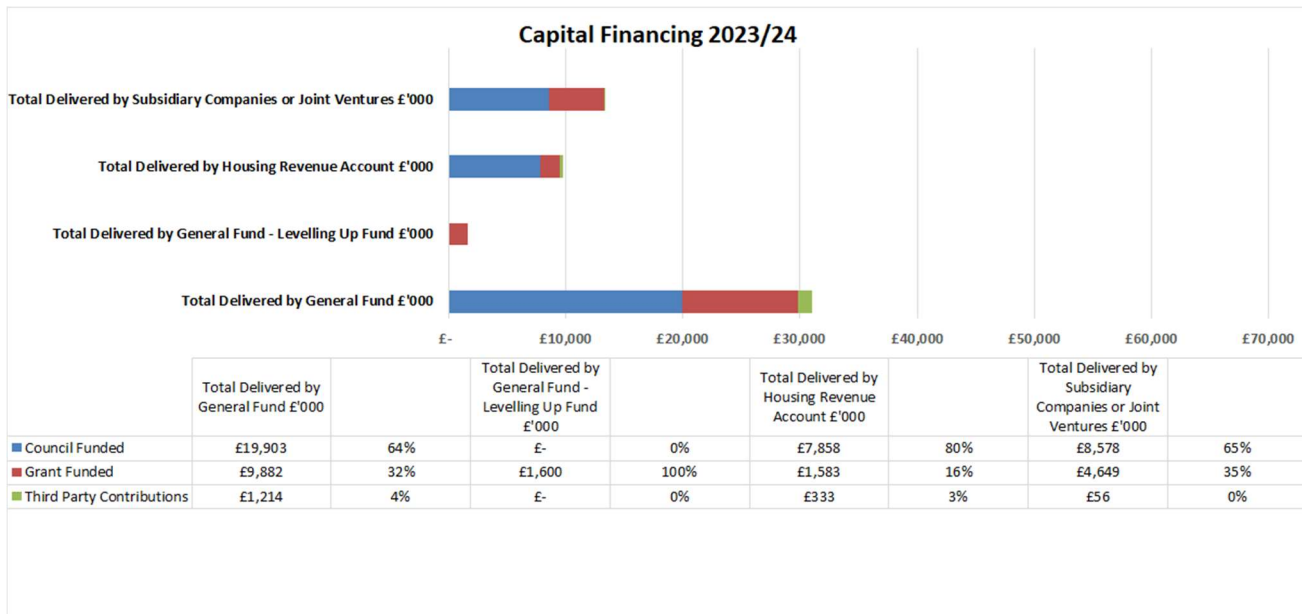
General Fund Capital Investment Programme Expected Outturn 2023/24



	Expected Outturn 2023/24	
Social Care	£	501,000
Energy Saving	£	231,000
Community Safety	£	142,000
	£	874,000



The capital investment for 2023/24 is proposed to be funded as follows:



Third party contributions are non-grant funding from external sources such as S106 contributions.

Of the £19.317 million of external funding expected, £18.169 million had been received by 30 November 2023.

2. Progress of Strategic Schemes

Successful and timely delivery of the capital investment programme is a key part of delivering the Corporate Plan.

£38.330 million of this relates to strategic schemes and approximately 48% spend has been achieved to date for these strategic schemes.

Investment Area	Scheme	Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Outturn to 30 November 2023 £000	Expected outturn 2023/24 £000	Latest Expected Variance to Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Amended Budget 2024/25 to 2027/28 £000
Strategic Schemes						
Enterprise and Regeneration	Airport Business Park (including Local Growth Fund)	908	517	908	-	825
Enterprise and Regeneration	Better Queensway - Programme Management	554	388	484	(70)	270
Enterprise and Regeneration	Queensway Footbridge	150	-	150	-	80
Works to Property	Victoria Centre	876	612	876	-	-
Social Care	Brook Meadows House	-	437	437	437	-
Schools	High Needs Provision	1,661	466	232	(1,429)	6,641
Southend Pier	Southend Pier schemes	1,499	913	1,499	-	6,741
ICT	ICT schemes	3,367	2,045	3,614	247	4,828
Highways and Infrastructure	Footways and Carriageways Schemes	5,373	4,343	5,592	219	12,992
Highways and Infrastructure	Parking Schemes	503	136	503	-	-
Highways and Infrastructure	Transport Plan Schemes	3,447	1,489	3,308	(139)	3,467
Total General Fund Strategic Schemes		18,338	11,346	17,603	(735)	35,844
Enterprise and Regeneration	Leigh Port Detailed Design and Construction	1,000	307	1,000	-	13,206
Enterprise and Regeneration	Cliffs Pavilion	500	363	500	-	6,956
Enterprise and Regeneration	Marine Parade	1,238	14	100	(1,138)	1,938
Total General Fund - Funded by Levelling Up Fund Strategic Schemes		2,738	684	1,600	(1,138)	22,100
Council Housing New Build Programme	Council Housing New Build Programme	1,523	287	1,513	(10)	9,933
Council Housing Acquisitions	HRA Affordable Housing Acquisitions Programme	2,878	1,527	2,878	-	-
Council Housing Acquisitions	Acquisition of Tower Block Leaseholds - Queensway	450	-	450	-	-
Total HRA Strategic Schemes		4,851	1,814	4,841	(10)	9,933
Council Housing Refurbishment	HRA Decent Homes Programme	8,578	4,425	8,578	-	19,094
Enterprise and Regeneration	Better Queensway - SELEP	3,825	-	3,825	-	-
Total Delivered by Subsidiary Companies and Joint Ventures Strategic Schemes		12,403	4,425	12,403	-	19,094
Total Strategic Schemes		38,330	18,269	36,447	(1,883)	86,971

Strategic schemes - General Fund

Enterprise and Regeneration

The Launchpad at the Airport Business Park has now opened. There is still some outstanding expenditure to be incurred, which was estimated in the November Cabinet report to be £1,317k. There have been no changes to this estimate since November.

The refurbishment works to the Victoria Centre are progressing, and a number of the projects within this are now complete. The Council is committed to works which will utilise the remaining 2023/24 budget by the end of the financial year. As reported to November Cabinet, any works over and above the current commitments will be subject to a viable business case being presented.

Better Queensway Programme Management: the Council remains committed to the Better Queensway project and has secured Capacity Funding from Homes England towards this project. There however continue to be delays in this project. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £70k to 2024/25.

The Queensway footbridge is in the final stages of the demolition design process. The project is expected to commence onsite in March 2024. Demolition works are expected to be carried out quickly from this point, and within budget.

Social Care

As reported in previous Cabinet reports, construction of the new care home Brook Meadows House was completed in 2021/22 with residents having moved into the building in early 2022 and the Priory Care Home has been demolished. Works incurred during 2022/23 and 2023/24 do not have a budget allocation with £437k of expenditure incurred in 2023/24 over and above the overspend of £4.9M already incurred in 2021/22 and 2022/23. The overspend has been incurred due to a number of issues including the performance of the design team. The Council is currently taking forward actions with a view to recovering significant costs incurred where these have been caused by the performance of third parties. The timing of any cost recovery is uncertain.

Schools

The High Needs Provision budget is financed by grant monies from the Department for Education to enhance the facilities and number of places available for children with special educational needs and disabilities or requiring alternative provision. This project has commenced in 2023/24 but has not made as much progress as previously anticipated and is not now expected to conclude until 2025/26. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £1,429k from 2023/24 to 2024/25, and £4,224k from 2024/25 to 2025/26.

Southend Pier

Whilst work on the pier schemes are in progress, different elements of the project are at different stages of completion. Planned work in the summer months is limited with more significant expenditure anticipated to be incurred over the winter. All 2023/24 budgets are anticipated to be fully utilised by the end of the financial year.

ICT

Whilst work on ICT schemes is in progress, different projects are at different stages of completion. There are four projects where work which was planned for 2023/24 is now expected to take place in 2024/25. This report therefore includes requests to carry forward £40k, £27k, £15k and £40k against projects ICT Application Transformation, ICT Childrens and Adults Social Care – Implementation of ContrOCC Modules, ICT Core Application and Database Migration and ICT Digital Enablement respectively.

Four of the Council's software systems have moved to new SAAS models in 2023/24. As a result, there is now an annual subscription fee which needs to be paid for the licenses for these applications, which replaces the support and maintenance costs previously incurred. The total cost of these licenses for 2023/24 is £535k, of which £166k can be funded from existing capital budgets. This report therefore includes a request to add an additional budget of £369k to the Software Licensing project. There will be associated cost savings in revenue as a result of the above changes.

Highways and Infrastructure

The Footways and Carriageway schemes are progressing well with plans in place to deliver the allocated budget by the end of the financial year. Both are on course to overspend against their budgets as a result of inflationary pressures, with an estimated overspend of £110k across the two projects. The funding of this potential overspend is currently being reviewed.

New grant funding of £219k has been received for each of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 years relating to potholes. This report therefore includes a request to add new budgets of £219k to each year.

There is limited work planned for the remainder of 2023/24 on the A127 growth corridor project. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £139k to 2024/25.

Works on the Local Transport Plan Maintenance, Better Networks, Traffic Management Schemes, Better Operation of Traffic Control Systems, Better Sustainable Transport and Street Lighting projects are ongoing. It is anticipated that the total spend across all schemes in 2023/24 will be in line with the budget.

Car Parks

Car park infrastructure improvement works are progressing and are expected to be delivered in line with the budget.

No expenditure has been incurred for the year-to-date on parking signage replacement. This project will fund replacement signs required as a result of parking tariff changes which will be decided upon towards the end of the financial year. The allocated budget is expected to be utilised in full.

Strategic schemes - General Fund - Funded by the Levelling Up Fund

Enterprise & Regeneration

Leigh Port remains on course to be delivered within the timetable proposed at November Cabinet. The project is expected to complete by March 2025, with the majority of work undertaken in 2024/25.

As previously reported to Cabinet, progress against the Marine Parade project has been limited in recent months. The project is about to go out to tender with the work due to commence later in 2023/24. This is a further delay than previously reported, and this report therefore includes a request to carry forward £1,138k to 2024/25.

As reported in previous Cabinet reports, the Cliffs Pavilion project was placed on hold to enable the commercial terms to be agreed between the Council and the current operator. There have now been further delays as the tender results with the current operator were higher than expected and were determined to not represent value for money. The project will be re-tendered in early 2024. The majority of this project is expected to be delivered in 2024/25, and a request was previously made at July Cabinet to carry forward most of the budget to that year.

Strategic schemes - Housing Revenue Account

Construction of New Housing on HRA Land

The Council has entered into the main contract for phase 3A and is expecting to commence onsite works in early 2024. Expenditure is expected to accrue quickly in the coming months and the project remains on course to be delivered within the timetable communicated to November Cabinet. Phase 3B is about to commence its procurement process.

As previously reported to Cabinet, planning permission for Phase 4 was obtained at Development Control Committee in October 2022. An issue with access to the site has subsequently arisen regarding a right of way, which is yet to be resolved. This has resulted in delays to the project, and it is unlikely any significant work will be performed in 2023/24. The Council is expecting to go out for tender for this project imminently. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £50k from 2023/24 to 2024/25, and £1,384k from 2024/25 to 2025/26.

As previously reported to Cabinet, there have been delays to the West Shoebury scheme as a result of the Council parting company with the main contractor. The Council is currently in the process of exiting the existing contract. A new contract can then be issued with the intention to commence works in 2024/25. The project remains on course to be delivered to the timetable communicated to November Cabinet.

This report includes a request to add £40k of funds to the phase 5/6 feasibility project in order to utilise existing S106 funds.

The land assembly fund project was to be utilised to purchase one dwelling in 2023/24, the purchase of which has now been completed. This project was previously funded by S106 contributions. In order to utilise the available stamp duty land tax reliefs, this project includes

a request to fund £111k of the project costs using capital receipts rather than S106 contributions. As a result of this change, £111k of S106 receipts will be made available for other projects.

Affordable Housing Acquisitions Programme

11 properties are to be acquired under this programme in 2023/24. They have all either been purchased or are currently with solicitors awaiting completion. The total cost of these properties is expected to utilise the allocated budget in full in 2023/24.

Acquisition of Tower Block Leaseholds – Queensway

There are four properties currently with solicitors awaiting completion, and a fifth property which is currently in the pipeline. If these properties complete before year-end, the 2023/24 budget will be fully utilised.

Strategic schemes - Subsidiary Companies and Joint Ventures

HRA Decent Homes Programme

The main programme works are contractually committed and progressing. All works are under contract, although there have been some delays due to supply chain issues. The overall budget is expected to be spent over the course of 2023/24.

Better Queensway

The Council remains fully committed to the Better Queensway regeneration scheme for the benefit of the residents of the estate. There is no change at this stage to the position reported to November Cabinet.

3. Progress of other schemes

General Fund

Highways and Infrastructure

As reported to November Cabinet, there have been delays to the Belton Way East Cliff Slip project as a result of badgers continuing to access the site. The delays are not as severe as previously expected. This report therefore includes a request to accelerate delivery of £16k into 2023/24.

As reported to November Cabinet, there has also been a delay to procurement for traffic surveys to update the Southend Transport Model. Traffic surveys will now be undertaken in 2024/25 and the Model will be updated in 2024/25. The delays are not as severe as previously expected. This report therefore includes a request to accelerate delivery of £50k into 2023/24.

The Safer Roads project relating to the A13 is expected to commence in early 2024. This is a delay from previous proposals, and this report therefore includes a request to carry forward £500k from 2023/24 to 2024/25 and £1,588k from 2024/25 to 2025/26.

Urgent works to the sea wall at Two Tree Island have been identified, with the estimated cost of temporary repairs being £100k. This report therefore includes a request to bring £100k of the £500k of funds relating to the coastal defence refurbishment programme, which is currently subject to viable business case, into the capital programme for 2023/24. This will be added to the sea wall access refurbishment project.

Works to Property

There is expected to be limited further work performed on the Civic Centre – efficient use of space project in 2023/24. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £169k to 2024/25.

The Parks Fuel Storage project has been completed with an underspend of £2k. This report therefore includes a request to release the remaining unspent budget of £2k from 2023/24.

There is not expected to be any further progress on the Seaways – Homes England Conditions Funding project in 2023/24 or 2024/25. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £99k from 2024/25 to 2025/26.

Schools

The Fairways Primary curtain walling project has been detailed and is not now expected to take place until 2024/25. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £95k to 2024/25.

The Special Provision Capital Fund is expected to be completed in 2023/24. This report therefore includes a request to accelerate delivery of the £262k budget currently allocated to 2024/25 into 2023/24.

New external funding of £224k relating to Childcare Expansion has been notified to the Council. This report therefore includes a request to add a budget of £224k to 2024/25 in respect of this funding.

Energy Saving

New external funding towards the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure scheme has been secured. This report therefore includes requests to add new budgets of £148k to 2024/25 and 2025/26 respectively.

Culture and Tourism

It was reported to November Cabinet that the allotments water supply upgrade and irrigation tanks projects have not made any progress so far in 2023/24, and both projects were therefore placed on hold, with the budgets of £7k and £24k respectively being released from the main capital programme subject to a viable business case being produced. The irrigation tanks project has now been completed at a cost of £16k. This report therefore includes a request to reinstate a budget of £16k in respect of this project, and to remove the remaining £8k.

The Cliffs Pavilion Auditorium Air Handling Unit project is now complete with an overspend of £1k. The Cliffs Pavilion Air Handling Unit project remains in progress but is expected to come in under budget. This report therefore includes a request to transfer £1k from Air Handling Unit project to the Auditorium Air Handling Unit project.

Social Care

The disabled facilities programme is ahead of schedule. This report therefore includes a request accelerate delivery of £195k from 2027/28 to 2023/24.

S106/S38/CIL

This report includes a request to add budgets for two projects which will be funded by CIL contributions as follows:

- CIL Ward NA - Victoria - Patchwork Orchard Project: £5k
- CIL Ward NA - Prittlewell - Gainsborough Park Woodland and Orchard Project: £4k

The enhancing children's play provision in public parks project has commenced but is still in the early stages. The November Cabinet report include a request to carry forward £250k to 2024/25. This report includes a request to carry forward an additional £250k to 2024/25.

The enhancing cycle infrastructure scheme is to be reviewed. This report therefore includes a proposal to remove £850k from the capital programme, subject to a viable business case being received.

There have been delays in three S106 projects meaning they will not now take place until 2024/25. This report therefore includes requests to carry forward budgets of £8k, £2k and £1k respectively to 2024/25 for projects: S106 23/04/2015 Hinguar and Saxon - Public Art Contribution, S106 Avenue Works 14/01968/AMDT - Public Art and S106 Former Balmoral 14/00914/FULM - Public Art Contribution.

Housing Revenue Account

The Next Steps Accommodation Programme, which is used to refurbish properties for complex needs, is progressing, but there has not been as much need for these funds in 2023/24 as expected. The need for these funds is also expected to be reduced in 2024/25. Previous Cabinet reports included requests to carry forward £50k to 2024/25. This report includes a request to carry forward this £50k from 2024/25 to 2025/26.

As previously reported to September Cabinet, the Passive House Pilot project has experienced delays with obtaining planning permission. As of September, it was considered unlikely that any significant work will be performed on this project in 2023/24. Works are now progressing slightly quicker than expected, and this report therefore includes a request to accelerate delivery of £50k from 2024/25 to 2023/24.

The social housing decarbonisation fund, which aims to bring all Council dwellings up to a minimum energy rating standard, has experienced delays due to teething issues with the contractor. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £480k to 2024/25. The project is expected to complete by March 2025.

Previous Cabinet reports have included requests to carry forward amounts in respect of the HRA disabled adaptations project from 2023/24 to 2024/25. 2024/25 expenditure is expected to be in line with the revised 2023/24 position. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £394k from 2024/25 to 2025/26.

Subsidiary Companies and Joint Ventures

The No Use Empty – Growing Places Fund is not expected to commence until 2024/25. This report therefore includes a request to carry forward £500k to 2024/25.

4. Requested Changes to the Capital Investment Programme

Summary - programme to be delivered by the Council:

	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
Approved Capital Investment Programme - November 2023 Cabinet	45,502	64,376	11,169	6,681	4,172	131,900
Carry Forwards	(4,453)	(3,286)	7,739	-	-	-
Accelerated Deliveries	573	(378)	-	-	(195)	-
Additions to the Programme	369	-	-	-	-	369
Deletions from the Programme	(2)	-	-	-	-	(2)
Virements	-	-	-	-	-	-
New External Funding	268	591	148	-	-	1,007
Transfers from 'Subject to Viable Business Case' section of the programme	116	-	-	-	-	116
Transfers to 'Subject to Viable Business Case' section of the programme	-	(850)	-	-	-	(850)
Proposed Investment Programme - following amendments	42,373	60,453	19,056	6,681	3,977	132,540

Summary - programme to be delivered by Subsidiary Companies, Partners and Joint Ventures:

	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
Approved Capital Investment Programme - November 2023 Cabinet	13,783	6,774	6,329	6,491	-	33,377
Carry Forwards	(500)	500	-	-	-	-
Proposed Investment Programme - following amendments	13,283	7,274	6,329	6,491	-	33,377

Carry Forwards to Future Years - programme to be delivered by the Council

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
Marine Parade - Levelling Up Funding	(1,138)	1,138	-	-	-	-
Local Growth Fund - A127 Growth Corridor	(139)	139	-	-	-	-
Better Queensway - Programme Management	(70)	70	-	-	-	-
Safer Roads Fund - A13	(500)	(1,088)	1,588	-	-	-
CIL Main Fund Allocation - Enhancing Children's Play Provision in Public	(250)	250	-	-	-	-
Housing Construction Scheme - Phase 4	(50)	(1,334)	1,384	-	-	-
Next Steps Accommodation Programme	-	(50)	50	-	-	-
Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding	(480)	480	-	-	-	-
ICT - Application Transformation	(40)	40	-	-	-	-
ICT - Childrens and Adults Social Care - Implementation of ContrOCC	(27)	27	-	-	-	-
ICT - Core Application and Database Migration	(15)	15	-	-	-	-
ICT - Digital Enablement	(40)	40	-	-	-	-
Civic Campus - Efficient Use of Space	(169)	169	-	-	-	-
Seaways - Homes England Condition Funding	-	(99)	99	-	-	-
High Needs Provision	(1,429)	(2,795)	4,224	-	-	-
Fairways Primary - Curtain Walling	(95)	95	-	-	-	-
S106 23/04/2015 Hinguar and Saxon - Public Art Contribution	(8)	8	-	-	-	-
S106 Avenue Works 14/01968/AMDT - Public Art Contribution	(2)	2	-	-	-	-
S106 Former Balmoral 14/00914/FULM - Public Art Contribution	(1)	1	-	-	-	-
HRA Disabled Adaptations - Major Adaptions	-	(394)	394	-	-	-
Total Carry Forwards - programme to be delivered by the Council	(4,453)	(3,286)	7,739	-	-	-

Carry Forwards to Future Years - programme to be delivered by Subsidiary Companies, Partners and Joint Ventures

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
No Use Empty - Growing Places Fund	(500)	500	-	-	-	-
Total Carry Forwards - programme to be delivered by Subsidiary Companies, Partners and Joint Ventures	(500)	500	-	-	-	-

Accelerated Deliveries - programme to be delivered by the Council

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
DFT - Belton Way East Cliff Slip	16	(16)				-
Southend Transport Model	50	(50)				-
Passive House Pilot	50	(50)				-
Special Provision Capital Fund	262	(262)				-
Disabled Facilities	195				(195)	-
Total Accelerated Deliveries - programme to be delivered by the Council	573	(378)	-	-	(195)	-

Additions to the Programme - programme to be delivered by the Council

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
Software Licensing	369					369
Total Additions to the Programme - programme to be delivered by the Council	369	-	-	-	-	369

Deletions from the Programme - programme to be delivered by the Council

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
Parks Fuel Storage	(2)					(2)
Total Deletions from the Programme - programme to be delivered by the Council	(2)	-	-	-	-	(2)

Virements between schemes - programme to be delivered by the Council

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
Cliffs Pavilion - Air Handling Unit	(1)					(1)
Cliffs Pavilion - Auditorium Air Handling Unit	1					1
Total Virements between schemes - programme to be delivered by the Council	-	-	-	-	-	-

New External Funding - programme to be delivered by the Council

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
Housing Construction Scheme - Phase 5/6 Feasibility (S106)	40					40
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding		148	148			296
Highways Maintenance - Potholes	219	219				438
Childcare Expansion		224				224
CIL Ward NA - Victoria - Patchwork Orchard Project	5					5
CIL Ward NA - Prittlewell - Gainsborough Park Woodland and Orchard	4					4
Total New External Funding - programme to be delivered by the Council	268	591	148	-	-	1,007

Transfers from 'Subject to Viable Business Case' section to main Capital Investment Programme - programme to be delivered by the Council

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
Irrigation Tanks	16					16
Sea Wall Access Refurbishment	100					100
Total Transfers from 'Subject to Viable Business Case' section to main Capital Investment Programme - programme to be delivered by the Council	116	-	-	-	-	116

Transfers to 'Subject to Viable Business Case' section from main Capital Investment Programme - programme to be delivered by the Council

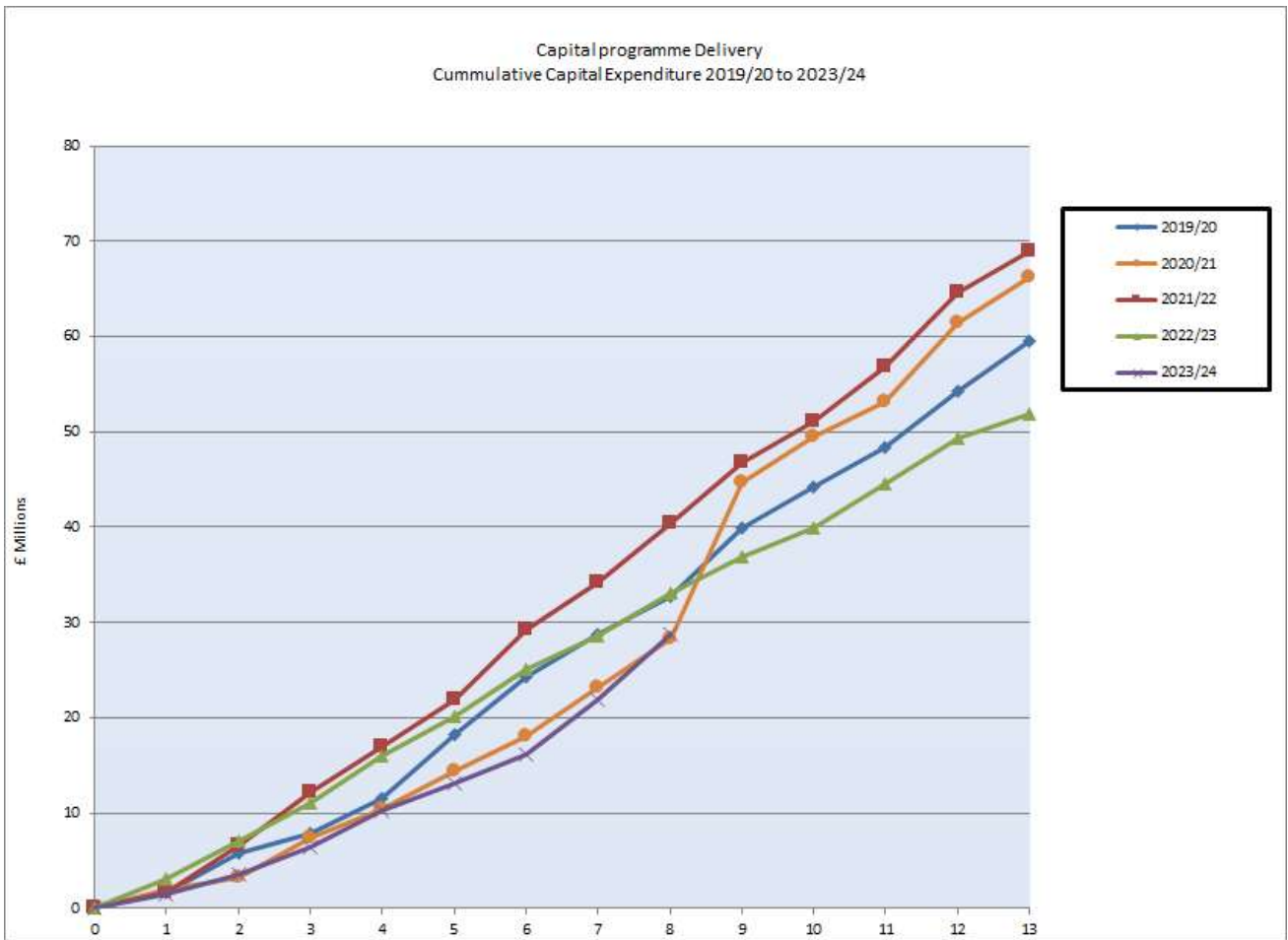
Scheme	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 and future years Budget £000	Total Budget (all years) £000
CIL Main Fund Allocation - Enhancing Cycle Infrastructure		(850)				(850)
Total Transfers to 'Subject to Viable Business Case' section from main Capital Investment Programme - programme to be delivered by the Council	-	(850)	-	-	-	(850)

5. Summary of Capital Expenditure at 30 November

	Original Budget 2023/24	Revisions	Revised Budget 2023/24	Actual 2023/24	Forecast outturn 2023/24	Forecast Variance to Year End 2023/24	% Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
General Fund Housing	1,135	(500)	635	417	630	195	66%
Social Care	263	(199)	64	437	501	437	683%
Schools	4,053	(1,294)	2,759	1,050	1,497	(1,262)	38%
Enterprise and Regeneration	2,195	(583)	1,612	905	1,542	(70)	56%
Southend Pier	5,053	(3,554)	1,499	913	1,499	0	61%
Culture and Tourism	152	754	906	602	922	16	66%
Community Safety	29	113	142	100	142	0	70%
Highways and Infrastructure	13,878	229	14,107	7,653	13,853	(254)	54%
Works to Property	6,739	(488)	6,251	3,380	6,080	(171)	54%
Energy Saving	256	(25)	231	58	231	0	25%
ICT	3,109	258	3,367	2,045	3,614	247	61%
S106/S38/CIL	35	942	977	73	725	(252)	7%
TOTAL PROGRAMME TO BE DELIVERED BY THE GENERAL FUND	38,897	(4,347)	32,550	17,633	31,436	(1,114)	54%
Enterprise and Regeneration	22,405	(19,667)	2,738	684	1,600	(1,138)	25%
TOTAL PROGRAMME TO BE DELIVERED BY THE GENERAL FUND - FUNDED BY THE LEVELLING UP FUND	22,405	(19,667)	2,738	684	1,600	(1,138)	25%
Council Housing New Build Programme	7,875	(6,352)	1,523	288	1,513	(10)	19%
Council Housing Acquisitions Programme	2,846	5,195	8,041	4,592	7,611	(430)	57%
Council Housing Refurbishment - Disabled Adaptations	770	(120)	650	337	650	0	52%
TOTAL PROGRAMME TO BE DELIVERED BY THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	11,491	(1,277)	10,214	5,217	9,774	(440)	51%
Council Housing Refurbishment	7,593	985	8,578	4,425	8,578	0	52%
Enterprise and Regeneration	17,050	(11,845)	5,205	774	4,705	(500)	15%
TOTAL PROGRAMME TO BE DELIVERED BY SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES OR JOINT VENTURES	24,643	(10,860)	13,783	5,199	13,283	(500)	38%
	95,436	(36,151)	59,285	28,733	56,093	(3,192)	48%
Council Approved Original Budget - February 2023	95,436						
Programme to be delivered by the General Fund							
General Fund Housing	(500)						
Social Care	(199)						
Schools	(1,294)						
Enterprise and Regeneration	(583)						
Southend Pier	(3,554)						
Culture and Tourism	754						
Community Safety	113						
Highways and Infrastructure	229						
Works to Property	(488)						
Energy Saving	(25)						
ICT	258						
S106/S38/CIL	942						
Programme to be delivered by the General Fund - Funded by the Levelling Up Fund							
Enterprise and Regeneration	(19,667)						
Programme to be delivered by Housing Revenue Account							
Council Housing New Build Programme	(6,352)						
Council Housing Acquisitions Programme	5,195						
Council Housing Refurbishment - Disabled Adaptations	(120)						
Programme to be delivered by Subsidiary companies or Joint Ventures							
Council Housing Refurbishment	985						
Enterprise and Regeneration	(11,845)						
Council Approved Revised Budget - November 2023	59,285						

Actual compared to Revised Budget spent is £28.733M or 48%

6. Capital Programme Delivery



Year	Outturn £m	Outturn Against Budget %
2019/20	59.5	83.8
2020/21	66.2	81.0
2021/22	69.0	88.0
2022/23	52.0	83.0

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 11 January 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: No
Title of Report: **Corporate Performance Report - November 2023 (period 8)**

Executive Director: Claire Shuter (Strategy and Change)
Report Author: Suzanne Newman, Head of Corporate Strategy
Executive Councillor: Councillor Cox, Leader of the Council

1 Executive Summary

The corporate performance report is a key tool in scrutinising the Council's overall performance against the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan alongside the financial performance report. It is designed to provide an overview to all relevant stakeholders at regular stages throughout the financial year. It is essential that the Council monitors and assesses its performance regularly to ensure that it is meeting its strategic objectives and providing value for money. This approach highlights where corrective action is necessary and reasonable mitigation is required to try to deliver against performance targets alongside a balanced financial position by the end of the year.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet notes the Corporate Performance Report as at 30 November 2023 set out in Appendix 1.

3 Corporate Performance

3.1 The Corporate Performance for November 2023 report (Appendix 1) covers Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which align to the corporate priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2023-2017 and highlights the Council's overall performance against agreed corporate objectives.

3.2 The report shows our performance predominantly up to the period of November 2023, with some exceptions where data is unavailable at this time. Data has been rated against targets using Red, Amber Green (RAG) ratings where applicable and compares our current position to the previous month and previous year where data is available.

3.3 The report reflects the council's recently refreshed Corporate Plan (2023-2027) and how the council is performing against the agreed priorities detailed within the plan. This is presented by the four refreshed priorities:

1. A growing city with a strong and prosperous community
2. A safe city with a good quality of life for all
3. A clean city with a resilient environment
4. A transforming council delivering efficient, cost-effective services

3.4 Each of the four priorities are further broken down into corporate objectives, with the most appropriate KPI linked to illustrate how well the objective is performing. The refreshed corporate objectives are:

A growing city with a strong and prosperous community

Objectives:

- Economic regeneration and business development
- Spending power used wisely
- Enhanced tourism, culture and leisure

A safe city with a good quality of life for all

Objectives:

- Safe, inclusive communities and neighbourhoods
- People live well, age well and care well
- Children and young people, including those in care, feel and are safe at home, school and in their communities
- Quality, affordable safe homes

A clean city with a resilient environment

Objectives:

- Enhanced and protected street scene and environment
- Improved transport system
- Prevent waste, promoting re-use and increase recycling

A transforming council delivering efficient, cost-effective services

Objectives:

- Value for Money
- Transformation

3.5 The Council's strategic KPIs demonstrate measures that provide an indication of the Council's performance towards our corporate objectives. They are often short to medium term in the time taken to see a difference in performance and the Council has greater influence in affecting them. The strategic KPIs are fulfilled by Council services through strategies, action plans, programmes, projects and initiatives detailed in Service Plans.

3.6 The KPIs currently showing as red on their RAG status, indicate that they are at risk of missing target. These indicators are noted below by way of exception:

A safe city with a good quality of life for all

3.7 **Take up of the NHS Health Check programme**

This is a monthly measure. The Office for Health Improvement & Disparities report that the percentage of Health Checks offered and received for 2023/24 quarter 2 has increased, which tracks with Southend's increase from 1,577 (September 2023) to 2,024 (November 2023).

Engagement and improvements in partnership working, with Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System, continues to further improve the take up of the NHS Health Check. Following investigation and engagement, four GP practices that have not delivered the Health Check programme have confirmed their intention to commence delivery in 2024 to support improvement of this measure.

3.8 Percentage of children receiving MMR vaccinations (two doses at 5 years old)

This is a quarterly measure. The percentage uptake in Southend for MMR 2 doses at 5 years is higher at 85% than England at 84.5% but lower than the East of England regional uptake at 87.9%.

Work planned and undertaken to support improvement of this measure includes Community Conversation (held in December 2023) focusing on keeping Southend Healthy; work in progress with EPUT to support catch up childhood vaccinations in primary schools, linked with nurseries and children's centres (to take place between January – March 2024); further work with the Childrens Family Young Persons Services to improve uptake and engage with parents and carers, including the dissemination of information resources by School nurses and Health visitors.

3.9 Rate of children on child protection plan per 10,000 population

This is a monthly measure. As of October 2023 Gov.uk report that children on protection plans in 2023 have had a slight decrease against 2022 statistics. This trend tracks with Southend where there is a slight reduction of child protection plans from November 2023 (29.99) against November 2022 figures (32.211). There has been a slight increase from October 2023 (29.2) to November 2023 (29.99). This continues to be an area of focus including the review of Children In Need over the coming 12 months to ensure that children are being supported at the right level.

3.10 Percentage of placements in residential and Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) settings

This is a monthly measure. Ofsted reporting evidences that in mainstream fostering, there has been an increasing use of IFAs nationally, with Local Authorities accounting for a steadily decreasing proportion of all approved households, from 61% in 2018 to 58% in 2022. In this period, IFAs have seen an increase in capacity of 3%, whilst the Local Authority sector has seen an 8% decrease. There has also been a downward trend in the number of applications for both Local Authorities and IFAs, and a higher number of deregistration's compared with approvals.

Increases in the use of residential and IFA settings coincides with increasing numbers of children in care in Southend, as well as an increase in complex

needs of these children. A focus on returning children and young people to their birth families where possible looks to reduce the number of children in care. The council is focussing time and effort on recruiting more Southend foster carers and encouraging more conversations with local residential providers to ensure Children and Young People are provided with more geographical appropriate placements.

3.11 Percentage of Children Looked After (CLA) long-term stability

This is a monthly measure. Latest national data from gov.uk illustrates improved performance from March 2022 to March 2023, which tracks with Southend (67% in March 2023 against 62.9% in March 2022). The reduced performance at period 8 in Southend appears to be a localised issue; the Fostering team are working on their marketing strategy and there is hope the increase in inhouse carers over the coming year will mean we are able to offer direct support to improve this measure.

3.12 Total number of households in temporary accommodation

This is a monthly measure. There is a national housing issue contributing to the Council's rise in temporary accommodation. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities released data in October 2023 demonstrating that households in temporary accommodation rose by 10% nationally from the same period last year. Locally this pressure is being further impacted by high volumes of out of area placements by other local authorities into Southend, the pressures arising from central government, refugee resettlement and asylum policy, frozen Local Housing Allowance rates and a declining private sector rented offer. The Hostel Improvement project is progressing with South Essex Homes looking at optimising use and improving standards within our current hostels and new build development opportunities.

A clean city with a resilient environment

3.13 Percentage of waste recycled

This is an annual measure. The latest national statistics for recycling provided by the Department for Environmental Food & Rural Affairs (2021 data, reported in 2023) notes that there was a small increase of households recycling in England from 2020 (44.0%) to 2021 (44.1%). This is compared to pre-COVID rates of 45.5% in 2019, demonstrating the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the difficulty in returning to previous recycling rates.

The council will continue to use a variety of tools including resident engagement to maintain and increase recycling rates over time; 2022 data will be released at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

A transforming council delivering efficient, cost-effective services

3.14 Ensure a balanced budget for 2023/24

The council is dealing with an unprecedented financial crisis that has impacted across all of Local Government. For 23/24 the council is focusing on a range of

initiatives to help break even with our finances for 23/24. The direction of travel towards no variance is positive as the level of overspend has reduced by £4.4m between period 6 to period 8.

- 3.15 For ease of reading, a Glossary of Terms is provided in the Corporate Performance report – Period 8 2023-24 (Appendix 1 pages 17-19).
- 3.16 The following table sets out corporate risks affiliated to KPIs. The KPIs with associated risks can be read throughout the SCC Corporate Plan Performance Report (Appendix 1).
- 3.17 Aligning our corporate risks and performance enables a holistic approach to understanding and presenting the impact the council’s highest risks may have on performance, and to allow for risk mitigation and planning to be informed by performance data. Performance can act as an early warning sign for risks, enabling performance to be viewed systemically and early mitigation to take place. The remaining corporate risks are overarching and therefore not linked to KPIs (4 – Public services landscape, 5 – Workforce, 6 – a) Cyber security b) Data protection, 7- Capital investment programme delivery, 12 – Other safeguarding responsibilities, 14 – Staffing vacancies impacting on the delivery of statutory responsibilities, 19 – Local Plan, 20 - Regeneration and major projects); the full risk register reference key can be found on SCC Corporate Plan Performance Report page 16.

Corporate Risks Associated With KPIs	
2 – Financial sustainability	13 – Health inequalities
3 – Inflation and cost of living pressures	15 – Adult social care
8 – Transformation programme	16 – Social cohesion
9– Mitigating for and adapting to climate change	17 – Housing
10 – Waste Management	18 – House building programme
11 – Safeguarding responsibilities and child welfare	21 – Visitor destination and major events
13 – Health inequalities	22 - Economic recovery and income inequalities

- 3.18 The following breakdown provides an overview of the corporate risks aligned to KPIs that are not meeting target (please note some KPIs are aligned to multiple risks). This illustrates what potential impacts may arise as a result of performance not meeting target:

Corporate Risks with KPIs not meeting target		
Corporate Risk	Proportion of KPIs that are Red or Amber	Potential impact
2 – Financial sustainability	1/9 KPIs rated red (11%)	This may impact the medium to long term financial sustainability of the Council.
9– Mitigating for and adapting to climate change	2/9 KPIs rated red (22%) 1/9 rated amber (12.5%)	This may impact the council’s ability to make an adequate contribution to the reduction in carbon emissions required.
10 – Waste Management	1/9 KPIs rated red (11%)	This may impact the Council’s ability to effectively manage waste arrangements results in a loss of service quality and additional financial liability for the Council.
11 – Safeguarding responsibilities and child welfare	3/9 KPIs rated red (33%) 2/9 rated amber (22%)	This could cause a failure to deliver the outcomes anticipated for vulnerable people that need support.
13 – Health inequalities	2/9 KPIs rated red (22%) 2/9 rated amber (22%)	This may impact on widening health inequalities in the city.
15 – Adult social care	1/9 rated amber (11%)	This could cause difficulty in meeting increasing demand for support, resulting in worsening outcomes for those in need of support.
17 – Housing	1/9 KPIs rated red (11%) 2/9 rated amber (22%)	This may impact on the council’s ability to address rising homelessness, particularly with the ongoing cost of living pressures.
18 – House building programme	1/8 rated amber (11%)	This may impact pressure on the local housing market and the ability to deliver the anticipated housing supply.

4 Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1 The Corporate Performance Report informs decision making to ensure that the Council’s priorities are on track to be achieved and aligns with the Financial Performance Report to ensure that they are delivered within the approved budget provision.
- 4.2 Improving efficiency and productivity is essential but the scale of the unprecedented financial pressures will inevitably lead to a reduction in the range, quality, cost and responsiveness of other discretionary Council services, as well as challenging our approach to statutory services.

5 Other Options

- 5.1 The Council could choose to monitor its corporate performance against an alternative timeframe, but it is considered that the current reporting schedule provides the appropriate balance to allow strategic oversight of the budget by members and to also formally manage the Council's exposure to financial risk. More frequent monitoring is undertaken by officers and considered by individual service Directors and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) including the implementation of any necessary remedial actions.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The delivery of the Council's corporate plan and its related performance is undertaken within the overall budget resources of the Council and any adverse spending and its funding to achieve the related performance is identified within the finance budget monitoring report elsewhere on this agenda.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The report provides performance information. It is good governance and sensible management practice for the Council to consider monitoring information in relation to plans and budgets that it has adopted.
- 7.2 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires the Council as a best value authority to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". Monitoring of financial and other performance information is an important way in which that obligation can be fulfilled.

8 Carbon Impact

- 8.1 None arising from this report.

9 Equalities

- 9.1 Some of the actions may have equality and diversity implications and these will be considered as part of our normal equalities impact assessments.

10 Consultation

- 10.1 Engagement has already been made with staff and cabinet members and now with all councillors and this will continue as options to mitigate for 2023/24 are progressed as well as options for delivering a robust balanced budget for 2024/25.

11 Background Papers

12 Appendix

12.1 Appendix 1: Corporate Performance report – Period 8 2023-24

Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:

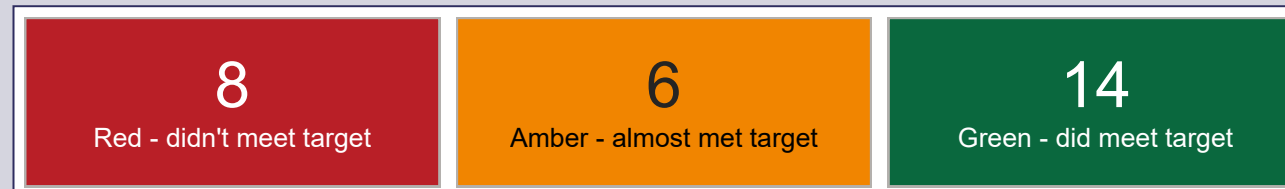
This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	02.01.24
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	18.12.23
Executive Director(s)	Claire Shuter	22.12.23
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Cox	03.01.24

Corporate Plan Performance Dashboard

The Corporate Plan Performance Report includes performance indicators relating to the council's recently refreshed Corporate Plan (2023 to 2027). This report shows our corporate performance presented by the four refreshed priorities. Where applicable, data has been RAG rated against targets.

Relevant corporate risks are noted underneath each applicable Key Performance Indicator (KPI) title.

For further information, please contact Insights@southend.gov.uk



91

A growing city with a strong and prosperous community

- economic regeneration and business development
- spending power used wisely
- enhanced tourism, culture and leisure

A safe city with a good quality of life for all

- safe, inclusive communities and neighbourhoods
- people live well, age well and care well
- children and young people, including those in care, feel and are safe at home, school and in their communities
- quality, affordable safe homes

A clean city with a resilient environment

- enhanced and protected street scene and environment
- improved transport system
- prevent waste, promoting re-use and increase recycling

A transforming council delivering efficient, cost-effective services

- value for money
- transformation

Corporate Risk Register key

Glossary

A growing city with a strong and prosperous community



Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Amount of council's spend with local businesses Corporate Risk Register: risk 2 and 3 CP01.001 NS	Maximise	2023/24	--	£63,000,000	GREEN	--	£63,456,910
		Annual	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest Note Procurement continue to: attend Southend Business Partnership events to promote how local businesses can access our procurement portal, contract register, pipeline procurement plan and other public sector opportunities run quarterly on-line workshops with local businesses around sourcing and bidding for public sector contracts participate in Economic Recovery group alongside Economic Development promote the supplier search functionality in business world remind officers that they are expected to single source contracts (up to £10k) via local suppliers and seek at least 2 quotes from local suppliers on spend from £10-25k (as long as we have local suppliers in that given market) report and promote the above as part of the EDLT dashboard reports (October-November)							
Visitor numbers to Southend Pier Corporate Risk Register: risk 21 CP01.002	Maximise	November 2023	320,708	313,800	GREEN	286,291	322,603
		Monthly	Cumulative - year to date	Monthly target			
Latest note In November 2023, the pier attracted 7,564 visitors, keeping us on course to achieve our year's target. This was a decrease of 1,220 visitors compared to the same month last year, when 8,784 visitors were recorded. This can be explained by November being a particularly rainy month this year. We are hoping for a dry December and are planning for a busy festive period with the Santa event at the end of the pier.							

A safe city with a good quality of life for all



Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Take up of the NHS Health Check programme Corporate Risk Register: risk 13 CP02.001	Maximise	November 2023	2024	2904	RED	1577	1375
		Monthly	Cumulative - year to date	Monthly target			
Latest note 20 practices have delivered health checks since April 2023. The four practices that have not yet delivered any health checks have confirmed their intention to start the delivery in 2024. We are continuing to support the four practices on the outstanding actions to start the process. To date, nearly half (49%) of health checks have been delivered to residents in more deprived areas of Southend-on-Sea.							
Number of physically inactive adults completing a physical activity course Corporate Risk Register: risk 13 CP02.002	Maximise	November 2023	286	272	GREEN	230	328
		Monthly	Cumulative - year to date	Monthly target			
Latest note On schedule to achieve the annual target. The figure achieved to date is 286. Local providers held various sports and physical activity courses for adults doing little physical activity each week. Courses were weekly sessions over a set period of time and included bouldering, netball and fitness. The courses were successful due to providers establishing demand before hosting and providing support for those who completed them to maintain physical activity.							
Rate of under-18 conceptions Corporate Risk Register: risk 13 CP02.003	Minimise	2023/24	--	9.50	AMBER	--	--
		Annual	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note Over the last 18 years, the under-18 conception rate has fallen by over 72%, with all councils achieving reductions. Southend-on-Sea has seen a decrease after a period of plateau, but it's unclear if this is due to Covid or if it's sustained. Teenage conception data is lagging due to two-year data requirements (conception and birth may occur in two different calendar years). The latest conception rates are for 2021/22, due to be refreshed in June 2024. Where Southend-on-Sea is as of the 21/22 data: Currently below the England average (13.1 per 1000) at 9.8 per 1,000 births Currently below East of England average (11.0 per 1000) The East of England range is 8.5-18.7 RAG rated amber both regionally and with statistically neighbours Statistical neighbours range from 9.0 (green) to 21.1 (red), Southend amber at 9.8 The council's Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parents Working Group is implementing a range of strategies and activities to prevent unplanned teenage conceptions and provide support to young parents. This includes: Supporting and improving the relationship and sex education delivered by schools and understating the quality of this provision Targeting support for children at high risk for becoming young parents, including those in care and those with poor educational attendance and journeys Increasing access to emergency contraception and long-acting reversible contraception Accessing voice of young people undergoing an abortion to understand any missed opportunities at prevention Increasing skills and networking of professionals actively carrying caseloads of young parents to reduce inequalities and improve synergy Improving the access to timely, young people friendly contraception services Improving knowledge and skills to delivery relationship and sex education and have open and honest conversations with young people regardless of setting							

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Percentage of children receiving MMR vaccinations at second birthday Corporate Risk Register: risk 13 CP02.004a	Maximise	Q1 2023/24	93.2%	95.0%	AMBER	88.6%	88.8%
		Quarterly	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note Southend-on-Sea's uptake for MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) one dose at 24 months is the same as England's at 89.3%, but slightly lower than the East of England regional uptake at 90.9%. Currently, GPs are commissioned to administer childhood MMR vaccinations. The NHS has launched their new vaccination strategy. The aim is to improve services by providing greater flexibility to local neighbourhood teams and Integrated Care Systems, to enable teams to increase vaccination uptake and coverage while reducing inequalities. There has been a national downward trend in the uptake of MMR vaccinations since the COVID pandemic lockdowns. Work planned and undertaken: Community Conversation on 6 December 2023 at Civic Centre focused on Keeping Southend Healthy, responding to 2019 measles outbreak, raising vaccination awareness and encouraging uptake. Well attended by the voluntary sector, healthcare professionals and the council. Work is underway with Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust to support catch-up childhood vaccinations in primary schools, linked with nurseries and children's centres, with a focus on MMR vaccines from January to March 2024 Further work with the Children, Families and Young People Service to improve uptake and engage with parents and carers. Resources and information disseminated by school nurses and health visitors. This measure is reported with a one quarter lag in data.							
94 Percentage of children receiving MMR vaccinations at fifth birthday Corporate Risk Register: risk 13 CP02.004b	Maximise	Q1 2023/24	85.7%	95.0%	RED	83.1%	88.4%
		Quarterly	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note Southend-on-Sea's uptake for MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) two doses at 5 years is slightly higher at 85% than England's at 84.5%, but lower than the East of England regional uptake at 87.9%. Currently, GPs are commissioned to administer childhood MMR vaccinations. The NHS has launched their new vaccination strategy. The aim is to improve services by providing greater flexibility to local neighbourhood teams and Integrated Care Systems, to enable teams to increase vaccination uptake and coverage while reducing inequalities. There has been a national downward trend in the uptake of MMR vaccinations since the COVID pandemic lockdowns. Work planned and undertaken: Community Conversation on 6 December 2023 at Civic Centre focused on Keeping Southend Healthy, responding to 2019 measles outbreak, raising vaccination awareness and encouraging uptake. Well attended by the voluntary sector, healthcare professionals and the council. Work is underway with Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust to support catch-up childhood vaccinations in primary schools, linked with nurseries and children's centres, with a focus on MMR vaccines from January to March 2024 Further work with the Children, Families and Young People Service to improve uptake and engage with parents and carers. Resources and information disseminated by school nurses and health visitors. This measure is reported with a one quarter lag in data.							

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Proportion of adults with learning disabilities who live in their own home or with their family Corporate Risk Register: risk 15 CP02.006	Maximise	November 2023	88.1%	85.5%	GREEN	88.90%	85.60%
		Monthly	Snapshot	Annual target			
	Latest note The council's Learning Disability team is focused on supporting people with a learning disability to reside within tenanted arrangements to increase their choice and control. This measure remains consistently above target with November's performance at 88.1% exceeding a target of 85.5%.						
Number of permanent admissions into residential and nursing care (18-64) Corporate Risk Register: risk 15 CP02.007	Minimise	November 2023	7.00	7.00	GREEN	4.00	3.73
		Monthly	Snapshot	Monthly target			
	Latest note In November, there were seven permanent admissions into residential care, meeting the target of seven. The performance in December is on target, which is consistent with the performance throughout the year.						
Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services who live independently with or without support Corporate Risk Register: risk 15 CP02.008	Maximise	October 2023	38.3%	39.0%	AMBER	38.7%	40.4%
		Monthly	Snapshot	Annual target			
	Latest note In October 2023, the performance for this measure was 38.3%, slightly below the current target of 39%. In January 2024, the third phase of a data quality project specifically focussing on the ASCOF measures will be implemented. This work will focus on those service users who do not have an employment and accommodation status updated in the past 12 months. The reporting criteria only considers statuses updated in the past 12 months when calculating the performance. Once this initial work has been completed, there will be a new pre-emptive report highlighting service users who's status will 'expire' in the next 3 months. The above actions, hopefully will have a positive impact on performance. It is worth noting that while we will be working to ensure service users have an updated employment and accommodation status, this may not guarantee increased performance as the updated statuses won't all be 'Living independently or with support'. This measure is reported with a one month lag in data.						

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Proportion of older people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services Corporate Risk Register: risk 15 CP02.009	Maximise	November 2023	87.9%	80.0%	GREEN	90.20%	78.20%
		Monthly	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note November's performance of 87.9% exceeded the target of 80%. Of the 66 people discharged from hospital, 58 remain at home, 3 are deceased and 5 are now within a care home. It is important to note that the NHS continues to lead on discharge from hospital, reducing the council's input and control over this measure.							
Number of co-produced strategies and policies Corporate Risk Register: risk 16 CP02.011	Maximise	November 2023	8.0	4.0	GREEN	4	--
		Monthly	Cumulative - year to date	Monthly target			
Latest note Activity in October and November 2023 includes: publishing the Southend on Sea City Council Co Production Framework, setting out the council's vision and commitment for co-production developing new complaints policy, with input from Learning Disability user voice group taking the Ageing Well strategy to the Learning Disability user voice group to develop strands of work working on delivery of the Autism and Neurodivergence action plan.							

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Rate of children on child protection plan per 10,000 population Corporate Risk Register: risk 11 CP02.012	Balanced	November 2023	30.0	34 - 44	RED	31.57	32.21
		Monthly	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note There has been a slight increase on the previous month. The Southend Children's Single Point of Contact has been a factor in the reduction of children subject to child protection plans. This is having a positive impact as the ethos is on working with children and families at the lowest levels prior to any escalations to statutory services. All requests are quality assured by a senior manager to make sure that thresholds are being applied correctly, which is also having an impact. This continues to be an area of focus, including the review of Children in Need over 12 months to ensure that children are being held at the right level, with an expected rise in the coming weeks.							
Percentage of placements in residential and Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) settings Corporate Risk Register: risk 11 CP02.013	Minimise	November 2023	53.0%	45.00%	RED	53.65%	54.20%
		Monthly	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note There is an ongoing issue with placements, the availability and quality of placements that are appropriate for our children and young people, more so with foster placements. We do have to extend the search to residential route, particularly for our older cohort of children and young people. We are focussing time and effort on recruiting more Southend foster carers to ensure our children and young people are provided with more geographical appropriate placements. We are encouraging more conversations with local residential providers so we can accommodate Southend children and young people with Southend providers.							
Percentage of Children Looked After (CLA) long-term stability Corporate Risk Register: risk 11 CP02.014	Maximise	November 2023	54.4%	70.00%	RED	62.38%	64.80%
		Monthly	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note We have had a number of young people's placements end due to retirement, ill health and carers' being unable to manage young people's behaviour. We are embedding the placement stability process and getting much more reactive at putting this in place. We are also trying to support placements through various options, but some have been disrupted for the reasons given above and this is out of our control. The fostering team is working on its marketing strategy and there is hope the increase in our inhouse carers over the coming year will mean we are able to offer direct support.							

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Percentage of children experiencing permanent exclusions in the academic year Corporate Risk Register: risk 11 CP02.015	Maximise	November 2023	0.03%	0.08%	GREEN	0.02%	0.03%
		Monthly	Cumulative - Sept-Jul	Annual target			
Latest note In November, two young people received permanent exclusions from school. A Year 11 female with special educational needs was permanently excluded from Shoeburyness High school and a Year 9 female with no special educational needs was permanently excluded from Chase High School. There has been an increase in possible permanent exclusions, prompting a concerted effort by the council to engage schools and look at alternative measures, such as directions, applying for funding and further outreach support.							
Percentage of council homes meeting the Decent Home Standards Corporate Risk Register: risk 11 CP02.015	Maximise	November 2023	96.8%	97.3%	AMBER	96.6%	89.0%
		Monthly	Cumulative - year to date	Monthly target			
Latest note The programme is progressing well; although, there are some challenges reaching target properties for electrical rewires due to access issues. Our Difficult Access Coordinator is actively working with these tenants to reach agreement on access and allow works to take place.							
Percentage of properties brought into compliance (Selective Licensing Scheme) Corporate Risk Register: risk 17 CP02.017	Maximise	Q2 2023/24	20.0%	15.0%	GREEN	--	--
		Quarterly	Cumulative	Quarterly target			
Latest note The Selective Licensing Scheme is a five-year scheme, launched in 2021. The first year of the scheme was about issuing licences – 3,540 properties were issued with a selective licence. To date, 25% of licensed properties have been visited. Of these, 20% have been brought into compliance and 5% are currently being worked on. The overall target is for 100% of properties to be brought into compliance by December 2026. Our quarterly target is to increase the percentage of properties brought into compliance and will be 25% by the end of 2023.							
Number of houses supplied by council, Registered Providers (RPs) and empty properties brought back into use Corporate Risk Register: risk 17 and 18 CP02.018	Maximise	Q2 2023/24	48	50	AMBER	30	--
		Quarterly	Cumulative - year to date	Quarterly target			
Latest note The council's Acquisitions Programme is progressing well, with all 15 homes purchased as part of the Local Authority Housing Fund. Marfleet & Blyth have now been appointed as contractor for Phase 3a of the Housing Revenue Account Land Review and have started pre-commencement works. The project will see 13 houses and bungalows built in Shoeburyness with completion in 2024/25.							

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
	Minimise	November 2023	309	219	RED	269	240
		Monthly	Snapshot	Annual target			
<p>Latest note</p> <p>At the end of October 2023, 309 households were placed in emergency or temporary accommodation, exceeding available spaces. 280 households were placed due to us accepting a duty under housing legislation, while 29 were placed by our Rough Sleeping or Resettlement teams due to a vulnerability. Of these 29 households, 12 were in our commissioned rapid assessment hub, 10 were in newly commissioned winter provision and 7 were in private bed and breakfast.</p> <p>Due to the level of rough sleeping, winter weather, and additional government funding, the council and HARP have worked together to secure 35 emergency bed spaces for verified rough sleepers. The provision opened on 30 November 2023 and will continue until February 2024, with the goal of people being moved to more settled accommodation solutions before this comes to an end.</p> <p>The Hostel Improvement project is progressing with South Essex Homes looking at optimising use and improving standards within our current hostels and new build development opportunities. Remedial work to bring 22 x 2 bed flats in Quantock back into use is nearing completion on the last remaining homes. Once this work is complete, consideration will be given to voids works on other suitable vacant properties in the estate.</p>							
<p>Total number of households in temporary accommodation Corporate Risk Register: risk 17 CP02.019</p>							

A clean city with a resilient environment

1

Red

1

Amber

5

Green

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous
Percentage of council homes that are Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rated 'C' or above Corporate Risk Register: risk 9 and 17 CP03.001 100	Maximise	2023/24	--	84.0%	AMBER	--	81.9%
		Annual	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note There has been progress on our retrofit action plan: the parity projects database and report, which outlines the cost benefit analysis of different retrofit pathways, has provided a baseline for mapping next steps towards net zero for our existing stock. we have prioritised key actions, such as improving data and undertaking pilot projects. we secured £1.15 million from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), which will support delivery of the action plan. our retrofit show home has been completed and is now open to the public. The show home will inform the best approaches for our wider retrofit programme. The action plan will address the need to set formal retrofit targets and key performance indicators. The action plan is being monitored by the council and South Essex Homes sustainability sub-group. The business plan for the Future Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is currently being worked through and will provide further direction for the retrofit programme. Our future phases of HRA newbuild developments are committed to achieving the Passivhaus standard and we have begun progressing Passivhaus pilot projects. We are exploring the possibility of developing a sustainable housing strategy via the housing pipeline group, which would establish our principles for sustainable development across all future housing development projects.							
Pollutant levels in air quality management areas Corporate Risk Register: risk 9 CP03.002	Minimise	2023/24	--	40	GREEN	--	37.00
		Annual	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note The council continues to monitor air quality in air quality management areas. In 2022, the Air Quality Management Area 1 recorded a nitrogen dioxide level of 36.2 µg/m3, which is below the air quality objective of 40 µg/m3.							

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Percentage of carriageway potholes repairs, that have been inspected and meet required investigatory levels, are repaired within 28 days CP03.005	Maximise	November 2023	100.00%	100.00%	GREEN		
		Monthly	Snapshot	Annual target			
Latest note All carriageway pothole repairs requested in September and October 2023 have been inspected. All carriageway potholes that meet investigatory levels have been or are on track to be completed within the required 28-day timescale.							
Percentage of waste collections carried out on schedule Corporate Risk Register: risk 10 CP03.006	Maximise	November 2023	99.96%	99.00%	GREEN	99.96%	99.94%
		Monthly	Cumulative - year to date	Monthly target			
Latest note In November 2023, there were 763 reported missed collections, which is a decrease of 10 on the previous month. To date, 99.96% of collections have been carried out on time, exceeding the annual target of 99.00%							

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
	Maximise	2023/24	--	50.00%	RED	--	41.72%
		Annual	Snapshot	Annual target			
<p>Percentage of waste recycled</p> <p>Corporate Risk Register: risk 9 and 10</p> <p>CP03.007</p> <p>Latest note</p> <p>Tonnage and performance data unavailable for September to October 2023-24. Comparing the latest available data (Q1 2023-24) with the same period in 2022-23, shows the recycling rate for Q1 2023-24 was 45%, a decrease of 0.16 percentage points from 45.16% in Q1 2022-23. The data shows:</p> <p>Increases: 2.2% increase in pink sack recycling tonnage collected at kerbside an 11.7% increase in dry recycling tonnage collected at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) 10.6% increase in garden waste tonnage collected at kerbside 49.9% increase in garden waste tonnage collected at HWRCs 40.3% increase in reuse tonnage collected at HWRCs</p> <p>Decreases: 10.2% decrease in food waste tonnage collected at kerbside 17.1% decrease in paper and card tonnage collected at kerbside 5.7% increase in non-recyclable (residual) tonnage collected at kerbside 68.5% increase in non-recyclable (residual) tonnage collected at HWRCs.</p> <p>Activity this period: a waste composition analysis has shown that capture rates for certain materials, particularly food waste, are low and in some cases have fallen. three Big Belly bins were relocated to new locations in the city to test operational efficiencies in lower foot fall areas. ten local projects were awarded £4900 between them as part of Veolia's sustainability fund. collections ran smoothly throughout October and November, with no instances of non-completion. Crew monitoring adhered to Veolia QHSE guidelines, and tool box talks were conducted with all crews to maintain high operational service delivery standards.</p> <p>Communications activity: delivery of 28,000 leaflets about our food waste service launched paid social media campaign to promote recycling 257 letters were sent to households presenting incorrect materials in their recycling 217 social media posts covering Recycle Week, Halloween recycling, vape recycling and recycling events.</p>							

Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Percentage acceptable standard of cleanliness: litter Corporate Risk Register: risk 10 CP03.008	Maximise	August 2023	98.82%	95.00%	GREEN	99.40%	97.03%
		Monthly	Cumulative - year to date	Annual target			
	Latest note At the last data entry of August 2023 performance demonstrated a good level of cleansing; the indicator is on track with the 23/24 target of 95%. The Waste team are holding vacancies in accordance with the corporate financial sustainability commitments. All team resources are currently team prioritising the waste collection procurement.						
Percentage acceptable standard of cleanliness: detritus Corporate Risk Register: risk 10 CP03.009	Maximise	August 2023	100.00%	95.00%	GREEN	100.00%	90.71%
		Monthly	Cumulative - year to date	Annual target			
	Latest note At the last data entry of August 2023 performance demonstrated a good level of cleansing; the indicator is on track with the 23/24 target of 95%. The Waste team are holding vacancies in accordance with the corporate financial sustainability commitments. All team resources are currently team prioritising the waste collection procurement.						

A transforming council delivering efficient, cost-effective services



Measure	Aim	Time period	Latest value	Target	RAG rating	Previous period	Previous year
Ensure a Balanced Budget for 2023/24 Corporate Risk Register: Risk 2 GP04.001	Minimise	November 2023	£6,300,000	--	RED	£10,700,000	--
		Periodically	Snapshot				
	Latest note ▼ The council is dealing with an unprecedented financial crisis that has impacted across all of Local Government. For 23/24 the council is focusing on a range of initiatives to help break even with our finances for 23/24. The direction of travel towards no variance is positive as the level of overspend has reduced by £4.4m between period 6 to period 8.						

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in development

A growing city with a strong and prosperous community

- Number of businesses engaged with
- Value of inward investment secured by Southend-on-Sea City Council
- Number of jobs created through Southend-on-Sea City Council initiatives
- Number of higher education learning completions at Southend Adult Community College
- Accommodation occupancy rates
- Total value of tourism
- Overall number of total footfall for all identified council-run cultural assets (museums, galleries, theatres, libraries and leisure centres)
- Annual number of overnight trips
- Annual visitor numbers

A clean city with a resilient environment

- Tree net gain in the city
- Proportion of bus services running on time

A safe city with a good quality of life for all

- Number of people who have quit smoking through the smoking cessation services
- Number of people completing the Falls Prevention Programme
- Rate of domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population
- Rate of knife crime incidents per 1,000 population
- Rate of hate crime incidents per 1,000 population
- Rate of reported anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents to Essex Police per 1,000 population
- Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support
- Percentage of good or outstanding school (a) and early education settings (b)
- Percentage of children on free school meals (FSM) achieving national expectation at KS2 (a) and KS4 (b) outcomes in schools
- Percentage of persistent absences (10% or more missed) for all pupils
- Rate of children on a child in need plan

A transforming council delivering efficient, cost-effective services

- Transformation programme (2024/25 onwards)

Corporate Risk Register Key: Risk Numbers

Risk		
2 - Financial sustainability	9 - Mitigating for and adapting to climate change	16 - Social cohesion
3 - Inflation and cost of living pressures	10 - Waste management	17 - Housing
4 - Public services landscape	11 - Safeguarding responsibilities and child welfare	18 - House building programme
5 - Workforce	12 - Other safeguarding responsibilities	19 - Local Plan
6 - a) Cyber security b) Data protection	13 - Health inequalities	20 - Regeneration and major projects
7 - Capital investment programme delivery	14 - Staffing vacancies impacting on the delivery of statutory responsibilities	21 - Visitor destination and major events
8 - Transformation programme	15 - Adult social care	22 - Economic recovery and income inequalities

Glossary of terms

Priority	Measure	Definition
Priority 1 - A growing city with a strong and prosperous community	Amount of council's spend with local businesses	Total spend by the council and South Essex Homes with external suppliers based in Southend-on-Sea.
Priority 1 - A growing city with a strong and prosperous community	Visitor numbers to Southend Pier	The total number of visitors who pay to walk Southend pier or ride the trains.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Number of permanent admissions into residential and nursing care (18-64)	The number of council-supported younger adults (aged 18-64) whose long-term support needs were met by a change of setting to residential and nursing care during the year.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Number of physically inactive adults completing a physical activity course	The total number of physically inactive adults completing a physical activity course. Physical activity courses are run as part of a programme to assist behaviour change. Physically inactive adults are defined as doing less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. Continuing to be active is defined as doing some physical activity.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Percentage of children receiving MMR vaccinations at second (a) and fifth (b) birthday	(a) The total number of children whose second birthday falls within the time period who received one dose of MMR on or after their first birthday and at any time before their second birthday. (b) The total number of children whose fifth birthday falls within the time period who received two doses of MMR on or after their first birthday and at any time before their fifth birthday.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services who live independently with or without support	The number of adults aged 18-69 who are receiving secondary mental health services recorded as living independently (with or without support), divided by number of adults aged 18-69 who have received secondary mental health services.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Proportion of adults with learning difficulties who live in their own home or with their family	All people who are "living on their own or with their family" divided by the number of working-age clients with a primary support reason of learning disability support in long term services.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Proportion of older people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services	The proportion of people at home after 90 days following a period of reablement post hospital divided by the total number of hospital discharges to reablement.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Rate of under-18 conceptions	The rate of conceptions under 18 per 1,000 females aged 15 – 17 for the calendar year. The rate includes all conceptions under 18 but uses the ONS mid-year population estimates for females aged 15-17 as a denominator to calculate the rate (as 95% of under 18 conceptions occur within this age group).
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Take up of the NHS Health Check programme	The total number of NHS Health Checks delivered.

Glossary of terms

Priority	Measure	Definition
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Number of co-produced strategies and policies	The number of council strategies and policies that have been co-produced with residents and relevant external organisations. These only relate to the number that involve or are known to the SCC Communities Team.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Number of houses supplied by council, Registered Providers (RPs) and empty properties brought back into use	The total number of housing that have been supplied by the council and/or Registered Providers (RPs) and empty properties brought back into use.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Number of properties brought into compliance (Selective Licensing Scheme)	The number of properties brought into compliance under the Selective Licensing Scheme.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Percentage of children experiencing permanent exclusions in the academic year	The proportion of children attending all Southend-on-Sea schools being issued a permanent exclusion.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Percentage of Children Looked After (CLA) long-term stability	The proportion of children who are looked after on the last day of the month who have been in the same placement for at least two years (730 calendar days) or, for those children in an adoptive placement, their previous placement and their adoptive placement added together is at least two years (730 calendar days).
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Percentage of council homes meeting the Decent Home Standards	The percentage of council homes meeting the Decent Home Standards. A decent home meets the following four criteria: a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing. b) It is in a reasonable state of repair. c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services. d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Percentage of placements in residential and Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) settings	The proportion of children who are looked after on the last day of the month and have a placement in a residential or independent fostering agency setting.
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Rate of children on a child in need plan (a) or child protection plan (b) per 10,000 population	The rate of children who have an open Child in Need or Child Protection Plan on the last date of month, excluding children whose plan ceases on the last date of the month (excluding children who have a plan with another LA but are in Southend-on-Sea).
Priority 2 - A safe city with a good quality of life for all	Total number of households in temporary accommodation	The number of households in temporary accommodation on the last date of the month.
Priority 3 - A clean city with a resilient environment	Percentage of council homes that are Energy Performance Certificate rated 'C' or above	An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rates how energy efficient your building is using grades from A to G (with 'A' the most efficient grade). This KPI measures the percentage of all council homes that are grade C or above.
Priority 3 - A clean city with a resilient environment	Pollutant levels in air quality management areas	This measures air quality in Southend-on-Sea's two Air Quality Management Areas – The Bell Junction (AQMA 1) and A127 Victoria Avenue (AQMA 2).

Glossary of terms

Priority	Measure	Definition
Priority 3 - A clean city with a resilient environment	Percentage of waste collections carried out on schedule	How well household waste is collected in line with the council's collection dates and times. More information can be found here .
Priority 4 - A transforming council delivering efficient, cost-effective services	Ensure a Balanced Budget for 2023/24	It is essential that the council monitors its budgets to ensure that value for money is provided; corrective action and reasonable mitigation is in place where necessary to support delivery of a balanced financial position.
Priority 3 - A clean city with a resilient environment	Percentage acceptable standard of cleanliness: detritus	Percentage is calculated using a sample number of streets, which during inspection the amount of detritus is assessed to give an overall grade to a road or street. Detritus is comprised of small, broken-down particles of synthetic and natural materials. Detritus includes dust, mud, soil, grit, gravel, stones, rotted leaf and vegetable residues, and fragments of twigs, glass, plastic and other finely divided materials.
Priority 3 - A clean city with a resilient environment	Percentage acceptable standard of cleanliness: litter	Percentage is calculated using a sample number of streets, which during inspection the amount of litter is assessed to give an overall grade to a road or street. Litter is assumed to include a range of different materials, some associated with smoking, eating and drinking, that are improperly discarded and left.
Priority 3 - A clean city with a resilient environment	Percentage of carriageway potholes repairs, that have been inspected and meet required investigatory levels, are repaired within 28 days	Percentage of carriageway potholes repairs that have been inspected by the council's highways team and meet required investigatory levels and are repaired with a permanent repair within 28 days. The only exception is on key routes such as the A127, where a temporary fix will be carried out within 24 hours to reduce the risk, ahead of a permanent repair.
Priority 3 - A clean city with a resilient environment	Percentage of waste recycled	The cumulative amount of household waste that is collected by Southend-on-Sea City Council that is recycled per quarter.

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting: Cabinet
Date 11 January 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: Yes
Title of Report: Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Procurement Award Approval

Executive Director: Claire Shuter
Report Author: Aaron Townsend
Executive Councillor: Cllr James Moyies

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Microsoft licensing is critical to the daily operations of the Council as it provides staff with access to tools such as Office (word, excel, PowerPoint, and more), platforms for communication (Teams, Outlook, Viva, etc) and various other tools to support the applications that keep a modern council working (server, database, security and cloud licensing). While it is possible to move to another option such as open source/apple, the costs, and complexity of moving, are prohibitive as this would mean replacing other applications that need Microsoft to run.
- 1.2. The purpose of this decision report is to
- provide a clear outline of the maximum costs anticipated
 - to recommend the award of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) procurement with effect from 1st April 2024.

The budget was approved at the September Cabinet meeting and the ICT and Corporate procurement teams have been working within a framework to procure the best deal for the council via a Microsoft partner. We anticipate that the costs will reduce further although we cannot provide clarity right now.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. Approve the proposed award of a Microsoft EA for 3-years. This will be aligned with the new Government DTA (Digital Transformation Agreement), to ensure uninterrupted access to critical software solutions whilst optimising costs and technology capabilities.

3. Background

- 3.1. SCC has been utilising Microsoft products and services for several years under the existing Enterprise Agreement. Microsoft is a trusted and reliable technology partner, offering a wide range of software solutions essential for efficient public service delivery.

- 3.2. Most if not all Local Authorities use Microsoft as the large applications used for key services are Microsoft based. Microsoft licensing contracts are usually for 3-years, and the current agreement is set to expire in March 2024, necessitating a renewal of the contract. The contracts are with Microsoft but are awarded to a certified partner who is responsible for administering and supporting the contract.
- 3.3. Microsoft and the UK Gov regularly agree a DTA which provides for discounts to central and local government entities using Microsoft licensing. The latest agreement has not yet been finalised, meaning discount levels are not yet known.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. By leveraging volume licensing, consolidating software purchases under a single agreement, and aligning to the DTA collective buying power agreement, SCC can achieve significant cost avoidance. Had SCC not participated in the current DTA, the costs above, purely based on user licensing costs, would increase by £722,242.32. The new DTA information is expected before 1 May 2024, but physically renews on that date.
- 4.2. Predictable Budgeting - The enterprise agreement provides for predictable costs over the term of the agreement. This eliminates the uncertainty associated with fluctuating software licensing expenses.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. Other than moving away from Microsoft to a product suite, such as Google Workplace, there are no cost-effective alternatives.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. While specific pricing details will be determined during the DTA negotiations, the budgetary implications of renewing the Microsoft EA are summarised below.
- 6.2. The budget forecast below is based on the current cost and does not provide for any change in discount via the DTA or the rightsizing of the licensing mix which is underway.

3-Year Budget / Forecast Summary April 24 – March 27			
	<i>Current Max Spend Est.</i>	<i>New Aggregation Spend Est.</i>	<i>Estimated Cost Avoidance</i>
Year 24/25	£1,169,274	£1,063,748	-£105,527
Year 25/26	£1,169,274	£1,155,682	-£13,593
Year 26/27	£1,169,274	£1,155,682	-£13,593
Total:	£3,507,823	£3,375,112	-£132,712

Table 1 - Projected Budgets

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Failure to renew the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) for our organisation could have significant legal and financial implications. The existing agreement

governs our use of Microsoft software and services, and its expiration without renewal may result in several potential issues: Fines for non-compliance; Data Security and Privacy issues due to an inability to access critical software updates and security patches; Data breaches or non-compliance with data protection regulations, resulting in legal liabilities.

8. Policy Context

8.1 Not applicable in this case.

9. Carbon Impact

9.1. As this is purely a digital license to operate using Microsoft software and services, there is no carbon impact to consider.

10. Equalities

10.1. Not applicable in this case.

11. Consultation

11.1. Other than the standard processes carried out via the council’s corporate procurement team, there has been no other external consultation carried out.

12. Appendices

12.1. None

13. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	2/1/2024
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	3/1/2024
Executive Director(s)	Claire Shuter	28/12/2023
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Moyies	3/1/2024

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 11 January 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: Yes
Title of Report: **School Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools 2025/26; the Coordinated Admission Scheme for Academic year 2025/26; and Review of the relevant area**

Executive Director: Michael Marks
Report Author: Catherine Braun, Head of Access and Inclusion and Chrissy Papas, Place Planning and Admission Manager
Executive Councillor: Councillor Helen Boyd

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The admission arrangements for (LA maintained) community schools must be agreed annually. The admission arrangements requesting agreement by council are for the academic year 2025/26. This includes the published admission number (PAN) for each of the schools and the catchment areas.
- 1.2. As agreed by Cabinet on the 18 September 2023, the LA undertook a statutory consultation for all community schools with school Governors on the proposed admission arrangements and PAN. All schools agreed and as such no further changes are proposed.
- 1.3. As agreed by Cabinet on the 18 September 2023, the local authority ran a public consultation on reducing PAN for Chalkwell Hall Junior School from 120 to 90. This is to bring in line with the reduced number at Chalkwell Hall Infant School. No Objections were received.
- 1.4. As agreed by Cabinet on the 18 September 2023, the LA consulted schools on the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2025/26 schools agreed proposed amendments and no further changes were identified.
- 1.5. As agreed by Cabinet on the 18 September 2023, the Scheme was ratified by the Executive Director for Children and Public Health in December 2023 and was published on the 31 December 2023.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1. **Determine the Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1**

2.2. **Determine the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix 2**

3. Background

Statutory Framework

- 3.1. The Council has the responsibility to determine the following in relation to school admissions:
- a) the Admission Arrangements for Community Schools (admission numbers, admission criteria and catchment areas); and
 - b) the Coordinated Admissions Scheme, which sets out the way in which school admissions for all schools will operate (including academies and other own admission authority schools).
- 3.2 The local authority (as the admission authority for all community schools) **must** consult on the admission arrangements for community schools, if it proposes to make any changes to the existing arrangements or, at least every seven years, even if there are no changes.
- 3.3 Own Admission Authorities, (academy, foundation, and voluntary aided schools) have the responsibility to consult on and determine their own admission arrangements including catchment areas.
- 3.4 The Admissions Code 2021 determines that the official window for formal consultation which must be between 1 October and 31 January and the consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks.
- 3.5 Admission arrangements for Community Schools in Southend must be determined by 28th February 2024 and included in a composite prospectus for all schools by 15th March 2024. These are statutory deadlines and must be adhered to by all admission authorities.
- 3.6 The current admission arrangements for Community Schools (including catchment areas) were last consulted on and approved by the Council in January 2021 for the admissions relating to academic year 2022/23.
- 3.7 The local authority (as the admission authority for community schools) must consult the governing body of each community school where it proposes either to increase or keep the same published admission number (PAN).
- 3.8 It should be noted that Heycroft Primary School converted to academy status on the 1 January 2024 and therefore no longer falls under the local authorities jurisdiction for determining admission arrangements.
- 3.9 The proposed admission arrangements published admission numbers and catchment areas includes all seven local authority (maintained) community schools. This includes Barons Court Primary School & Nursery who are in the process of converting to academy status joining the Learning in Harmany academy trust. The legal status for this school remains as a LA community school until they

convert to academy. The LA will therefore continue to determine admission arrangements which will transfer at the point of academization.

- 3.10 The Council must balance the duty to ensure sufficient school places alongside its duty to make efficient use of resources. The DfE recommends Councils have a surplus of around 5% within each planning cluster. Where surplus becomes too low or too high consideration is needed to either increase or reduce the number of available places in the town. This results in changes to some school PANs.
- 3.11 The recommendation is to keep the same PAN for all community schools except Chalkwell Hall Junior School where a reduction in PAN from 120 to 90 for the year 2025 admission is proposed to bring in line with Chalkwell Hall Junior School.
- 3.12 Chalkwell Hall Infant school's PAN was reduced from 120 to 90 for admission into reception 2022/23. This reduced admission number will reach Chalkwell Hall Junior school in September 2025 when the year group reaches year 3.
- 3.13 There are currently no proposed changes to the Admission Limits from 2025/26 for the remaining community schools. The governing body of each of the community schools was consulted on their proposed PAN and proposed arrangements and all agreed.
- 3.14 The proposed admission limits for all community primary schools for September 2025/26 are shown on **Page 3** of the Admission Arrangements for Community Schools at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.15 Schemes for coordinating all admission applications to schools must be formulated and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) by 1 January in the determination year. For the school year commencing September 2025, submission to the DfE must be submitted by 1 January 2024. Consultation on the scheme is mandatory every seven years or where substantial changes are being made.
- 3.16 The School Admissions guidance requires Local Authorities to determine every two years a "relevant area" for the purposes of admissions. This defines the area in which admission authorities consult on admission arrangements. The area of Southend, Castle Point and Rochford has been in place for many years and is most appropriate for consultation given that a significant number of pupils access provision in schools in those areas.

Admission Arrangements for 2025/26

Admission/oversubscription Criteria

- 3.17 There are no proposed changes from the previously consulted 2022/23 oversubscription criteria and definitions. The admission criteria for community primary schools are shown in **Appendix 1**

Published Admission Number (PAN)

- 3.18 There are currently no proposed changes to the Admission Limits from 2024/25 for community schools with the exception of Chalkwell Hall Junior School (ref. 3.21).

- 3.19 The consultation with the current six unaffected community schools did not raise any objections to the proposal that the PANs remain unchanged.

Catchment Areas

- 3.20 The proposed catchment areas for primary schools for September 2024 are identified within the Admission Arrangements in **Appendix 1**. No changes were proposed, and no objections have been received.

Formal Consultation of the Admission Arrangements and Proposed Changes to the Published Admission Number for Chalkwell hall Junior School

- 3.21 The consultation for the Admission Arrangements for Chalkwell Hall Junor School was held widely in the period 1 October to 14 November 2023.
- 3.22 The consultation was run via the 'Your Say Southend' portal and in total there were 109 site visits to the consultation pages, with 26 active participants. Of those that completed the survey, all agreed with the proposed admission number citing they were clear, fair, and reasonable.
- 3.23 In addition, 2 emails were received, 1 was from a teaching union seeking further clarity and assurances on any impacts to existing staff and 1 email from a Councillor seeking further information on the order of admission criteria.

No objections were received from parents, school staff, school governors, local authority officers or other members of the community.

Other Consultations

- 3.24 The consultation with Chair of Governors for the community school admission limits (PAN) was held 9 October to 31 October 2023 and no objections were received.
- 3.25 The consultation on the Coordinated Admissions Scheme was held 1 November – 1 December 2023 was held, and no objections were received.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. Chalkwell Hall Junior school mainly admit pupils from the Infant school.
- 4.2. A phased reduction in the admission limit has been in operation since 2022. The reduced pupil admission number of 90 will move from the infant school to year 3 at Chalkwell Hall Junior school in 2025.
- 4.3. There have been no objections received to the consultation to reduce the PAN from 120 to 90 for admission to year 3 in 2025.
- 4.4. An admission limit higher than the feed from the infant school would negatively impact schools in Leigh, as the pupils would generally move from neighbouring schools in the leigh area.
- 4.5. There would be a higher surplus of places in the City resulting in a negative impact for some schools.

4.6. No objections have been received from schools and governors in relation to the unchanged admission arrangements for the other six remaining community schools. Neither have there been any objections to the Admission Scheme 2025/26 or the relevant area.

5. Other Options

5.1. The council could decide to leave the admission limit at 120 for Chalkwell Hall Junior school. This would increase the current number of places available in the city by 30 places.

5.2. The impacts of this could result in objections from other primary schools to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator on the grounds that there is an oversupply of places, resulting in children moving from other local schools in year 3 to Chalkwell Hall Junior school.

5.3. Should the council decide to determine the admission limit at 120 for Chalkwell Hall Junior school, this would result in more in-year movement (leavers and admissions) resulting in children changing schools unnecessarily and impacting local schools and children with potential disruption to their education as they move into year 3.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. There would be a financial implication for Chalkwell Hall Junior school as they would have 30 children less for year 3 and then rolling forward year on year from 2025/26.

6.2. The school has known of the planned reduction in the admission number since 2018 and are aware that the Infant school has been on a phased year group reduction in the admission number since 2022.

6.3. Chalkwell Hall Junior School has had significant lead up to the reduction in the admission limit, allowing for forward planning in their school organisation.

6.4. Were we not to consult, the financial implication would rest with other schools in the area who would likely lose pupils from taking up new places at Chalkwell Hall Juniors.

7. Legal Implications

7.1. The determination of admission arrangements for Community Schools and the provision of a coordinated admissions scheme is a statutory requirement. The determination for the Coordinated Admissions Scheme is a statutory requirement. The determination of a relevant area is also a statutory requirement.

7.2. In accordance with the Council's overview and procedural rules, the proposed admission arrangements for all community schools and reduced PAN for Chalkwell Hall Junior School was subject to pre-cabinet scrutiny in September 2023. Due to the statutory timeframe for consultation, which must be a minimum of six weeks in term time, it has not been possible to allow for pre-cabinet scrutiny prior to the final cabinet decision on the 11 January 2024. The timeline for submitting papers for pre-

cabinet scrutiny did not allow time for analysis, evaluation, and due consideration of the public responses to the consultation (see paragraph 11.1 below), A review of the scrutiny process will begin in January 2024 which will consider the impact of the timetable on the ability of scrutiny to exercise its function in relation to matters like this.

8. Policy Context

- 8.1 The School Admissions Code 2021 prescribes the details of the statutory process in following the process for making changes to admission arrangements.
- 8.2 The School Admissions Code 2021 prescribes the details for determining the Coordinated Admission Scheme. Not having one in place would result in the Secretary of State imposing a scheme for Southend.

9. Carbon Impact

- 9.1. Not reducing the admission limit for Chalkwell Hall Junior School, would result in children potentially applying to move for year 3, and this would generally be children living out of the catchment area, or further away from the school would cold increase the use of cars to get to school.

10. Equalities

- 10.1 A coordinated admissions scheme and clear oversubscription criteria are necessary to ensure fair access to school places. Admission Arrangements for Community Schools and the Coordinated Admission Scheme for Southend Schools have been written in line with mandatory requirements set by the Admissions Code 2021. The code determines that authorities must ensure that the practices and criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear, and objective and that parents should be able to easily understand how places are allocated.
- 10.2 In line with the Equality Act 2010, the arrangements and scheme are reviewed annually against an expanded list of protected characteristics as identified within the Admission Code: disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
- 10.3 The proposed Scheme, arrangements and decisions made through their administration are clear that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a parent who is applying for a school place or offered admission as a pupil.
- 10.4 There are limited exceptions to the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief and sex. Schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character are exempt from some aspects of the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and this means they can make a decision about whether or not to admit a child as a pupil based on religion or belief. Single-sex schools are lawfully permitted to discriminate on the grounds of sex in their admission arrangements.

11. Consultation

11.1 The statutory timeframes for consultation for admission arrangements are legislated as a minimum of 6 weeks in term time from 1 Oct 23 to 31 January 24. Arrangements then must be determined by Council by the 28 February 24.

11.2 The local authority (as the admission authority for community schools) must consult the governing body of each Community School where it proposes either to increase or keep the same published admission number (PAN). Due to proposed changes for Chalkwell Hall Junior School the LA held a public consultation for the proposed PAN reduction for 2025/26 for this school only. The public consultation was held on the [Your Say Southend](#) platform.

11.3 As no changes are proposed for the other six community schools, there was no requirement to hold a public consultation however the governing bodies for all seven schools will be consulted.

11.4 Schemes for co-ordinating all admission applications to schools must be formulated and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) by 1 January in the determination year. For the school year commencing September 2025, submission to the DfE must be submitted by 1 January 2024. Consultation on the scheme is mandatory every seven years or where substantial changes are being made. Southend-on-Sea City Council will consult admission authorities in the Borough to ensure cohesion of the coordinated admissions round. Consultation will run from 1 November to 7 December 2023.

12. Appendices

12.1. **Appendix 1:** Admission Arrangements for community schools 2025/26 (including admission oversubscription criteria, pupil admission numbers and catchment areas)

12.2. **Appendix 2:** Determined Coordinated Admission Scheme 2025/26

13. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	29/11/23
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	1/12/23
Executive Director(s)	Michael Marks	21/12/23
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Helen Boyd	

Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools

For September 2025/26 round of admissions

Author: **Southend-on-Sea City Council | Education and Early Years | Access & Inclusion**

Review date: September 2024

For office use – statutory process: The School Admissions Code 2021

Key Dates	Task
September 2023	Cabinet
1 October – 13 November 2023	Public Consultation
19 th Sept – 31 st October 2023	PAN consultation with Governing Bodies for community schools
January 2023	Final Determined Admission Arrangements by Cabinet (post PAN consultation)
15 th March 2023	Publication of Composite Prospectus of Determined Arrangements
16 th March – 15 th May 2023	Window for Objections to the School Adjudicator.
12 th September 2023	Final arrangements for 2025 are published in the Primary booklet

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Community Schools Published Admissions Number 2025/26	3
3. Oversubscription criteria for community schools	3
Barons Court Primary School & Nursery	4
Chalkwell Hall Infant School	4
Chalkwell Hall Junior School	4
Earls Hall Primary School	4
Fairways Primary School	5
Leigh North Street Primary School	5
West Leigh Infant School	5
4. Explanatory notes, including maps, apply to all community schools in Southend-on-Sea	6
4.1 Looked after children and children that were previously looked after	6
4.2 Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans	6
4.3 Pupils eligible for pupil premium – Early years pupil premium (West Leigh Infant School)	6
4.4 Pupils of staff of the school	7
4.5 Distance	7
4.6 Distance where parents have separated	7
4.7 Infant to partner Junior admissions	8
4.8 Siblings	8
4.9 Waiting lists	8
4.10 Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school.	8
4.11 In-year admissions	9
4.12 Right of Appeal	9
4.13 Home Address	10
4.14 Catchment area	10
5. Catchment Map	11

1. Introduction

Southend-on-Sea City Council is the admission authority for all community schools in the city. This document sets out the formal policies for all community schools in the city. The arrangements below, including the explanatory notes, are in line with government legislation and guidance (School Admissions Code and School Admissions Appeals Code) and designed to ensure there is a fair, clear and reasonable admissions procedure for all applicants, and to help guide parents through the application process.

These arrangements apply to all admissions, including in-year admissions for the admission year 2025 and are delivered under the terms of the Determined Coordinated Admission Scheme 2025.

2. Community Schools Published Admissions Number 2025/26

Community Primary Schools	Proposed admission limit for 2025/26
Barons Court Primary School & Nursery	35
Chalkwell Hall Infant School	90
Chalkwell Hall Junior School	90
Earls Hall Primary School	90
Fairways Primary School	60
Leigh North Street Primary School	90
West Leigh Infant School	120

3. Oversubscription criteria for community schools

Criteria are set for each individual school below and apply to admissions for year 2025/26. Explanatory notes, below, apply to all community school arrangements. The published admission limit for community schools is provided above.

If at the closing date for applications, there are not enough places for all those who have expressed a wish to have their child admitted to a community school; places will be allocated using the admission criteria as below. This will not apply to children with a statement of special educational needs (SEND) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans as the plan/statement names the school and therefore the child must be admitted to the named school. The admission criteria are listed below by school with explanatory notes following:

Barons Court Primary School & Nursery

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Pupils who live in the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school
3. Pupils who live in the catchment area
4. Pupils who live outside the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school
5. Pupils of staff at the school
6. Pupils who live outside the catchment area
(for all criteria, catchment area map and additional information please see explanatory notes and maps below)

Chalkwell Hall Infant School

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Pupils who live in the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school or Chalkwell Hall Junior School
3. Pupils of staff at the school
4. Pupils who live in the catchment area
5. Pupils who live outside the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school or Chalkwell Hall Junior School
6. Pupils who live outside the catchment area
7. (for all criteria, catchment area map and additional information please see explanatory notes and maps below)

Chalkwell Hall Junior School

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Pupils attending year 2 at Chalkwell Hall Infant School
3. Pupils who live in the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school or Chalkwell Hall Infant School
4. Pupils of staff at the school
5. Pupils who live in the catchment area
6. Pupils who live outside the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school or Chalkwell Hall Junior School
7. Pupils who live outside the catchment area
8. (for all criteria, catchment area map and additional information please see explanatory notes and maps below)

Earls Hall Primary School

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Pupils who live in the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school
3. Pupils of staff at the school
4. Pupils who live in the catchment area
5. Pupils who live outside the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school
6. Pupils who live outside the catchment area
7. (for all criteria, catchment area map and additional information please see explanatory notes and maps below)

Fairways Primary School

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Pupils who have a sibling attending the school
3. Pupils who live in the catchment area
4. Pupils of staff at the school
5. Pupils who live outside the catchment area
6. (for all criteria, catchment area map and additional information please see explanatory notes and maps below)

Leigh North Street Primary School

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Pupils who live in the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school
3. Pupils of staff at the school
4. Pupils who live in the catchment area
5. Pupils who live outside the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school
6. Pupils who live outside the catchment area
7. (for all criteria, catchment area map and additional information please see explanatory notes and maps below)

West Leigh Infant School

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Pupils who live in the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school or West Leigh Junior School
3. Pupils of staff at the school
4. Pupils eligible for pupil premium who live in the catchment area
5. Pupils who live in the catchment area
6. Pupils who live outside that catchment area who have a sibling attending the school or attending West Leigh Junior School
7. Pupils who live outside the catchment area
8. (for all criteria, catchment area map and additional information please see explanatory notes and maps below)

4. Explanatory notes, including maps, apply to all community schools in Southend-on-Sea

Parents must make a separate application for transfer from nursery to primary school and from infant to junior school. Parents must complete a Southend-on-Sea Common Application Form (CAF) for applications to year reception and year 3 between 14th September and 15th January.

4.1 Looked after children and children that were previously looked after

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order⁹⁰ including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).

Child arrangements orders are defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

Refer to section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special Guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

4.2 Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans

An Education, Health and Care Plan is a plan made by the local authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special education, health and social care provision required for that child. All children whose statement of special educational needs (SEND) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan names the school must be admitted. Children with a statement or a plan will follow a different process for admission. Further information can be found on

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)](#)

[Local Offer](#)

4.3 Pupils eligible for pupil premium – Early years pupil premium (West Leigh Infant School)

Nurseries and schools are given a pupil premium/early years pupil premium for children who have qualified for free school meals at any point in the past six years. Parents will need to tick on the application form and/or supplementary information form or notify the Local Authority in writing if they are eligible or registered for pupil premium. Any disclosure for pupil premium will be used only to rank applications against the admission criteria and will not be held for any other purpose.

Parents can check their eligibility by filling out the [LA online form](#)

Parents that are in receipt of one of the following may be eligible for pupil premium:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (if they not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income under £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may get for another 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit and Universal Credit

4.4 Pupils of staff of the school

Children will be ranked in this admission criteria if they are children of staff at the school under the following circumstances: -

- a. where the member of teaching staff (including, staff that are at the school in positions, such as: Senior Leadership Team/level, Head of Year Group, Head of Department, Office Manager or SENCo) that has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made,

and/or
- b. the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable specialist skill shortage and
- c. are the children of the member of staff, living permanently with the member of staff at the same address. The member of staff must be working at the school at the time of application and expected to continue with their employment at the school during the application and allocation process.

4.5 Distance

In the case of over subscription in any one category “straight line” distance will be used to measure the distance between the pupil’s home and the nearest pupil entrance to the school. Distances will be measured using the Local Authority’s computerised measuring system. The pupils living closest will be given priority. If the pupil’s home is a flat the distance will be measured to the main external entrance to the building.

4.5.1 Tie-Break

To be used to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated: If the same distance is shared by more than one pupil, and only one place is available, the place will be awarded on the basis of a computerised random allocation process (supervised by someone independent of the Council / governing body). In the case where the last child offered is a twin or sibling of a multiple birth sibling both/all children will be offered and the sibling will be an ‘excepted pupil’.

4.6 Distance where parents have separated

The distance is measured the same for all applications. Only one application can be received. The LA should not have the details of both parents or know of the marital status of the parents. If more than one application is received from parents, applications will be placed on hold until such time that:

- an application is made that both parents agree to; or
- written agreement is provided from both parents; or
- a court order is obtained confirming which parent's application takes precedence'.

Details on address checks and which address is relevant are also provided in the admission booklet. In all cases the child's normal place of residence is applicable for the purposes of the application.

4.7 Infant to partner Junior admissions

Parents must apply in the main round to transfer from an infant school to the junior school. Parents must use the Council common application form (CAF) and submit the application between 14th September to 15th January. The Council offers a full coordinated process for admission to year 3.

4.8 Siblings

Siblings are considered to be a brother or sister, half-brother or half-sister, step-brother or step-sister, adopted brother or sister, living at the same address, who attends the school at the time of application with a reasonable expectation that he or she will still be attending at the time of the proposed admission.

In the exceptional situation where one twin or one or two triplets are refused a place, in order to keep family members together and in line with the School Admissions Code 2014, the additional pupil(s) will be admitted even if this results in the admission limit for the year group being exceeded.

4.9 Waiting lists

Children's names will automatically be on the waiting list for schools that are higher on the rank list and for which they do not receive an offer (for years Reception and year 3).

Parents can appeal against the refusal for schools for which they did not receive an offer. Appeals must be lodged within 20 school days of the date of the letter. Parents can access the information on appeals and submit an appeal online on the council's web site www.southend.gov.uk/admissions or email admissions@southend.gov.uk to request an appeal application form. All appeals are considered by an Independent Appeals Panel.

Waiting lists for all year groups for community schools are closed at the end of each school year.

4.10 Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school.

The Council provides for the admission of all children in the September following the child's fourth birthday. Most children start school on a full time basis, however parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age (age 5) and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made (for reception this will be start of summer term/April);

Parents wishing their child to attend part time, or to delay starting must discuss their decision with the headteacher of their allocated school. The approved deferment means that the place is held open and is not offered to another child and the parents must take up the place full time by the start of the Summer Term in April. Part-time agreements should include core teaching sessions.

In the case of children born prematurely or the late summer months parents may request admission outside the normal age group so that their child starts school the September after their 5th birthday. Such requests for Schools in Southend-on-Sea are directly to the school and the school advises the parent of their decision. In most cases school will notify the Council and the Council will inform the parent in writing. Parents must notify the LA and provide any letters relating to this matter, especially for agreements outside the Council's area.

Parents submitting a request for admission outside the normal age group must also complete the Single application Form during the main admission round, 14th September – 15th January for the 'usual age group for their child'.

4.11 In-year admissions

As permitted by law parents can make an application at any time to any school outside the normal admissions. Where places are available applicants will be offered. Where there are no places applicants will be refused and can join the waiting list for the school. Waiting lists are ranked according to the admission criteria for the school. In some cases where a child is already on a school roll locally the place may be offered for the start of the next term.

To apply for reception after the normal admission cycle or for admission into Years 1-6, parents will need to complete an In-Year application form which is available from the Council's offices and the website, www.southend.gov.uk/admissions and admissions@southend.gov.uk

Applications in the current school year are processed within a maximum of 15 school days, applications for the next school year are processed as received from 1 July, however most decisions are released on return of schools in September.

Pupils that are refused a place and added to the waiting list and remain on the waiting list until 31 Aug of any given year. Waiting lists close on 31 Aug of any given year and new waiting lists are created for the next academic year (from the applications for the next school year). Waiting lists from previous years are not rolled over to the next. Parents wishing to continue on a waiting list for a following year are required to make a fresh application.

As required by the School Admissions Code parents will be notified within 15 school days of the outcome of their application and will be sent a written outcome, with a reminder of the right of appeal. Applications are shared with the allocated school and with a school that is a preference and is its own admission authority. Full details on how information is processed is published on the [Councils website](#).

4.12 Right of Appeal

Main round appeals (reception and year 3): Parents can appeal against the refusal for schools for which they did not receive an offer. Appeals must be lodged within 20 school days of the date of the letter. Appeals must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. Parents can access the information on appeals and submit an appeal online on the council's web site www.southend.gov.uk/admissions or email admissions@southend.gov.uk to request an appeal application form. All appeals are considered by an Independent Appeals Panel.

Main round appeals (in-year R-6): Parents can appeal against the refusal for schools for which they did not receive an offer. Appeals must be lodged within 20 school days of the date of the letter. For applications for in-year admissions, appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged. Parents can access the information on appeals and submit an appeal online on the council's web site www.southend.gov.uk/admissions or email admissions@southend.gov.uk to request an appeal application form. All appeals are considered by an Independent Appeals Panel.

4.13 Home Address

For all applications, the address used will be the child's habitual normal place of residence as at the closing date for applications, i.e., 15th January (reception and year 3). Changes to address can be accommodated up to a month after the closing date. Where the address change cannot be accommodated within the reasonable period, parents will be advised, and changes will be updated after all on time applications have been processed.

4.14 Catchment area

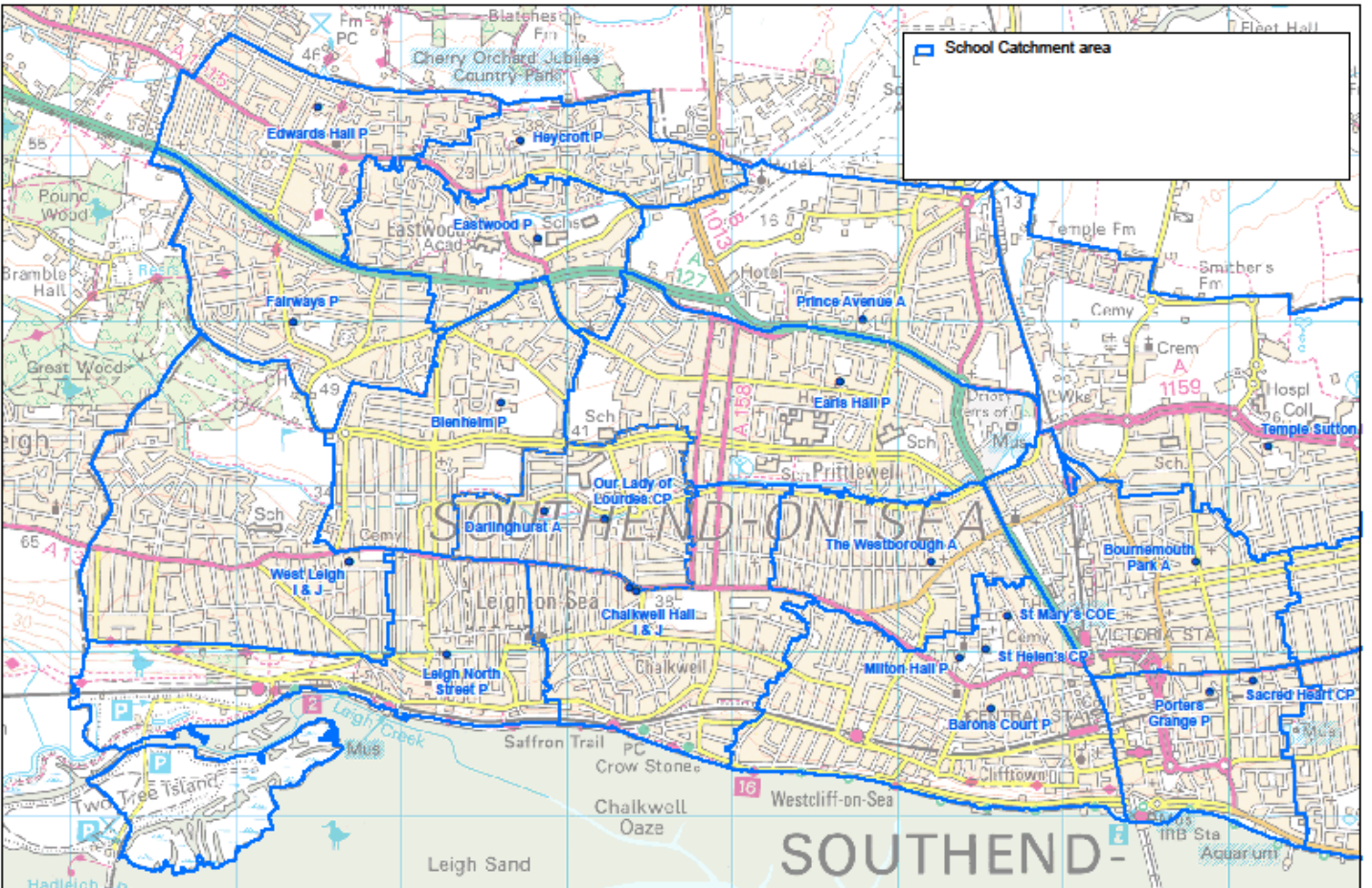
The catchment area is provided in the [catchment map](#) look up facility and also copied below.

The relevant Coordinated Admissions Scheme and Primary Admission booklets should be read in conjunction to the Determined Admission Arrangements for all schools in the City of Southend-on-Sea. The Primary Admission booklet contains further details, provides more information and is written to support parents through the rounds.

5. Catchment Map



Infant, Junior and Primary School catchment areas – Southend-on-Sea



© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100019680

Scale 1:30,000

This page is intentionally left blank

Southend-on-Sea City Council Determined Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2025/26

Author: **Southend-on-Sea City Council | Education and Early Years | Access & Inclusion**

Publication Due: 1 January 2024

Approval Route	Key Dates
Cabinet:	September 2023
Consultation with schools:	2 November – 1 December 2023
Approved by Executive Directors delegated authority:	12 December 2023
Published: Council Web site	December 2023 (before 1 Jan 2024)

1Table _Office Use table with key dates for the process

Contents

Introduction	3
1. Aims and scope of the scheme	3
2. Key Aspects of the Scheme	3
3. Collation and publication of Open Day/Evening events	3
4. General details of the scheme.....	3
5. Summer Born Children.....	6
6. Co-ordination of pupil admissions to Year 3 of Southend junior schools 2025/26	6
7. Co-ordinated arrangements between the offer date and start of autumn term.	7
8. Year 7 - Under and over age applicants.....	7
9. Applications from children whose parents are living abroad	8
10. New applications, late applications, changes of preferences and additional applications ..	8
11. Supplementary Information Forms	9
12. Waiting lists	9
13. Appeals	10
14. Atypical Admissions	10
15. In Year.....	11
16. Annual Review of the Scheme	11
17. List of schools.....	11
17. Key dates – Infant, Primary and Junior admissions September 2025.....	14
18. Key dates – Secondary admissions September 2025.....	15

Introduction

The School Admissions Code 2021 requires a single arrangement for co-ordinating all applications to state schools from parents in their area. In the City of Southend-on-Sea, the scheme applies to admissions into reception, year 3 and year 7. This document must be published by 1 January of each year.

1. Aims and scope of the scheme

- 1.1 To assist the offer of one school place to each pupil.
- 1.2 To simplify the admission process for parents.
- 1.3 To co-ordinate with other local authorities and admission authorities.

2. Key Aspects of the Scheme

- 2.1 The Council processes applications for all mainstream schools in the area.
- 2.2 The Council will send offers of places to Southend residents even if the school is in another local authority.
- 2.3 Only the Council will know the ranking of the parental preferences. Parental preferences may be shared with Admission Authorities for the purposes of admission appeals. This will be after offer day.
- 2.4 The Council will provide each school with a breakdown of preferences for their own school as on offer day.
- 2.5 In all cases admission authority schools are responsible for applying the admission criteria. Schools are responsible for appeals unless they agree with the Council otherwise.
- 2.6 Admission authorities must confirm by 1 October of each year if they wish for the Council to run appeals.

3. Collation and publication of Open Day/Evening events

- 3.1 Secondary Schools and the Council will work together with the aim of ensuring parents can visit all secondary schools in the City.
- 3.2 The Council will coordinate and publish the open days for secondary schools in the area.
- 3.3 Secondary Schools to advise the Council of open days when the school calendar for the next school year is set. The Council will email all secondary schools to share dates provided, between January and April with the aim of working together to avoid clashes.
- 3.4 The Council will publish final dates and details on the secondary information flyer sent to all year 5 pupils by the middle of June. This will coincide with the publication of the Secondary Booklet in Early July.

4. General details of the scheme

- 4.1 Run process for main round Primary and secondary admissions up to the end of coordination (last week in August).
- 4.2 Parents will complete a Common Application Form on which they will be able to put forward
3 primary schools in order of priority; or 5 secondary schools in order of priority

- 4.3 Parents will be advised to apply online for a school place via Southend Council but will be able to complete a paper form if they wish.
- 4.4 All application forms must be sent to the Council.
- 4.5 Lists of pupils that have not applied will be made available, where possible. School or early years providers that do not share data with the Council will need to provide the admissions team with a list of pupils. The team can then check on who has not yet applied.
- 4.6 Parents can add schools that are in another local authority area on their application form. The offer of a place at a school in another local authority will be made by the Council. Similarly, other local authorities will offer places to their residents on behalf of Southend schools.
- 4.7 The Council considers all preferences against the admissions criteria for each school.
- 4.8 Completed Supplementary Information Forms must be sent back to the school. These forms are not application forms and parents must also complete the common application form.
- 4.9 The Primary and Secondary Booklets are available electronically and can be provided in print on request from parents. Communication for parents are provided to primary schools, for both year 5/6 and early years, for electronic mail out (this includes wider distribution such as independent schools).
- 4.10 There is a national closing date for application forms. The deadline for receipt of any Supplementary Information Forms is set by individual schools and the Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex. Supplementary Information Forms submitted after the closing date may not be used until after national offer day.
- 4.11 Parents must ensure these additional forms are provided in good time to the school or the consortium.
- 4.12 Initial lists will be shared with schools for communication on children that have not yet applied and for faith schools to match against SIF forms.
- 4.13 Submitted online applications will be imported to the admissions database. The Council will input into the admissions database all information shown on any paper application forms, including any reasons for the application, and will provide details to the preference schools.
- 4.14 The Council will share files with other local authorities as required.
- 4.15 The Council pre-ranks all school application lists where possible. Schools and the Consortium, are responsible to rank/check ranking in order of the respective criteria, for all pupils who have applied to their school. Ranked lists must be returned to the Council by the agreed date – or must be completed on the receivers portal by the agreed date. Applications that do not have a Supplementary Information Form must still be ranked. The council will ensure that only the highest qualifying ranking, against admission criteria, is recorded.
- 4.16 Pupils with plans will be accommodated if the named school is in the final Education, Health and Care Plan by 2 February for Secondary and 4 March for Primary (or next working day) of any given year.
- 4.17 Certain (as provided in section 2.16 for 'excepted pupil'), pupils may need to be admitted over number and the Council will manage the school back to the admission limit until the last week of August.
- 4.18 Ranked lists for own admission authority schools remain the responsibility of the admission authority.
- 4.19 The scheme works with the order in which parents select preferences. The order of preferences should reflect the order parents wish to be offered a place. If for example parents are unsuccessful in gaining a place for the first preference school, they are not disadvantaged in obtaining their second preference or their third preference etc. The process will continue until all preferences are used.

- 4.20 It is a parental responsibility to inform the Council of a sibling at the school and any change of circumstance during the round, such as change of address (1 Sept to 22 Aug)
- 4.21 The Council will provide any other local authorities with details of any pupil's resident in their area who can be offered places at schools in the City (and vice versa).
- 4.22 Where possible the Council will share allocation lists to schools and the Consortium as appropriate before offer day. This will be dependent on the process being complete before offer day. Schools will be notified if it is not possible to send the lists to them. When lists can be sent, schools will be reminded of section 2.10 of The School Admissions Code 2021. Schools must not contact parents about the outcome of the applications until after these offers have been received by parents.
- 4.23 The Council will send an offer of a single place to pupils applying for a school place on the offer day.
- 4.24 Parents who completed an online application will be advised of the outcome of their application by email on offer day, unless they indicate on the application form that they would prefer a response by letter.
- 4.25 Parents who completed a paper application form will be advised of the outcome of their application by email on offer day. Where no email address is provided letters will be posted using 2nd class envelopes.
- 4.26 Offers are automatically recorded as 'accepted'. Parents will need to respond to any subsequent offers made post offer day within 10 working days.
- 4.27 Refusals must be received in writing from the applicant to the Council, refusals sent to the schools cannot be actioned by the Council until confirmation is received by the parent or the home LA if an out of area pupil.
- 4.28 The Council will not log a refusal, for statutory age pupils, unless the parents can provide details of the educational arrangements, they are putting in place for their child.
- 4.29 Schools must refer children that do not arrive on the year 6 transition day to the Council for recording, tracing and follow up with the parent.
- 4.30 Schools must refer children that do not take up places, and that have not responded to further tracing, in early September as 'children missing education' and follow the CME protocol.
- 4.31 Where children aged under 5 do not take up a reception place the primary/infant school must report this to the Council. The Council follow the 'under 5s missing education' process.
- 4.32 The Council will not accept the refusal of places without information. The Council will refer pupils as appropriate to the elective home education team where parents have confirmed they will be electively home educating. This will only be where the parent has confirmed this in writing.
- 4.33 Where no offer is possible the Council will offer a place at a school in the City nearest to the home address with vacancies at that time. Such offers will not be made to selective or faith schools (unless arranged with the school/s).
- 4.34 Offer letters for the main round to years R, 3 and 7 will remind parents not to call schools on offer day and to call the Council.
- 4.35 Only the Council will inform parents of offers and waiting list positions to parents until the last week in August. As lists are updated schools might not have accurate information.
- 4.36 Schools that send welcome letters/packs will only do so two weeks after offer day to provide parents with the opportunity to consider the offer and allow for any post offer day activity at the Council.
- 4.37 Any places will be reallocated if parents advise the Council that they no longer require a place. The Council will ensure the child is tracked and monitor parents that choose to home educate.

- 4.38 The Council will send allocation lists, waiting lists and withdrawn lists on the prescribed timetable and not on demand.
- 4.39 The Council publishes the School Admissions Privacy notices on Appeals, proof of address and the overall notice on [Admission Policies and Reports – Southend-on-Sea City Council](#)
- 4.40 The Council shares personal information with teams within the Council working to improve outcomes for children and young people (e.g. Inclusion, Attendance, CME, Virtual school etc) the full list is provided on [Microsoft Word - School Admissions.docx \(southend.gov.uk\)](#)
- 4.41 The Council will make use of the most current available software to ensure the process between schools and the Council is effective and efficient.

5. Summer Born Children

- 5.1 In the case of children born prematurely or late summer months parents may ask for admission to reception a year later. The child would be aged five.
- 5.2 The decision to admit outside of a child's normal age group is made based on the circumstances of each case however, unless born early summer months and a significant reason not to support the parent request, requests are supported. Parents must submit requests directly to schools and schools can make a decision or can hand over the response to the Council. Schools will inform the Council if they wish for the Council to send the outcome to the parent.
- 5.3 Parents submitting a request for admission outside the normal age group must also complete the Common Application Form. Parents can decide which admission year they wish to apply for once they have an outcome from schools. Admission cannot be delayed further than the term after the child turns five. Parents that apply a year later will need to use a paper application form.

6. Co-ordination of pupil admissions to Year 3 of Southend junior schools 2025/26

- 6.1 Applications will not be necessary for children moving from Year 2 to Year 3 in their existing primary school. However, parents of children in Year 2 of an infant school must apply for transfer to Year 3.
- 6.2 The closing date for completing a common application form for a Year 3 place is 15 January 2025
- 6.3 The Council will write to year 2 parents, that are attending infant schools, via the parent mail systems from the respective infant schools, advising of coordination round and need to apply to transfer to year 3 at the 'partner' junior school. The Council will also provide a simple flyer for all primary schools to mail out electronically.
- 6.4 The Council will work with infant schools in the area to assist the transfer of pupils to the Junior school.
- 6.5 The Council will provide an initial list of application received via common applications forms to junior schools by 26 January 2025
- 6.6 The Council will provide a list of all applications received via common application forms to junior schools by 9 February 2025
- 6.7 Schools must rank applications according to their admission criteria and return the ranked list to the Council on the agreed date - 26 February 2025.

- 6.8 Ranking must only be based on the highest qualifying admission criterion, and not all criteria as this skews the ranking. The Council will undertake all year 2 infant to junior ranking.
- 6.9 For all applications received by the closing date, from parents of Year 2 children (including children attending year 2 in an infant school), the Council will inform parents of the outcome of that application on National offer day.
- 6.10 There is full co-ordination for admission to year 3 as a normal admission round for junior schools. This is because we have infant and junior schools in the City and additional places at West Leigh Junior School and Bournes Green Junior School.
- 6.11 Applications submitted for children that are in the primary school that wish to remain in the same school will be withdrawn and parents will be advised that no application is required.

7. Co-ordinated arrangements between the offer date and start of autumn term.

- 7.1 The council will continue to coordinate admissions until the last week in August of each year.
- 7.2 Late and new preferences/applications will be slotted into the waiting lists by the Council in line with school admission arrangements. This will include using new address details where relevant and re-ranking applications to appropriate positions.
- 7.3 Where parents have refused the offer of the place then the vacant place will be offered in strict order of the waiting list until the place is accepted. This does not apply to Eastwood Academy, who advise on place to be offered due to their admission arrangements.
- 7.4 The offer of school places as they become available will continue to be made by the Council.
- 7.5 Once the final list is sent to schools on 22 August the coordination procedures for reception year, year 3 and year 7 will close. The Council will continue to administer waiting lists and in-year admissions for all Community and identified Own Admission Authority schools as agreed. Admission Authorities wishing to manage their own waiting lists will do so from 22 August onwards. Waiting lists must be held at least until the end of the first term (December).

8. Year 7 - Under and over age applicants

- 8.1 Parents must direct their request for under or over age matters directly to the school.
- 8.2 Any decisions made must be well documented and meet the requirements of the School Admission Code in that they are in the 'best interest of the child'.
- 8.3 Once a child, has started the year and completed at least one term as an out of normal age group, they cannot apply for a second opportunity to year 7. Admission mid-year to move from year 7 back to year 6 is not usually in the best interest of a child.
- 8.4 Schools must keep a record of the decision to admit out of normal age group and be able to provide reasons for decision to the Council.

9. Applications from children whose parents are living abroad

- 9.1 Parents who are living abroad and who wish their child to apply for a Southend school have no home authority. They can apply through what is a proxy home authority (i.e., the Council area in which they intend to buy a house or settle the child with relatives). However, although they may apply in this way, no place will be offered, using the new address, until they can provide clear evidence of residency.

10. New applications, late applications, changes of preferences and additional applications

- 10.1 New applications: Applications from parents moving into the area, who in the view of the Council could not have made an application by the closing date, will be slotted into the system when received. These applications might only be processed after all on time offers are made. These will be regarded as new applications and will only apply for parents that could not have applied on time such as moving into the country. Exceptional circumstances will be considered at the discretion of the Council.
- 10.2 Change of address: Addresses for schools in Southend-on-Sea are as per the child's normal place of residence on or before the last Friday in November, for Secondary Admissions. And for Infant, Junior and Primary Admissions as at 15 February (both rounds up to a month after the closing date). Any change of addresses that could not have reasonably been made by these dates would be at the discretion of the Council. Any addresses after these dates are updated after offer day for the transfer group (i.e., 1 March or 17 April) and the applications re-ranked accordingly. Parents that could not have applied by the deadlines for the main rounds will be considered under the terms of this scheme.
- 10.3 Late applications: Applications received after the closing date, will be regarded as late. They will not be considered until all "on time" applications have been considered. The Council will be the final arbiter, under the coordinated scheme, as to whether an application is late or not.
- 10.4 Changes in preference
Changes in the order of preferences already expressed will not be accepted after the closing dates unless, the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional and the changes can be accommodated. Change of preference for schools under another local authority will be consulted on with the appropriate local authority.
- 10.5 Additional preferences: any additional preferences received after the closing dates will be considered after the offer date.
- 10.6 Checks will be made with other departments in the Council and, where it is suspected that the family live outside Southend, contact will be made with the relevant Council. Where there is reasonable doubt as to the validity of a home address, the Council reserves the right to take additional checking.
- 10.7 Changes of address between offer day and the last week of August will be checked by the Council. Parents will need to provide proof of the home address in the form of; a house purchase; exchange of contracts, or a long-term letting agreement.

Informal tenancy agreement will not be accepted. In all situations, the Council must be satisfied that it is the child's normal/habitual place of residence.

- 10.8 Places can be withdrawn up to the end of December / or first term in the situation where an offer is made in error, or the application has been found to be fraudulent. Admission Authorities must inform the Council of any places withdrawn for the coordinated round up to December of each year and vice versa.
- 10.9 Schools must inform the Council of address, sibling, or any other differences in ranking lists.
- 10.10 Applications made online, via the parent portal that are unsubmitted will not be processed.

11. Supplementary Information Forms

- 11.1 In order that they may seek further information to apply their admission criteria, the following schools require parents to complete a Supplementary Information form.

Primary School	Details
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic	For all applications
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary	For all applications
St George's Catholic Primary	For all applications
St Helen's Catholic Primary	For all applications
St Mary's, Prittlewell, C of E Primary	For all applications

Table 2 Primary Schools and Supplementary forms

Secondary School	Details
St Bernard's High School	For all applications
St Thomas More High School	For all applications
Shoeburyness High School	For year 7 applications for selective places
Southend High School for Boys	For all applications for selective places
Southend High School for Girls	For all applications for selective places
The Eastwood School	For year 7 applications for Sport / Performing Arts places
Westcliff High School for Boys	For all applications for selective places
Westcliff High School for Girls	For all applications for selective places

Table 3 Secondary Schools and Supplementary forms

- 11.2 The registration process with the CSSE is in effect a SIF, as additional information is provided.

- 11.3 It is the responsibility of the grammar schools to ensure that the CSSE verify eligibility for preferential consideration.

12. Waiting lists

- 12.1 On offer day the Council will have a waiting list for each Southend school. In most cases the Council will be able to rank pupils that apply late, for example using distance. Depending on the admission criteria a new application would be added into the waiting list.
- 12.2 The Council will maintain the waiting list as ranked by schools. Where any new pupil, such as a late application, is added to the waiting list the Council should be advised within 10 working days of where such pupils fit in relation to other pupils on the waiting list.

- 12.3 Where a vacancy does arise the place will be offered by the Council to the pupil at top of the waiting list.
- 12.4 A parent of a child at the top of the waiting list offered a place must confirm, within 10 working days, whether they wish to accept the place. During the 10 days the child would hold two offers.
- 12.5 The Council will keep waiting lists for all community schools and schools who we manage in year admissions for in the City for the full school year. Waiting lists will be maintained strictly in accordance with the admission criteria of the school concerned.
- 12.6 The Council will remove pupils from the waiting list who are offered and accept a place at a school that is a higher preference.
- 12.7 The Council will rank pupils with address changes, late and new applications after all on time offers are made or on the waiting list as appropriate.
- 12.8 All admission authorities must specify, in their arrangements, the period a child remains on a waiting list for each school year.

13. Appeals

- 13.1 When a local authority or an admission authority informs a parent of a decision to refuse their child a place at a school for which they have applied, it must include the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents must be informed that, if they wish to appeal, they should set out their grounds for appeal in writing. Admission authorities must not limit the grounds on which an appeal can be made.
- 13.2 Own admission authorities must inform the Council no later than 1 October before a main round if it requires the Council to present their appeals. The Council might not be able to support schools with appeals without prior agreement. The Council does not present appeals for in year processes where it is not the administrator.
- 13.3 Schools will send lists of submitted appeals to the Council. The Council will record the appeal against the admission record and provide the school with all relevant documentation.
- 13.4 School must inform the Council within 5 school days of the outcome of any appeal.
- 13.5 Having received notification from the school, parents will have 10 school days to confirm in writing to the Council which place they wish to accept following the outcome of any appeals. Once a place is released, that place will be reallocated.
- 13.6 Admission authorities must comply with the School Admissions Appeals Code 2022 and must record all appeals and provide the data to the Council after all appeals are heard.

14. Atypical Admissions

- 14.1 The Council will execute instruction from the Department for Education in relation to admission related matters including but not limited to;
- 14.2 By 30 September of each year the Council will write to all year 9 pupils to advise of alternative education opportunities that are available for year 10 pupils within a reasonable distance;
- 14.3 All schools have a statutory duty to secure impartial careers guidance for all Year 8 to Year 13 students to inspire their young people to fulfil their potential and to make

them aware of all opportunities open to them. We strongly recommend that your child discuss their options with a Careers Adviser in their current school or college. The careers advisor will also be able to advise of UTCs further away that might offer different specialities.

15. In Year

- 15.1 Own Admission Authorities must inform the Council by 1 August at the latest of each year whether they intend to be part of the Council's in-year co-ordination scheme for the following 1 September to 31 August or whether they will be managing their own in-year admissions.
- 15.2 The Council will publish information on its website by 31 August to explain how in-year applications will be made and how they will be dealt with from 1 September onwards.
- 15.3 The Council will provide a suitable application form for parents to complete when applying for a school place for their child for a school for which it coordinates in year admissions. Where the Council receives an in-year application for a school which manages its own in year admissions, it must promptly forward the application to the relevant admission authority, which must process it in accordance with its own in-year admission arrangements.
- 15.4 Own Admission authorities must follow the requirements of the Code.
- 15.5 All schools must provide the Council with available places/vacancies via the weekly email request.
- 15.6 The Council and Own Admission Authorities should inform a parent of the outcome of an application within 10 school days, and must respond in writing no later than 15 school days.
- 15.7 Own admission authorities must inform the Council of all in-year applications and their outcome within 2 days of receipt of the application.
- 15.8 Own Admission Authorities must follow Children Missing Education protocol where appropriate.
- 15.9 Where the Council processes in year admissions, it will send a copy of the application to the proposed allocated school and the school will have 24 hours to raise any concerns. The offer will be sent to the applicant, post the 24 hours, if no contact from the school has been made.

16. Annual Review of the Scheme

- 16.1 Each year all local authorities must formulate and publish on their website a scheme by 1 January in the relevant determination year to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools within their area.
- 16.2 Local Authorities must consult admission authorities for schools affected by the scheme and other Local Authorities every 7 years as a minimum.
- 16.3 A local authority must inform the Secretary of State whether they have agreed a scheme by 15 April. If this is not achieved the Secretary of State may impose a scheme.

17. List of schools

The list of schools that are included in this agreement

Secondary Schools

School Name	Number
Belfairs Academy	5434
Cecil Jones Academy	4004
Chase High School	4000
Shoeburyness High School	4034
Southchurch High School	4002
Southend High School for Boys	5446
Southend High School for Girls	5428
St Bernard's High School	5465
St Thomas More High School	5447
The Eastwood Academy	5414
Westcliff High School for Boys	5401
Westcliff High School for Girls	5423

Table 4 Secondary School

Primary Schools

School Name	Number
Barons Court Primary School & Nursery	2124
Blenheim Primary School	2387
Bournemouth Park Academy	3822
Bournes Green Infant School	2128
Bournes Green Junior School	2123
Chalkwell Hall Infant School	2022
Chalkwell Hall Junior School	2019
Darlinghurst Academy	2127
Earls Hall Primary School	2023
Eastwood Primary School	3825
Edwards Hall Primary School	3826
Fairways Primary School	2407
Friars Primary School & Nursery	3824
Greenways Primary School	2104
Hamstel Infant School	2093
Hamstel Junior School (partner school)	2092
Heycroft Primary School	2126
Hinguar Primary School	2094
Leigh North Street Primary School	2096
Milton Hall Primary School and Nursery	5273
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School	2002
Porters Grange Primary School & Nursery	2001
Prince Avenue Academy	2000
Richmond Avenue Primary School	3823
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery	3326
St George's Catholic Primary School	3329
St Helen's Catholic Primary School	3327
St Mary's Prittlewell Church of England Primary School	3325
Temple Sutton Primary School	2132

School Name	Number
The Westborough Academy	2004
Thorpedene Primary School	5225
West Leigh Infant School	2109
West Leigh Junior School (partner school)	2108

Table 5 Primary Schools

17. Key dates – Infant, Primary and Junior admissions September 2025

Date (or next working day)	Actions
1st January 2024	Date for formulation of scheme
September- October 2024	Publish Admissions Information Advertisements, fliers, and letters to registered parents of early years children
14 September 2024	Admission round opens for applications
Early October 2024	Distribution of year 3 “letter/fliers” to year 2 pupils
Mid December 2024	Preliminary lists to faith schools for Supplementary Information Form follow up
14 September – 22 January	The Council admissions team verifying applications, which continues right up to end of coordination, for late applications.
15 January 2025	Closing date for admission applications (address changes up to a month will be accommodated)
22 January 2025	Follow up list to faith schools for Supplementary Information Form follow up
31 January 2025	Initial list of preferences sent to admissions authorities and other local authorities for ranking. Initial list is a pre-ranked list.
9 February 2025	Final list of preferences sent to admissions authorities
26 February 2025	Closing date for schools to return ranked preferences
4 March 2025	SEN pupils will be accommodated if the named school is identified in the finalised Education, Health and Care Plan. Post this date pupils will be admitted over the PAN but managed back to PAN until coordination ceases
12 April 2025	Where possible, final offer lists and offer data will be sent to schools under embargo (only if receivers portal not working – we will allow live access to schools)
16 April 2025	National Offer Day
16 May 2025	Closing date for appeal forms (reference to the code 2.3 of School Admissions Appeals Code 2012 – must be submitted at least 20 days for one time appeals after offer day – date is in outcome letter to applicants) Date supports appeals being heard by deadline.
18 July 2025	All on-time appeals completed (2.3a) School Admission appeals Code 2022 (40 school days from 16 May)
22 August 2025	The administration of waiting lists for years R and 3 and all in-year admissions handed over to academy, voluntary aided, and foundation schools for schools that run their own in year admissions. Transfer rounds moved to in year process for Council (notional as receivers portal will have live data - only if receivers portal not working) Coordination to reception ceases and in year process comes in

Table 6 Key Dates - Infant, Primary and Junior Admissions September 2025

18. Key dates – Secondary admissions September 2025

Date(or next working day)	Action
First week in July 2024	Publication of Secondary Admissions Information (booklet) Admissions information distribution to year 5 pupils. Open evenings at schools that admit pupils because of testing / auditions
1 July – 7 September 2024	Registration for testing / audition (CSSE/Eastwood) confirmed by CSSE and Eastwood in publications
1 September 2024	Opening of on-line admissions facility for transfer to secondary school
First two weeks in September 2024	Distribution of reminder flier /booklet to year 6 pupils
XX September 2024*	11+ test (to be confirmed by the Consortium – dates will be available in the Admissions booklets)
XX September 2024*	Alternative test date (for religious, illness or exceptional circumstances) 11+ test (to be confirmed by the Consortium – dates will be available in the Admissions booklets)
9 October 2024	List of pupils not applied will be made available to current primary/junior schools where possible, or primary/junior lists from school to be matched with applications, to identify any barriers preventing on-time applications being submitted.
XX October 2024*	Testing results to be sent to parents by Consortium / schools (to be confirmed by the Consortium – dates will be available in the Admissions booklets)
w/c 16 October 2024	Follow up list of pupils not applied will be made available to current primary/junior schools to identify any barriers preventing on-time applications being submitted.
w/c 16 October 2024	Preliminary list to be sent to faith schools for Supplementary Information Form follow up
31 October 2024	Closing date for admission applications (address changes up to a month will be accommodated – 30 Nov 2023)
w/c 6 November 2024	Follow up list to be sent to faith schools for Supplementary Information Form follow up.
w/c 20 November 2024	List of preferences to be sent to schools and other authorities for ranking.
w/c 8 January 2025	Closing date for schools to return ranked preferences
2 February 2025	SEN pupils will be accommodated if the named schools are identified in the finalised EHSP by 9 February
w/c 23 February 2025	Where possible, final offer lists and offer data will be sent to schools and Consortium under embargo (only if receivers portal not working – otherwise information will be made available on the receivers portal)
3 March 2025	National Offer day

Date (or next working day)	Action
4 March 2025	Year 6 destination lists sent to primary/junior schools under embargo (only if receivers portal not working – otherwise information will be made available on the receivers portal)
After 15 March 2025	Secondary schools that wish to send welcome letter/packs
1-25 March 2025	Updated information, new offers, withdrawals etc sent to secondary school's post offer responses via email communication (only if receivers portal not working)
w/c 25 March 2025	Updated lists to secondary schools (only if receivers portal not working)
1 April 2025	Closing date for appeal forms (reference to the code 2.3 of School Admissions Appeals Code 2012 – must be submitted a min of 20 days for one time appeals after offer day – date is in outcome letter to applicants – need this date to ensure all appeals completed before primary appeal round)
w/c 20 May 2025	Updated lists sent to secondary schools and primary/junior schools for year 6 transfer (only if receivers portal not working)
17 June 2025 (pending school closure days)	All on-time appeals completed – refer to School Admissions Appeals Code 2012 (reference to the code 2.3 of School Admissions Appeals Code 2012 – must be heard within 40 days for one time appeals after 1 April)
w/c 30 June 2025	Updated lists sent to secondary schools and primary/junior schools for year 6 transition day. Schools must report children that do not attend transition day to SCC. (only if receivers portal not working)
27 August 2025	The administration of waiting lists handed over to academy, voluntary aided, and foundation, free schools (notional as receivers portal will have live data - only if receivers portal not working)

Key Dates - Secondary Admissions Sept 2025

Southend-on-Sea City Council | Education and Early Years | Access & Inclusion Team

Queries to or copies can be requested from: Chrissy Papas, School Place Planning & Admission Compliance Manager, SCC, chrissypapas@southend.gov.uk

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 11 January 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: Yes
Title of Report: Award of contract for Toilet Cleaning and Light Maintenance Services

Executive Director: Alan Richards, Executive Director Environment and Place
Report Author: Nicola Watts, Interim Waste Procurement Contract Manager
Executive Councillor: Councillor Davidson, Cabinet Member for the Environment

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Toilet Cleaning and Light Maintenance Services are currently provided under contract as part of the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Services. There is an opportunity at the end of the current contract for the services to be provided by South Essex Property Services Limited at a cost slightly below the current market offer with additional benefits of working with an organisation set up to deliver services for the Council.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. Award a contract to South Essex Property Services Limited for the provision of the 'Toilet Cleaning and Light Maintenance Services' for public toilets and portaloos and toilets within Parks and some other named locations in Southend-on-Sea City from April 2025 to April 2030 with an option to extend the contract for up to a further 5 years.

3. Background

- 3.1. The current 'Toilet Cleaning and Light Maintenance Services' is delivered by Veolia ES (UK) Limited ("Veolia") under the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract which started in October 2015. The 8-year contract which expired in October 2023, has been extended until October 2024, with the option to extend for a further 6-month period to April 2025.
- 3.2. During Summer 2020, the Council was awarded funding by the "Welcome Back Fund" to support and manage the impacts of the pandemic. To encourage people to get out and exercise, £4,349 of the funding was used to purchase 30 portaloos (including 5 disabled portaloos) which were positioned in a number of locations across Southend to support social distancing. Eventually they were then repositioned to locations along the seafront in order to increase toilet capacity post-covid.

Service Outline

- 3.3. There are currently 16 public toilet locations and 6 toilet locations in Parks in the Southend-on-Sea City Council area that are included within the contract. There are a further 25 portaloos (5 in storage) that are currently in use during the summer season only to increase toilet provision at locations with high visitor numbers. The portaloos are also serviced by Veolia but are not part of the core services under Veolia's contract so are charged through the Dayworks rates in the contract for the summer period. The scope of the services is outlined below.
- 3.4. The key areas in the provision of the Toilet Cleaning and Light Maintenance Services includes;
 - a) removal of litter from within the immediate external area (to be defined as within 3m of the toilet walls);
 - b) Cleaning toilets;
 - c) Opening and closing;
 - d) Light maintenance and repairs;
 - e) Waste collection, transportation and disposal (including clinical waste);

- f) Emptying of liquid waste from portaloos, flushing of sewage pipes associated with toilet buildings and emptying of sewage sumps (at named locations);
- g) Provision of consumables;
- h) Responding to emergency situations like pump failures;
- i) Reporting of repairs that fall outside the scope of light maintenance and repairs (to the Council's Building Repairs Team).

3.5. The cleaning of the toilets include the following activities;

- a) all urinals, toilet pans and seats;
- b) all nappy changing tables;
- c) all wash basins, taps and hand dryers;
- d) all shower areas, including waste traps, grills, water outflows, exposed pipework and shower heads;
- e) all changing areas and all specialist equipment;
- f) all floors, walls, ceilings windows and ledges
- g) all fixtures and fittings including signage;
- h) all service rooms and store cupboards; and
- i) all window glass, frames, light fittings, shades and covers inside and outside.

3.6. As part of the tender process for the new Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract anticipated to start in April 2025, the toilet services have provisionally been included as an Additional Service. However, as detailed below, better value for money can be obtained by awarding the contract for toilet services to South Essex Property Services Limited and removing the services from the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract tender process. The Council has commenced the second stage of the procurement process for the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract so making a decision to remove the toilet services from the tender at this stage will allow bidders and the Council to focus on the core services.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. The Council can make a direct award to South Essex Property Services Limited using Regulation 12 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. However, in making a direct award such as this, the Council must still demonstrate that the decision is best value which is explored further below.
- 4.2. There are three requirements that must all be met to use this route (Regulation 12 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015) and this is how the Council meets those requirements:

(a) The contracting authority exercises over the legal person concerned a control which is similar to that which it exercises over its own departments; South Essex Property Services Limited is wholly owned by South Essex Homes Limited. South Essex Homes Limited is a private company limited by guarantee without share capital.

The Partnership Agreement with South Essex Homes Limited and South Essex Property Services Limited makes very clear that the Council exercises significant control over both companies which would meet the test for control as detailed above. Extract from the Partnership Agreement:

1.3.4 the Council exercises power over significant decisions of South Essex Homes and through South Essex Homes, South Essex Property Services;

1.3.5 the Council has responsibility for and exercises ultimate control over South Essex Homes and South Essex Property Services;

(b) More than 80% of the activities of the controlled legal person are carried out in the performance of tasks entrusted to it by the controlling contracting authority or by other legal persons controlled by that contracting authority;

South Essex Property Services Limited have confirmed that more than 80% of their activities are carried out in the performance of tasks for South Essex Homes Limited and the Council and therefore meeting the test in (b) above. The turnover for SEPS for the year ended 31 March 2023 was £6,605k of

which £6,266k came from the Council and South Essex Homes Limited. Therefore 94.8% of the turnover of SEPS was from activities of SEPS in the performance of tasks entrusted to it by the Council and South Essex Homes Limited. Whilst there may be minor fluctuations to this percentage, it is anticipated that it will stay well above the 80% threshold throughout the life of the toilet cleansing services contract. The award of the toilet cleansing contract to South Essex Property Services Limited will increase further the % of their activities that are carried out in the performance of tasks for South Essex Homes Limited and the Council

(c) there is no direct private capital participation in the controlled legal person with the exception of non-controlling and non-blocking forms of private capital participation required by national legislative provisions, in conformity with the Treaties, which do not exert a decisive influence on the controlled legal person.

There is no direct private capital participation in South Essex Property Services Limited.

Detailed solutions costs

- 4.3. As part of the Detailed Solutions received from bidders in July 2023 for the new Waste Collection and Street Cleansing services contract, the Council has received indicative itemised costs for delivery of the toilet cleansing service for an 8-year contract term.
- 4.4. Although these are not final costs at this stage, they have provided indicative prices. Pricing of this service is more straightforward than some other elements of the main contract and therefore they are deemed accurate for the purposes of a price comparison.
- 4.5. The prices submitted are confidential and commercially sensitive and are therefore provided in Part 2 of this paper.

South Essex Property Services Limited Costs (SEPS)

- 4.6. SEPS have provided a best and final quotation for the work, following a series of meetings with them since January 2023. The price is based on a 5-year contract term with CPI applied annually to all costs including goods, vehicles and equipment (excluding staff costs and variable costs). Variable costs will be charged based on actuals, which include consumables (i.e. toilet roll, soap) repairs (i.e. replacement items) and waste removal (tonnages), which will avoid SEPS under-pricing or risk pricing. Staff costs will be uplifted by the Real Living Wage increase.
- 4.7. SEPS have presented a number of options to further reduce this price by limiting the opening times for the portaloos by 50% and 25%. It should be noted that the portaloos are not open 100% of the time during the summer currently and so there is scope to streamline this service element and reduce costs further with minimal impact on service delivery.
- 4.8. The total quoted price includes fixed price elements plus a variable price charge based on actuals, giving an overall price for the service, based on the current specification of £765,521.70. Part 2 of this paper demonstrates how this quote provides value for money against market rates.

Staff

- 4.9. Staff details are confidential and are therefore provided in Part 2 of this paper.
- 4.10. SEPS will be paying staff the Real Living Wage which normally tracks above the National Minimum Wage, by around 15%. Staff costs represent around 61% of the total contract costs.

YEAR	UK Real Living Wage	National Minimum Wage
-------------	----------------------------	------------------------------

19/20	£9.30	£8.21
20/21	£9.50	£8.72
21/22	£9.90	£8.91
22/23	£10.90	£9.50
23/24	£12	£10.42

5. Other Options

Pros and cons/ Risks and benefits

- 5.1. There are a number of key benefits to contracting with SEPS for the delivery of the toilet cleaning and light maintenance contract, but also some risks. These are outlined below.

Pros/ benefits

- a) Arm's length subsidiary organisation keeping the service delivery and spend within the Council;
- b) Higher quality and standard expected through specific and dedicated staff and resources;
- c) More scrutiny and control over the service;
- d) Increased transparency of costs;
- e) Flexible contract with ability to change and adapt to changing financial constraints to reflect to budgets and make efficiencies and savings more easily;
- f) Removal of toilets from main contract to allow Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contractor to focus attention on the larger service elements;
- g) Payment of the Real Living Wage to staff by SEPS means better staff morale, resilience and retention with corresponding benefits to achievement of service standards;
- h) Ability to minimise profit margin without erosion of service standard;.
- i) Opportunity to consolidate with other services delivered by SEPS (i.e. Civic Centre and Civic Buildings cleaning contract, caretakers, security staff) which provides further staffing resilience due to a number of local staff being available;

- j) SEPS can evidence value for money against market.;
- k) A close relationship as part of the Group enabling open and honest conversations;
- l) Ability to report issues outside of the contract specification to support other Council services and priorities (i.e. reporting antisocial behaviour, homelessness/rough sleeping, substance misuse or identifying areas requiring recycling facilities);
- m) Increased flexibility and responsiveness to service requirements through open dialogue with the Council;
- n) All monies/ profit made by SEPS are retained within the Group and can be used by the Council;
- o) Opportunity to deliver communications and customer service differently in toilet blocks and assess the most effective ways of communicating with the public and reporting issues.

Cons/ risks

- p) Some items to be sub-contracted (i.e. Legionella Testing, sump tank emptying, portaloos emptying) due to lack of appropriate equipment;
- q) SEPS pay the Real Living Wage. This will slightly increase the cost of staff and generally tracks above the National Living Wage, which is not offered to the current contractor's staff;
- r) Change to the way the current reporting functions operate, however an opportunity to make improvements.

6. Financial Implications

Costs against the current budget

- 6.1. Although the current cost and budget provision for this service is £340k p.a., it is recognised that this is not reflective of the current market and therefore is not representative of the current cost of this contract. Additionally, more resources are being deployed on this service than the level the Council are contracted to pay for. £340k p.a. does not even cover the staff costs required

for the delivery of the service and is therefore not sustainable. As part of the 2024/25 budget setting proposals, additional budget is earmarked for the waste collection and cleansing contract which is currently under a live procurement. This investment will also be utilised to fund the increased cost of the toilet cleansing contract as the value within the medium-term financial forecast is based on the initial tender submission which included toilet cleansing as an optional item.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. As detailed above, the direct award of a contract to SEPS is compliant with Regulation 12 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Further, the Council can demonstrate best value through the evaluation of price against the Detailed Solutions received as part of the tender for Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Services and further through the pros and cons detailed above.
- 7.2. TUPE will apply to the transfer of these services to SEPS. This allows employees to assert their right to transfer with the contract should they meet certain requirements regarding their employment. This is dealt with in more detail in the part 2 report.

8. Policy Context

- 8.1 The award of this contract will contribute to delivering the Council's Corporate Plan priority for a clean city with a resilient environment.

9. Carbon Impact

- 9.1. As a result of changing providers, no carbon impacts have been identified.

10. Equalities

- 10.1. An equalities impact assessment has not been completed as there is no change in service.

11. Consultation

11.1. No consultation has been completed as there is no change in service.

12. Appendices

12.1. Appendix 1:

13. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	28/12/2023
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	02/01/2024
Executive Director(s)	Alan Richards	22/12/2023
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Meg Davidson	18/12/2023

Title: Corporate Debt Management - Position to 30 November 2023

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 11 January 2024

Classification: Part 1

Policy Context: All corporate priorities

Key Decision: No

Executive Director: Joe Chesterton, Finance and Resources

Report Authors: Pete Bates, Director of Financial Services,
Richard Campbell, Council Tax Manager.

Executive Councillor: Councillor Cox Leader and Cabinet Member for SEND

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the following:

- The position as at 30 November 2023 of outstanding debt to the Council.
- Debts that have been written off, or are recommended for write off, for the financial year to 30 November 2023.
- Specific irrecoverable debts that are over £25,000 and therefore require Cabinet approval.
- The Council's updated Debt Collection and Recovery Policy

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Cabinet considers the outstanding debt position as of 30 November 2023 and notes the position of debts written off under delegation to 30 November 2023 as set out in **Appendices A & B**.
- 2.2. That Cabinet approves the two write-offs exceeding £25,000, as shown in **Appendix B**.
- 2.3. That Cabinet approves the updated Debt Collection and Recovery Policy, presented at **Appendix C**.

3. Background Information

- 3.1. It was agreed by Cabinet on 19 March 2013 that the S151 Officer would submit regular reports to Cabinet on all aspects of the Council's outstanding debt, along with the required write off position.
- 3.2. Southend-on-Sea City Council is made up of several service areas, of which all are responsible for the collection and administration of outstanding debt. The main areas are our Accounts Receivable team who conduct a large proportion of invoicing and the collection of debts owed to the Council. Our Revenues team are responsible for the collection of statutory levies such as Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates).
- 3.3. There are also other areas of debt that are included in this report, namely recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments, Parking and Enforcement penalties, Adult Social Care and Library fines. In addition, the position regarding outstanding debt levels for the Housing Revenue Account for rent arrears and service charges is also reported.
- 3.4. The process and legislative framework for the collection and write off of debt was detailed in the report to Cabinet on 17 September 2013. It is worth highlighting that the Council has a good success rate in the collection of debt. The collection targets are agreed annually as part of the Council's service and financial planning process.
- 3.5. Debts are only considered for write off where all other courses of recovery available have been undertaken or explored and the debt is considered irrecoverable.

4. Council Tax

- 4.1. £119.9m of Council Tax is due to be collected in 2023/24, with a year-end collection target of 97.5%. The Council to date has collected a total of £83.3m, with a percentage collection of 69.5% achieved. This is currently £239k less than the target profile for this period of the year but does not present a risk to the overall end of year collection target being achieved.

- 4.2. Collection continues for historic arrears from previous years. The following chart shows the actual in year collection rate over the past 4 years, and the collection rate of each year's charge to date, including debts that have been written off.

Council Tax Performance		
	As of 31 March of relevant year	As of 30 November 2023
2019/20	97.5%	99.1%
2020/21	96.7%	99.0%
2021/22	97.4%	98.7%
2022/23	97.5%	98.4%

- 4.3. The team continue to collect debts outside of this financial year and at time of reporting have collected £1.9m, meaning 17.9% of all historical debt held has now been collected.
- 4.4. The revenues team plans to commence a comprehensive review later this year in connection to any debts that are several years old and where the Council has a 100% bad debt provision. This remains a priority of the team, and work will hopefully commence in this area in early 2024, after the large court sessions have been reviewed.

5. Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates)

- 5.1. £38.5m of Non-Domestic Rate is due to be collected in 2023/24, with a collection target of 98.5%. The Council to date has collected a total of £27.5m, with a percentage collection of 71.5% achieved. This is currently £255k higher than the target profile for this period of the year therefore presents a positive position, with no current risk to the end-of-year collection. Collection is continuing for historic arrears from previous years. The following chart shows the actual in year collection rate over the past 4 years, and the collection rate of each year's charge to date, including debts that have been already written off.

Non-Domestic Rates Performance		
	As of 31 March of relevant year	As of 30 November 2023
2019/20	98.3%	99.7%
2020/21	90.6%	99.6%
2021/22	96.3%	99.1%
2022/23	98.7%	98.9%

The team continue to collect debts outside of this financial year and at time of reporting have collected £206k, meaning 12.6% of all historic debt held has been collected. This is lower than expected for this time of the year and analysis is being conducted to ensure the appropriate action is being taken in respect of all debts that remain outstanding.

6. Housing Benefit Overpayment

- 6.1. This is any rent allowance or rent rebate that a person has received but is not entitled to. Most commonly this accumulates when there is a change to a person's circumstance, and they fail to notify us in good time. The overpayment will be invoiced unless they are in receipt of Housing Benefit in which case their benefit entitlement is reduced to enable recovery of the overpayment. The vast majority of Housing Benefit overpayment is due to claimant error.

Housing Benefit Overpayment Created by Year (£000s)				
	Claimant Error	LA/DWP Error	Admin Delay	Liability Reduction
2022/23	651	55	36	45
2023/24 (to date)	605	34	20	37

- 6.2. Collection during the reporting period is comparable to last year, and as a result the debt in this area is similar, the cumulative debt position on 30 November 2023 is £4.2m, reduced from £4.5m in the previous financial year.

7. Libraries

- 7.1. Library debt is made up of several small value overdue fines and replacing lost or non-returned books.

8. Adult Services

- 8.1. Adult Services make charges for the following services:

- (i) Contributions to residential accommodation
- (ii) Charges for non-residential services i.e. Home Care, Community

- 8.2. Support, Day Services and transport to services

- (iii) Charges to other local authorities
- (iv) Charges to National Health Service

- 8.3. As of 30 November 2023, the level of debt was £7.842m, which is an increase of £1.885m compared to this time last year. The main driver of the increased debt level is the increased rates paid to providers, which are subject to means testing and passed onto the service user.
- 8.4. Of this debt, £2.095m (27%) is debt deferred against property and £0.958m (12%) is under 30 days old, which includes sums owed by the National Health Service or other local authorities.
- 8.5. Of the remaining £4.771m (61%), the majority has been overdue for greater than one year and in some cases, the debt is now charged to the service users' estate. This poses a significant risk to recovery as it is unsecured. This has been reflected by an appropriate increase in the Bad Debt provision specifically earmarked for this Service area.
- 8.6. Social care debt management has been highlighted as an area for improvement and the council recognises the potential vulnerability of the service user and the need for this debt to be managed in a sensitive manner. A review of working practices from financial assessment through to billing, collection, recovery and reporting for social care debt has commenced with the intention of integrating the Adult Social Care finance team into the Finance and Resources Directorate, under the leadership of the Director of Financial services. Consultation with appropriate staff will commence in early 2024, with a view to completing the transition for the start of the 2024/25 financial year. This would also have the benefit of delivering a corporate debt collection focus for all debt streams for the whole Council.

9. Parking

- 9.1. The recovery of unpaid Penalty Charge Notices is undertaken by a semi-judicial process under the current Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 9.2. From 1 April 2023 to 30 November 2023, a total of 48,500 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) have been issued identifying a projected income of £1.45m.
- 9.3. It should be noted that PCNs are issued at a higher rate and lower rate (£70.00 and £50.00 respectively) depending on the seriousness of the parking contravention. PCNs may be paid at a discounted rate of 50% of the charge if paid within 14 days of the date of issue.
- 9.4. This value is continuously being amended as payments are received and it should be recognised that payments made at the 50% discount amount will reduce the projected income level. Historically, 75% of paid PCN's are paid at the discounted payment.
- 9.5. The value of cancelled notices for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 November 2023 is £170,479 and cases written off where no vehicle owner has been identified totals £22,256.

- 9.6. Since 2018/19 the number of PCN's issued has increased by 31%. Although this is expected to bring more income into the Council it is also expected to result in an increased value of write offs too. Proportionally, the number of cancelled PCN's has not increased at this same rate which shows that those currently issued are more robust and appropriate.
- 9.7. To reduce the value of outstanding debt the service is considering exploring the possibility of joining the National Persistent Evader Database (NPED) which is intended to help authorities navigate their way through persistent evaders whom rarely or never pay legitimate fines. In conjunction, the NPED may also help to reduce our Traffic Enforcement Centre (TEC) costs as in some cases it is not viable to progress to court if the debt is deemed unlikely to be recovered.

Note: "In parking enforcement process, only PCNs that have been registered as an unpaid debt at the Traffic Enforcement Centre are classed as being at debt stage."

10. Miscellaneous Income

- 10.1. This is a range of services that the Council charge for including such areas as rental income on commercial properties, recharges to other bodies for services we have provided.
- 10.2. It is important to note that collection can vary month by month depending on the value of invoices raised as a reasonable period needs to be allowed for payment to be made.
- 10.3. There has been a significant increase in the write off position due to high value debt agreed for write off in the previous quarters report.
- 10.4. Total debt outstanding at time of reporting is £5.9m compared to £3.7m at the same time last year, an increase of £2.2m.
- 10.5. This increase is not a cause for concern, with an additional £5m raised in this financial year and collection rates remain positive at 91.05%, 1.05% above target for this period of the year.

11. Housing

- 11.1. Under the management of South Essex Homes there are arrears of outstanding debt of Rent and Service Charges for housing tenants. Extensive recovery procedures are followed but if the debt is deemed to be irrecoverable then the cost of any write-offs for this category of debt is specifically charged to the Housing Revenue Account and not to Council Taxpayers.

12. Debt Collection and Recovery Policy and Write-Off Levels

- 12.1. The current Debt Collection and Recovery Policy was approved in November 2017, at this time delegation was given to the Executive Director (Finance & Resources) to update the values and level of write-off that can be written off by various designated officers with the Council.
- 12.2. As part of the last Debt Management report to Cabinet, it was recommended that the current Debt Collection and Recovery Policy be reviewed, with any proposed changes being brought back for consideration and approval. A full assessment has been undertaken and it has been concluded that the Council's existing policy remains robust and effective and therefore only minor amendments have been made. The exception is the collection of Housing Benefit Overpayments, which has been updated in its entirety. An updated draft policy is attached at **Appendix C** for approval.
- 12.3. When the integration of the adults social care finance team into the Finance and Resources Directorate takes place, the policy may need to be further reviewed alongside this transition to assess and document any potential new enhancements to processes, procedures, working practices and workflows specifically for social care debt. Any further changes to the policy will then come back to Cabinet for consideration and final approval.
- 12.4. Write-off approval levels are not proposed to be changed and are shown in the following tables and are in accordance with the latest Financial Procedure rules as set out in the Constitution and the updated corporate debt recovery policy.

Debt Type: Accounts Receivable/Adult Services/ Housing and Council Tax Benefit	
Designation	Amount
Assistant Manager	under £5,000
Manager	Up to £10,000
Executive Director (Finance & Resources)	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

Debt Type: Council Tax and NNDR (National Non-Domestic Rates)	
Designation	Amount
Senior Officer	Up to £2,000
Team Leader	Up to £5,000
Manager	Up to £10,000
Executive Director (Finance & Resources)	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

Debt Type: Parking	
Designation	Amount
Team Leader	Up to £5,000
Head of Parking	Up to £10,000
Jointly - Head of Parking and Executive Director (Finance & Resources)	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

- 12.5. South Essex Homes, as managing agent, submit proposed write-offs to the Council, following which the following approval levels are exercised.

Debt Type: Housing Rents and Service Charges	
Designation	Amount
Jointly - Head of Housing Service and Executive Director (Finance & Resources)	Under £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

13. Reasons for Decisions

- 13.1. Debt collection is conducted independently by the following teams Accounts Receivable, Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit Overpayment, Parking and Enforcement penalties, Adult Social Care. All action instigated is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Debt Management Policy to ensure a fair and consistent approach is applied to each case, and to maximise collection for the Council. The Council have agreed to consolidate the debt collection of the services included in this report to form a Corporate Debt collection team to maximise revenue and the experience of residents.
- 13.2. Each write-off is considered on an individual basis to assess the viability of collection and via the Council's Corporate Debt Management Policy to ensure a standard consistent approach.

14. Other Options

This is a report notifying members of the current position of the Council's debt and related write offs, and therefore there are no other options.

15. Financial Implications

- 15.1. Debts that are written off will have been fully provided for within the Council's bad debt provision and as such there should be no specific additional financial implications for the Council. However, it is possible that unforeseen and unplanned additional write-offs occur, which could lead to the value of debts written off in any year exceeding the bad debt provision.
- 15.2. Where there is a potential for this occur, this report will act as an early warning system and will enable additional control measures to be agreed and undertaken to either bring the situation back under control, or to make appropriate adjustments to the bad debt provision.
- 15.3. Relevant service areas are aware that they will have to bear the full cost of the value of debts that are written off from within their service's budget.
- 15.4. The Council's bad debt provision is calculated according to the type of debt using an agreed formula. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by Finance Officers applying their professional judgement considering specific service knowledge. The proposed arrangements for each debt type are reviewed annually, and the approach is agreed with the Council's external auditors.
- 15.5. For General Fund debt the following percentages are used to calculate the value of provisions for various types of debt

Type of debt	Age of debt in months						
	<1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-6	6-12	>12
Sundry Debt	0%	10%	10%	50%	50%	90%	90%
Adult Social Care	0%	10%	10%	50%	50%	90%	100%
Commercial Rents	0%	10%	15%	25%	50%	70%	90%

- 15.6. Where there is an active payment plan in place no formal bad debt provision is made.
- 15.7. Provisions for bad debt associated with Council Tax or NNDR are calculated as part of the Collection Fund accounting arrangements and apportioned between Southend-on-Sea City Council as the billing authority and preceptors. These calculations follow a similar formulaic approach for the calculation bad debt provision over the last 23 years. The approach and calculations are also shared and agreed with the Council's external auditors each year.
- 15.8. Provisions for bad debt associated with the Housing Revenue Account follow specific recommended guidelines. The Council follows this approach, and the overall bad debt provision is calculated on this basis.

16. Legal Implications

- 16.1. If there are debts to be written off that exceed the level at which officers have delegated powers to deal with the matter, authorisation is required from Cabinet.

17. Carbon Impact

- 17.1. No carbon impact implications.

18. Equalities

- 18.1. Debt Collection is managed through a Corporate Debt Management Policy and is based on an approach of "Can't Pay Won't Pay". Each write-off is considered on an individual basis through a standard consistent best practice approach.

19. Consultation

- 19.1. No consultation required for the write off of debt.

20. Appendices

Appendix A: Debt Management Position - 30 November 2023

Appendix B: Summary of Write Offs - 30 November 2023

Appendix C: Updated Debt Collection and Recovery Policy

Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	28/12/23
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	
Executive Director	Joe Chesterton	28/12/23
Cabinet Member	Councillor Cox	3/1/24

Summary of Outstanding Debt**A. Outstanding Debt in respect of arrears before 2023/24 – all amounts are shown in £000s.**

Pre 1 st April 2023	Council Tax (a)	Business Rates (a)	Housing Benefit O/payments (b)	Adult Services	Misc. Income	HRA (Care Line/ Service Charges)	Parking (c)	Libraries (d)	HRA Current Tenants (e)	HRA Former Tenants (e)
Net Collectable Debt at 30.11.2023	11,067	1,630	4,259	8,238	11,361	410	763	n/a	n/a	477
Amount Paid 30.11.2023	1,979	206	947	3,379	9,412	144	143	4	n/a	82
Total Outstanding	9,088	1,424	3,312	4,859	1,949	266	620	(4)	n/a	395
Number of Accounts	18,379	436	1,549	3,153	1,389	124	n/a	n/a	n/a	488

B. Current Year Debt (Debt raised in respect of 2023/24) – all amounts are shown in £000s.

Post 1 st April 2023	Council Tax (a)	Business Rates (a)	Housing Benefit O/payments (b)	Adult Services	Misc. Income	HRA (Care Line/ Service Charges)	Parking (c)	Libraries (d)	HRA Current Tenants (e)	HRA Former Tenants (e)
Net Collectable Debt at 30.11.2023	119,923	38,549	932	11,330	34,728	2,840	424	n/a	26,551	196
Amount Paid 30.11.2023	83,347	27,548	947	8,365	28,791	2,565	32	5	25,491	22
Total Outstanding	36,576	11,001	(15)	2,965	5,937	275	392	(5)	1,060	174
Number of Accounts	75,775	2,247	500	1,867	942	511	n/a	n/a	1727	180

C. Total Debt (A + B) – all amounts are shown in £000s.

Total Debt	Council Tax (a)	Business Rates (a)	Housing Benefit O/payments (b)	Adult Services	Misc. Income	HRA (Care Line/ Service Charges)	Parking (c)	Libraries (d)	HRA Current Tenants (e)	HRA Former Tenants (e)
Total Net Collectable Debt at 30.11.2023	130,990	40,179	5,191	19,568	46,089	3,250	1,187	n/a	26,551	673
Total Amount Paid 30.11.2023	85,326	27,754	947	11,744	38,203	2,709	175	9	25,491	104
Total Debt Outstanding	45,664	12,425	4,245	7,824	7,886	541	1,012	(9)	1,060	569
Total Number of Accounts	94,154	2,683	2049	5,020	2,331	635	n/a	n/a	1,727	668

Notes

- (a) Council Tax and Business Rates include adjustments for write-offs, credits and outstanding court costs.
- (b) Unlike NDR and Council Tax, HB Overpayment is not attributable to a financial year i.e. a yearly debit is not raised. When a payment is made, it is not feasible to state which specific aged debt the payment was made against. For these reasons the outstanding amounts in the report reflect the actual outstanding debt at the date requested. It does not reflect the outstanding debt against current year and previous year debts.
- (c) Parking total outstanding is net of PCNs cancelled and written off.
- (d) The total figure of £9k relates to Library fines paid between 1 April 2023 and 30 November 2023
- (e) HRA tenancy debts (residential rent accounts) are rolling amounts, with no breaks in years or rollovers. Any cash received is applied to the oldest rent week outstanding. The figures shown are total arrears outstanding, and therefore include arrears still outstanding from prior years.

Summary of Write-off's

Debts written off in 2023/24

Period 1 April 2023 – 30 November 2023 relating to any year

All amounts stated in (£)

Write-offs	Council Tax	Business Rates (NDR)	Housing Benefit O/payment	Adult Services	Misc. Income	HRA (Service Charges)	Parking (a)	Libraries	HRA Tenants
Under £5k	251,889	32,348	14,263	41,981	94,508	15	814,195	734	31,546
£5k-£25k	29,768	128,128	0	23,186	24,357	0	0	0	19,316
Over £25k	25,686	52,260	0	0	265,946	0	0	0	0
Total	307,343	212,735	14,263	65,167	384,811	15	814,195	734	50,861

(a) Parking debts written off in the first two periods relate to:

- (i) expired warrants
- (ii) PCNs where DVLA has no keeper details
- (iii) PCNs where unable to register the debt and
- (iv) PCNs with invalid VRM

There are two write-offs over £25,000 submitted for approval for this period.

Amount to write-off	Justification	Service Area
£119,903.27	<p>Esquire Retail Limited – The High Court have provided an outcome ruling on a restructuring plan for the company, with a scheme of repayments agreed by the court, with the sum of £14,771.00 of the outstanding £134,674.27 falling to be payable by the company in this financial year.</p> <p>Collection will become available again in the upcoming 2024/2025 financial year for this company whilst they continue to trade, but due to the High Court ruling, the Council have no legal recourse to collect the sum of £119,903.27 and therefore it is proposed that this sum is approved for write off.</p>	Business Rates
£26,383.28	<p>Use Our Space Limited – This company owns the lease for two premises on the High Street with debts of £26,383.28 raised accordingly. The company has made attempts to claim relief via section 45a of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (exemption applied for a charitable organisation if the property when next used in used for that charity) however this has been rejected as the intention is not for this organisation to occupy the property with the business model being that of reletting the property.</p> <p>The Council have been unable to collect said fees and have now exhausted all avenues for collection, except for the commencement of insolvency proceedings. However, a company search indicates that there are no assets for the company and therefore such proceedings will be costly to the Council with no prospect of payment.</p>	Business Rates

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Debt Collection and Recovery Policy

January 2024

Covering the following areas for Southend City Council:

- **Council Tax**
- **Business Rates**
- **Housing Benefit**
- **Social Care**
- **Sundry Debts**
- **Parking management**

Contents

1.0	Purpose of the policy	3
2.0	Introduction	4
3.0	Can't Pay	5
4.0	Won't Pay	6
5.0	Principles common to all debt types	7
6.0	Principles of Enforcement (all debt types)	9
7.0	Collection specific to Sundry Debts	10
8.0	Collection specific to Housing Benefit Overpayments	12
9.0	Authorisation limits for write offs	13
10.0	Methods of recovery action	14
11.0	Debt management process	16
12.0	Responsibilities to Directorates in the raising of invoices	17
13.0	Stages of collection (flow chart)	19
14.0	Payment Arrangements.....	20
Annex 1	Adult Social Care - Social Debt Policy	23

1.0 Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out Southend on Sea City Councils strategic approach to the collection of public money across a varied sector of services.
- 1.2 All service providers within the council will need to understand the document and ensure their processes and procedures are suitable to deliver the required outcomes for both the council and residents within the City.
- 1.3 Whilst it is recognised the financial position of individuals and business owners alike are affected by the cost-of-living crisis, we are obligated to collect 100% of the revenue to ensure the local authority can operate within the current financial constraints, and to be able to continue to deliver critical services for all residents.
- 1.4 The document will also give clear guidance on the appropriate levels of credit checks and assessment required prior to service delivery. Clearly, we are and must continue to be ethical in our approach to delivering chargeable services. Although credit checks and assessments are a good indicator to someone's ability to pay back a debt it cannot be relied on totally. This is about mitigating the council's risk of exposure to bad debt and also supports our residents and businesses from falling into increased debt.
- 1.5 It will give clear instruction on "Payment in Advance" service areas where possible. Will collect monies in advance of service delivery, this will prevent debt and will ensure the service requester has the means to pay in advance of the service.
- 1.6 Whatever service is being delivered, the key to excellent collection is to ensure we collect the outstanding monies at the earliest possible stage. Therefore, the document will set out the required timescales to resolve queries and complaints, which have historically resulted in a loss of revenue when not dealt with appropriately.
- 1.7 In essence it will set out a corporate approach to debt collection and will ensure every available means will be used to collect outstanding monies.
- 1.8 Including: -
 - Payment in advance of service delivery
 - Revised reminder process to speed up collection in accordance with the relevant legislation

- Channel shift/ Promotion of Online Services
- Promotion of Direct Debit as the optimum method of payment
- Payment arrangements within a set criteria
- Legal framework
- Fraud initiative

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council has a duty to recover outstanding debt and in doing so seeks to ensure all monies due are collected in a timely and efficient way, whilst ensuring that its processes are fair to everyone. To this end, all debts are administered in line with corporate policy, national legislation, and financial procedure rules. Overall responsibility relating to the management and recovery of debt rests with the Section 151 Officer.
- 2.2 Recovery of outstanding debts relating to Council Tax, NDR (Business Rates) are undertaken by the Revenues team, Housing Benefit Overpayments are recovered within the Benefits team. Recovery of outstanding debts relating to Sundry Debt is undertaken by the Accounts Receivable team who report directly to the Director of Financial Services.
- 2.3 Recovery of outstanding Social Care debt is undertaken by the finance team within the “Adults and Communities” directorate. It is widely recognised across local government due to the nature and complexity of this debt; it requires specialist knowledge. It is also recognised that when dealing with this sensitive area of collection, arrears will be pursued with care and specialist knowledge. See Annex 1 Social Debt Policy 2017 on specific collection processes regarding Social Care Debts.
- 2.4 - The key aim of this policy is as follows: -
- To maximise the level of income collected by the Council by;
- Reducing the level of debt
 - Accurate and timely billing with evidence to justify the Invoice/bill.
 - Effective and timely recovery processes
 - Utilising the appropriate recovery method by debt type
 - Recognising that causes of debt vary and recovery methods should be focused accordingly. Debt will be categorised and methods of recovery focused by type, with debtors identified either as: -
‘Can’t Pay’ or Won’t Pay’:

3.0 Can't Pay

Our customers and businesses will receive appropriate assistance and support through debt management and benefit advice, our residents or businesses will be helped to make and adhere to payment arrangements and understand options to minimise costs in the future.

There could be several reasons where clients could fall into this category including but not limited to: -

- Unemployment
- Hardship due to personal illness
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol or drug dependence
- Imprisonment
- Difficult family issues

We have experienced staff within the authority who will support and work with our residents and businesses that experience debt, and will also sign post to the advice sector for further support including: -

- Available information on the Council website on support
- Citizen Advice,
- Step Change
- and other appropriate support organisations

4.0 Won't Pay

All available and appropriate methods of recovery will be considered depending on the nature of the debt and the individual or businesses circumstances including their assets and income.

General Principles

- That the citizens and businesses of Southend on Sea have a responsibility to pay for the services they receive and the charges for which they are liable.
- Council Tax revenue collected by the Council on behalf of taxpayers is recognised in legislation as priority debt, and debtors must give priority to the payment of these debts.
- Wherever possible and when appropriate, services will not be provided until payment has been made and cleared funds received.
- The cost of collection will be minimised by encouraging citizens to use the most cost-effective payment methods such as direct debit. Online and debit card payments will also be promoted in preference to other methods such as cash.
- The Council will advise our residents or businesses of any appropriate benefits, exemptions, discounts, or other reliefs which may reduce their debt.
- When the Council is made aware that debtors have multiple debts or require specific budgetary advice, staff will signpost debtors to external advice agencies. The council will endeavour to collect multiple debts at a single point of contact with the debtor whenever possible.
- Disputes in relation to the debt or recovery process will be resolved where possible within 30 days; Debtors will be kept fully informed of the ways in which they can contact the Council to discuss any dispute they may have. It will be the responsibility of the originating service area to resolve these disputes. Any disputes that run beyond the 30 days will be escalated to the relevant service manager.
- Where part of the debt is disputed, the Council will still continue to collect the undisputed amount within the legislation at the earliest possible opportunity whilst also dealing effectively with the disputed debt. It must be made clear at the initial contact with the client they must pay the undisputed part of the debt.
- When correspondence between the citizen/business and the responsible department fails to rectify any grievance or dispute and the citizen wishes to

make a complaint regarding the way in which the Council has attempted to collect debt, they will be fully informed of the Council's Feedback/Complaints procedure and will be given assistance to register that complaint.

- The Council will encourage effective sharing of information between departments and will explore the most efficient and effective way of achieving this whilst taking full account of relevant legislation e.g. Data Protection Act (DPA). If any officer of the council is unclear of their responsibilities under the DPA they must ask for advice from the corporate data protection officer to ensure no breach of legislation occurs

5.0 Principles common to all debts

- Every invoice must be correctly addressed to the person or organisation liable to pay it. The name on the invoice will be that of a person or body possessing "legal personality" under the legislation hierarchy.
- Invoices will be issued on the day of production. Exceptions to this must be approved by the relevant manager.
- Where we are dealing with an organisation or Small Medium Enterprise (SME) or any other type of business a purchase order number or payment reference must be entered on the invoice.
- If you do not obtain a Purchase order at the first point of contact with the organisation you will have 14 days to obtain one and pass onto the accounts receivable team.
- Service areas are responsible to compile evidence in the event to secure recovery of the debt through the courts. This must be compiled when an invoice is raised. All documentation relating to the invoice will be kept by the originating department in electronic format for 6 years after the last recovery action adhering to the Corporate Retention Policy.
- In each case the Council will use the most appropriate and effective method of recovery in order to maximise income, working with our commercial partners where appropriate.
- All invoices, reminders and final notices will be issued using the most cost-effective means available.

-
- Officers will employ flexibility and discretion when dealing with hardship, vulnerability, or dispute situations. This includes the ability to make deferred payment arrangements or suspend recovery action due to the debtor's individual circumstances.
 - Where appropriate a "Means Test or an Income & Expenditure" assessment will be required to ascertain an individual's ability to pay with appropriate evidence to support this. If this is refused, a payment arrangement may not be possible.

Note: - Arrangements to pay in instalments to clear the full outstanding amount are determined by individual departments, however the maximum period would be a 12-month period, any arrangement which is outside this period must be agreed with the relevant Manager.

- The council has a duty to monitor all payments arrangements and will ensure missed payments are actioned appropriately. The council will, dependent on circumstances hold the right to withdraw a payment arrangement making the full amount of debt due.
- Any member of staff, who has an interest in any debt must not participate in any form of monitoring/management of that debt and must declare their interest to their manager. This includes, but is not limited to:
 1. Self, including any business interest i.e. director, accountant
 2. Family members
 3. Friends
- All notices issued by Southend-on-Sea City Council will comply with the corporate style and will be easily identifiable as being from Southend-on-Sea City Council.
- Prompt recovery action is key to managing debt and maximising income the Council will: -
 1. Set clear targets and timescales for the recovery of debt
 2. Regularly monitor the level and age of debt
 3. Have clear documented recovery procedures and processes
 4. Set and regularly review priorities for specific areas of debt and the recovery methods used to ensure maximum collection
 5. Regularly review irrecoverable debt and submit write-offs for consideration by the appropriate Officer.
All write off approvals will follow Southend-on-Sea City Councils constitution.
- Performance in relation to current and aged debt will be produced on a monthly basis and reported directly to the "Chief finance officer".

- Write off will only occur when all recovery action has been exhausted. All debts that are written off will be written off against the income code against which it is held. In cases where the debt was originally shown as a balance sheet liability (for example car loans issued prior to the cessation of the scheme), the debt will be written back to the relevant department.
- Third party recovery agencies will be used when appropriate. Where a third-party agency is instructed to carry out activity on behalf of Southend-on-Sea City Council, information between the agency and the council will be in a secure electronic format.

6.0 Principles of Enforcement (All debt types)

- The Council will ensure that any enforcement action is:
 1. Proportional - a balance must be struck between the potential loss of income to the Council and the costs of the enforcement action.
 2. Consistent – That a similar approach to enforcement will be taken in similar circumstances to achieve consistency in the:
 - Advice given
 - Powers used
 - Recovery action taken
- At all times the following will be considered to inform the collection team of the severity of the action to be taken.
 - The debtor's payment history
 - The debtor's ability to pay
 - The social circumstances or vulnerability of the debtor
- Transparent – that reasons and clear explanations will be given for any enforcement action taken.
- If action is required, this should be within the guidance and should adhere to the Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2014 and should be clearly explained.
- Timescales for actions must be clearly stated and within the regulations.
- A written explanation must be given of any rights of appeal the debtor may have against the enforcement action either before or at the time the action is taken, this will be agreed with our commercial partners during the procurement process and awarding of any contract.

7.0 Collection specific to Sundry Debtors

- Sundry debtors are any other services the Council provides for which monies are due.
- Where practical payment must be received, and funds cleared before services are provided “Payment In Advance”.
- Where payment cannot be made before the service is provided invoices must be raised within 5 working days. It is recognised that there will be exceptions where a department is waiting for information from another source e.g. Social Care assessments and service packs.
- All invoices must be raised via the corporate debtors system Business World, the exception being Housing Benefit overpayments, Council Tax and Business Rates which are raised through the Northgate system. Staff responsible for raising invoices/bills must be properly trained in the use of the relevant system. In all other cases invoices will be raised by the accounts receivable (AR) team unless otherwise agreed with the AR Manager.
- Each Department will ensure all invoices are supported by sufficient evidence of the liability to secure recovery through the courts. Such evidence is to be retained and may be requested for any future recovery process as required.
- All staff responsible for providing chargeable services and/or raising invoices must attend a Training Session by the Accounts Receivable Team. This ensures that they understand the principles of the corporate debt strategy and the implications arising from uncollectable debts. System access will be restricted so that only “staff” that completes the training, will be able to raise invoices on the system.
- Information provided on an invoice must include the following:-

What the bill or Liability is for

The Amount Due

How to make a payment

A contact point for all enquiries

The council will provide a choice of convenient methods of payments and details of these options will be advised on each Invoice.

- In accordance with accounting principles, the budgets of the originating service will be credited with the value of the invoice at the time the invoice is raised. Where a disputed debt remains unpaid after 3 months the amount will be written back to the budget of the originating department. The Department will remain responsible for resolution of the debt and once paid will receive the income. Exceptions to this must be agreed between the service manager and the Accounts Receivable manager.
- In line with the general principles of this strategy the originating department must show that payment in advance is considered before the service is provided. If this option is not practical the service should seek payment at the time the service is delivered, provided that robust income collection arrangements are established. Sundry debtor accounts should only be raised as a last resort where payment in advance is inappropriate.
- Before raising an invoice, services must consider whether it is cost effective to do so. As a general rule, services should not raise invoices for less than £10 unless they have a legal obligation to do so, for example, ground rent income.
- Ownership of all sundry debts will be with the originating departments Budget Holder, and it is only the originating departments that can:
 1. Issue an e-mailed/written instruction to cancel an invoice
 2. Correspond with or discuss with the debtor issues relating to the validity of the debt, which must be in line with the Council's charging and income policy.
 3. Deal with complaints relating to the provision of the service or the raising of the invoice.
- Except for invoices payable by instalments or as otherwise contractually agreed, the settlement terms for all invoices will be 30 days.
- Recovery action will commence no later than 10 days after the settlement date has fallen due. All recovery action is the responsibility of the relevant collection team.
- Where initial recovery action has proved unsuccessful the debt will be referred back to the issuing department for further investigation to enable further recovery action to be taken. If proof of the debt cannot be provided upon request the debt will be considered for write off.

8.0 Collection specific to Housing Benefit Overpayments

A Housing Benefit Overpayment (HBOP) is any amount which has been paid but to which there was no entitlement.

An overpayment can occur after a claim is initially processed when the entitlement is reduced (sometimes to nil) following a supersession or revision assessment.

Decision Notice

An overpayment decision notice must be issued to anyone who the overpayment is legally recoverable from, even if the Local Authority (LA) has decided to recover the overpayment from someone else.

- The following information is the minimum that should be included in a decision notice, as stated in Housing Benefit Regulation Sch 9/(SPC) Sch 8.
- That there is a recoverable HB overpayment
- The reason there is a recoverable overpayment
- The amount of the recoverable overpayment
- How the amount was calculated
- The period of the overpayment
- Who the overpayment is legally recoverable from, and why
- Who the LA has decided to recover the overpayment from, and why
- The method of recovery
- When the recovery of an HB overpayment is to be made by deductions from future HB payments, the amount of the deduction
- The person's right to request a written statement
- The person's right to apply for a revision of the decision or appeal against it and the manner and time in which to do so

Methods of recovery

Depending on a person's circumstances at the time of recovery, there are several options available to the LA to use: -

- From arrears of HB that become payable while there is an outstanding overpayment
- By deduction from ongoing HB, which could be paid to the claimant, landlord, appointee, or agent (sometimes known as 'claw-back')
- By deduction from the partner's ongoing HB, if the claimant and partner were a couple at both the time of the overpayment and when deductions are being made.
- By transferring a Rent Rebate overpayment to the tenant's Rent Account
- By deduction from certain Department of Work and Pension (DWP) benefits

- By deduction from certain DWP benefits payable to the partner, if the claimant and partner were a couple at both the time of the overpayment and when deductions are being made
- By applying to another LA to ask them to deduct the overpayment from the claimant's ongoing HB entitlement
- By recovery from HB paid to a landlord/agent for another tenant (sometimes known as 'Blameless Tenant' recovery)
- By 'invoicing' the affected person for the amount outstanding
- By civil proceedings, which can lead to but not limited to County Court Bailiffs, 3rd party debt orders, charging orders.
- Debt collections services
- From the estate of a deceased person who had an overpayment prior to death
- By Direct Earnings Attachment (DEA)

If the debt can be collected at source from ongoing entitlement, then this will be the first method of recovery. Once benefit entitlement has ceased the council will issue an invoice, reminder, and final notice. If payment is not made in full or a suitable arrangement is not made, then further recovery action will commence.

County Court Action

If the debtor is a homeowner the Local Authority can apply for an application for a charging order to be made. This requires proceedings through the County Court, starting with obtaining a judgment against the debtor, however as the authority's local taxation team undertakes such action already when pursuing unpaid council tax, the process is understood, and is a remedy the County Court is familiar with the authority adopting.

The success of all enforcement action lies in the selectivity of the cases chosen, and for HBOP the intention is to target debts of a significant value and where the debtor has a clear history of either failing to engage with us or make a suitable arrangement to repay their debts. Cases progressed for charging orders would be selected with the utmost care after forensic review and evaluation as part of a concerted effort to secure the repayment of debts owed to the Authority where no other enforcement remedy has proved successful.

9.0 Authorisation limits for write offs

Debt Type: Accounts Receivable/Social Care/ Housing Benefit Overpayments

Designation	Amount
Assistant Manager	under £5,000
Manager	Up to £10,000
Executive Director (Finance & Resources)	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

Debt Type: Council Tax and NNDR (Non-Domestic Rates)

Designation	Amount
Senior Officer	under £2,000
Team Leader	Up to £5,000
Manager	Up to £10,000
Executive Director (Finance & Resources)	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

Debt Type: Parking

Designation	Amount
Team Leader	Up to £5,000
Head of Parking	Up to £10,000
Jointly – Head of Parking and Executive Director (Finance & Resources)	Between £10,000 and £25,000
Cabinet	£25,000 and above

The Recovery Manager will produce a report as required for the Executive Director and Cabinet members to inform of **All** write offs within each area.

10.0 Methods of Recovery Action

When proof of debt has been confirmed the debt will be referred to the Accounts Receivable Team who will take the necessary action which could include Enforcement.

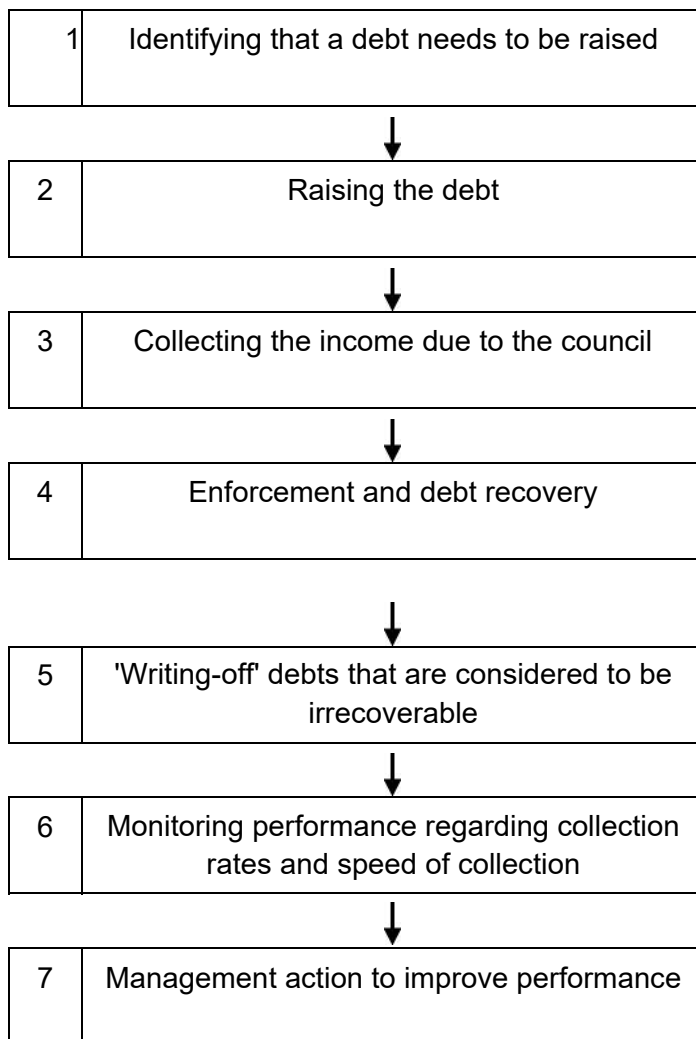
The first method of recovery will be to send cases for “Doorstep Recovery” Non-Enforcement action.

If the Council’s Collection Agents are not able to collect the debt, the statutory methods of enforcement will be considered as appropriate to each debt type. These methods include: -

1. Direct Earnings Attachment
 2. Warrants of execution
 3. High Court Enforcement Officer
 4. Insolvency
 5. Possession proceedings
 6. Third party Debt Orders
 7. Charging Order
 8. Enforced sale of assets
- These methods may only be used after a County Court Judgement is obtained. The methods will be used in accordance with the principles of Legal enforcement.
 - Further enforcement action will be taken where appropriate by converting the debt to a High Court Writ. The decision to convert the debt will be taken by the relevant service manager in agreement with the relevant department Director.
 - The costs of any enforcement action to recover sundry debts will be charged against the budget of the service raising the invoice and any costs recovered from the debtor will be credited against these budgets.
 - Where legally able to do so, services should suspend provision of future services to the debtor until outstanding debts are settled.
 - The Accounts Receivable Team will provide reports to business units on a regular basis usually Monthly/Quarterly, advising the amount of debt raised in the relevant period and the age and value of outstanding accounts.

- The business areas will receive reports detailing accounts which require a decision in relation to on-going recovery action. The reports will detail, but not be limited to, the following: -
 1. Accounts requiring county court action
 2. Accounts where recovery has been suspended by the originating unit
 3. Disputed accounts
 4. Accounts requiring other action
 5. Accounts suitable for write off
- Originating departments must review the reports and communicate their decisions regarding on-going recovery action to the relevant team within 10 working days of receipt of the report; any dispute must be resolved following the corporate complaints procedure timescales.
- The Accounts Receivable Manager will report the position of debts and any concerns regarding collection to the relevant Director as required.

11.0 Debt management process



12.0 Responsibilities to Directorates in the raising of invoices

Directorates responsible for raising invoices must note their responsibilities as part of the Debt recovery process.

Stage 1

Each department is responsible for ensuring services provided are correctly invoiced and agreed with the recipient of the service. Payment in advance must be the approach taken to minimise debt and maximise income whenever possible.

All reasonable efforts must be made to credit check clients in the event of Payment in Advance not being an appropriate method.

Stage 2

IF Payment in Advance is not appropriate:-

The raising of debts will be undertaken by the Accounts Receivable Team wherever possible and by exception will be undertaken by the directorates where agreed by the Chief Finance Officer (or deputy).

To aid debt collection, the Council will provide clear and prompt information about invoices and liabilities.

The information provided will show;

- What the Invoice or liability is for;
- The amount due;
- How to make payment
- Contact details for all enquiries.

When dealing with an organisation a Purchase Order must be obtained to quote on the invoice raised, as this is a commitment to pay from the organisation and should ensure prompt payment upon receipt.

All staff raising debt must have specific training and be made aware of their responsibilities before being authorised in the system to do so. Part of the process will be an assessment to determine if it would be more efficient to raise the debt centrally rather than devolved to a service.

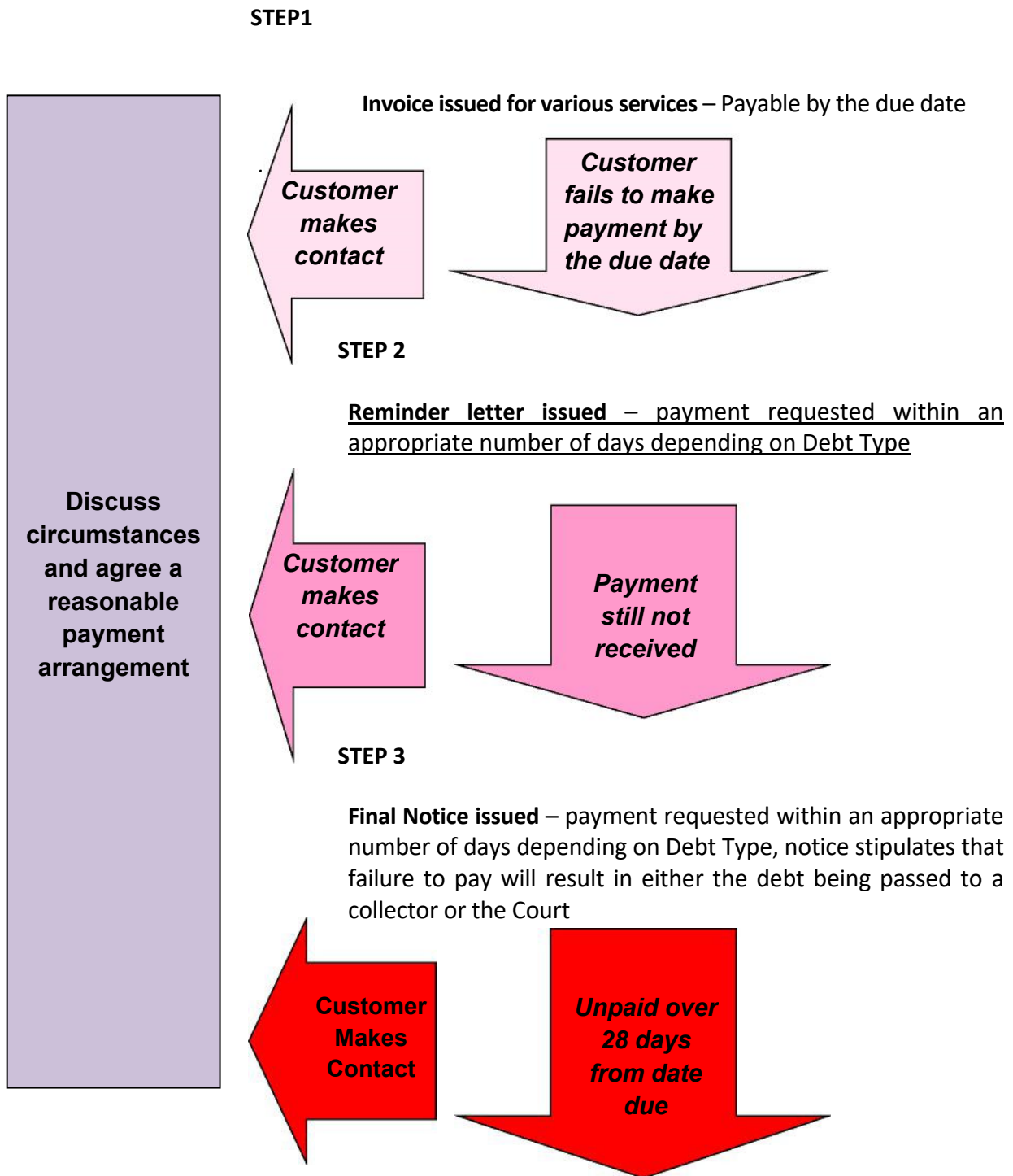
Stage 3

Debt will be collected and recovered through the relevant collection team

- a- Sundry Debtors - Accounts receivable
- b- Social Care - ACS Finance team (supplemented by Annex1 – Adult Social Care – Social Debt Policy)
- c- Parking Enforcement – APCOA third party contractor
- d- Council Tax – Council Tax Revenues Team
- e- Business Rates- Business Rates Revenues team
- f- Housing Benefit – HB Benefits Team

(Accounts receivable manager will support the ACS finance team and supply age debt reports on a monthly basis)

13.0 Stages of collection



Note: - Parking Enforcement follow the same principles, Legislation variances exist and are managed by the service area.

Social Care: - Follows the same principles, complex issues do exist with managing case work. A separate social care strategy document is available which covers the complex issues however where issues do not exist the debts follow the same route to collection.

It is the responsibility of the service area to resolve disputed invoices.

The debt manager will monitor invoices ensuring they are resolved within agreed corporate timescales as laid out within the Corporate Complaints Process.

It is the responsibility of the Debt Manager to:-

- To promote a corporate approach towards sharing debtor information and managing multiple debts owed to the Council
- To acknowledge the role of the recognised advice agencies and to work with such agencies whenever possible
- To treat individuals consistently and fairly regardless of age, race, religion, gender, disability and sexual orientation.

14.0 Payment Arrangements

It is the responsibility of the debt manager to manage payment arrangements

- All payment arrangements will be closely monitored;
- Prompt action will be taken to collect the debt in respect of missed payments;
- The individual should be reminded that the date on which instalments are to be paid is the final date on which money should reach the Council's account;
- The responsibility remains with the individual for making sure they allow sufficient time for the payment to reach the Council's account by the due date;
- Action may be taken, even where payment is received shortly after the due date.
- When payment arrangements are not maintained, it is important to ensure that prompt action is taken (by the individual) to try and bring the arrangement back up to date. Although the Council ideally will require the original agreement to be brought up to date within a short timescale, if there has been a significant change in circumstances it may be possible to negotiate a new arrangement.

It is the responsibility of the Debt Manager to apply charges as agreed by the organisation:-

- The first reminder letter will not carry a charge to the customer but will contain a notification that subsequent reminder letters may be subject to a charge.
- The Council maintains the right to charge for reminder letters and statements.
- The council maintains the right to charge interest on late payments of certain types of debt in accordance with the agreements in place.

Specifically in relation to:-

- a. Commercial rent agreements
- b. Social Care invoices where the payment is deferred until a client's asset is sold.

Stage 4

It is the responsibility of the service area to supply the relevant evidence/Documentation for the recovery process beyond the reminder stage is pursued.

It is the responsibility of the debt team to carry out all reasonable steps to collect income due to the council.

The debtor's team will manage and are responsible for the process of collection for those clients who **"Won't Pay"** and will use all reasonable action to collect outstanding debt for the service area.

The Debtor's team will manage the process for those clients that **"Can't Pay"** by making reasonable payment arrangements and sign posting for support on debt advice.

In the event of a service area dealing with a payment issue any decision outside of the corporate approach must be agreed by the debt manager.

Extra costs incurred in debt recovery (e.g. legal costs) will be charged to the originating department

Costs recovered through court activity will be credited back to the service area

Stage 5

Once all activity is exhausted and it is clear it is no longer cost effective to collect debts will be promptly written off against the business debt provision.

Budgetary provision is agreed each year to ensure it does not impact on current year services however the provision does impact on service budgets which makes it critical the earlier stages are strictly adhered to ensure service areas can continue to deliver services.

Where it is clear that a debt is uncollectable or is uneconomic to collect it will be promptly written off and the originating department will be charged

Stage 6

It is the responsibility of the debt manager to provide management information on current debtors by means of an Aged debt report

Debt outstanding for more than 30 days will be reported with a narrative of actions to collect subject to appropriate de-minimus levels as agreed by the chief finance officer.

Stage 7

Management action will be taken when necessary to improve performance regarding collection rates and speed of collection, this could include working with our commercial partners who have expertise in specific areas of recovery.

All debt will be invoiced and tracked on the corporate debtors system wherever possible. Where other systems are being used (e.g. PCN) these systems will be kept under review and the debts will be moved to the corporate system when practical. Where the use of the corporate debtors system is not appropriate the system used needs to be approved by the council's chief finance officer (or deputy) and the service area will be responsible for reporting the monthly debt position to ensure an accurate corporate debt position can be understood.

Ownership of the debt remains with the directorate originating the invoice

The directorate requesting the debt has a duty to assist and co-operate with the corporate function to ensure collection of debt

Annex 1

Adult Social Care – Social Debt Policy
November 2017

Index

Introduction

Scope

Care Act 2014

Residential and Non-Residential Care Charges- actions, escalation process,
executors process

Instalment Plans

Deferred Payment Debt

Unrecoverable Debt

Write-off Process

Waiver of Charges

Exempt from Charges

Charges to Health Authority

Charges to Other Local Authorities

Residential Care Home Debt

Recording

Credit Notes

Parked Debt

Complaint Date- Holding Reminders

Safeguarding Concerns

Introduction

Southend-on-Sea City Council raises charges for a wide range of services across the organisation. All debts owed should be pursued according to the Corporate Debt Collection and Recovery Policy October 2017.

However it is acknowledged that within the role of the protection of vulnerable adults, there will be some debt that cannot be pursued in the same way. Within the strategy document these are referred to as social debts.

This document sets out the debt recovery process for social debts.

Scope

Adult Social Care within the Department for People makes charges for the following services

- Contributions to residential accommodation
- Charges for Home Care services
- Charges for Community Support services
- Charges for day services
- Charges for transport to services
- Charges to other local authorities
- Charges to Health Authority

Adult Social Care charges are raised within the Department for People by Finance Officers within the Adult Social Care Finance Team, using the corporate financial system Agresso. The Corporate Accounts Receivable Team (AR) authorise the invoices and they are sent by post. If the invoice is unpaid the Agresso system will send 2 reminders at seven day intervals. If the invoice remains unpaid, recovery will pass back to Adult Social Care for action.

The Care Act 2014 introduces a modern legal framework for the recovery of debts as a result of non- payment of care charges. This is covered in section 69 and 70 of the Care Act 2014. The key points are:

- Local authorities should clearly discuss with the person or their representative at the outset that care and support is a chargeable service. Provision of information and advice should cover the person's responsibility to pay for care and support
- Financial assessment – This should be carried out in a timely manner and the person/rep notified in writing of the outcome of the financial assessment, the frequency of invoice and payment methods. They should also be informed of their right to a review and what they should do if they disagree with their financial assessment.
- As part of the financial assessment process, LA's should find out if any person has an enduring Power of Attorney or Lasting Power of Attorney for property and financial affairs or a Court of Protection deputy for property and affairs or someone who has

been given appointee-ship¹ for the purpose of benefit payments who is responsible for payment of the care and support charges.

- All LA's should have a process for identifying when a sum becomes due and at what point it becomes overdue and falls into a recovery process.
- The recovery process should include issuing reminder notices and either contacting the debtor by telephone or visiting. Comprehensive notes of any discussions with persons/ reps should be kept. A solicitor's letter rather than a standard system generated reminder letter has proved very effective in getting a response from a debtor who has not engaged with the LA previously.
- If there is any doubt over the person's capacity or safeguarding concerns the case should immediately be referred back to social care staff.
- Within the Care Act is an obligation to have considered and evidenced well-being. This should be followed through within debt recovery processes.

All people receiving services are financially assessed to ascertain what they should pay towards services and therefore there should be no reason for invoices to be unpaid. However service users may be elderly, vulnerable, lack capacity to understand charges and every unpaid invoice needs to be investigated to understand the reason for non-payment. Invoices raised for grant re-charges, NHS re-charges and to other local authorities, should not be raised until agreement is received from the third party.

From the start of a period of care enquiries are made about whether an adult has someone to help with finances and could be their contact instead of the individual service user. Social workers will ask when assessing for care and our financial assessment form also asks the question.

If someone falls into arrears we will ask again, as the adults health may have declined since the care started.

If an adult is in a care home setting they will usually have someone dealing with their finances. If they haven't and we are invoicing the adult at the home, then we would be checking systems for any notes and also contacting the care home. They again may have deteriorated and could no longer manage their own finances or we may not have been made aware of an admission to hospital.

All charges are made following financial assessment and so should be able to be paid. However Finance staff are fully appreciative that the adults we serve are vulnerable, often elderly and confused and although debts to the authority have to be collected, we act with sensitivity and respect for the adult.

Residential Care and Non-Residential Care Services

Each month 3 reports are run, residential care debt, non-residential care debt and various debts. These detail all debts over 30 days old. The various debt report is interrogated by the Finance Manager.

Finance Officers will interrogate the residential and non-residential debt reports and try to find out why an amount is unpaid e.g. by phoning the person direct, contacting families. Often these steps are sufficient to pay the debt.

Further actions include:

Interrogation of all systems to ensure invoices are being sent to the person with payment responsibility

Look at the financial assessment to ensure it is correct

Liaison with DWP if benefits are not in payment/suspended etc

Social workers made aware of the debt – to ensure there are no safeguarding/financial abuse issues

Refer to Legal Section for advice

Refer to independent advocacy service for assistance with debt issues

Follow Safeguarding procedure

Investigate settlement of estates, who is next of kin, executor

Gather further information that may cause the financial assessment to be revised and debts adjusted

All cases will be looked at individually and actions will vary from case to case.

In order to get to a level of consistency the following process will be followed:

- 1) Officer runs report
- 2) New debt is identified and report sheet is opened in Civica
- 3) Telephone contact- resolution or issue identified

Dispute/Complaint

Decide who needs to resolve/investigate dispute, initiate on Civica

A 14 day reminder will be sent to officers work tray to ensure follow up action

Will result in payment, charge adjusted and paid or charge written off or waived.

Billing Issue

Invoice may be unpaid as being sent to incorrect address or should be sent to a care-of address. Make correction resulting in payment. No further action.

No Telephone Contact or Unsuccessful

Standard letter 1 asks for contact to be made

If no contact standard letter 2

Still no contact, refer to social worker via Civica for contact at home

May be resolved during a yearly review

A recurring reminder will be sent to officers work tray to ensure follow up action

If no resolution initiate safeguarding referral

Escalation Of Debt Issue

If no resolution following safeguarding, a further Civica process is started sending an email to Finance Manager to consider legal action. The Local Authority should be seen to have taken all actions possible to negotiate following any dispute. Full chronology would be required by County Court.

The Finance Manager and Group manager will discuss how to resolve the debt.

Executors Accounts

When the authority is advised of the death of an adult, invoices should be raised for services up to date of death and produce a balancing invoice. The officer will start a CIVICA process to ensure prompt debt recovery. The process will ask who is dealing with the estate and enquire at intervals about how the probate process is progressing.

Instalment Plans

As charges are made following a financial assessment, all charges should be affordable.

Instalments to clear arrears can be negotiated, however as ongoing charges need to be paid, regard needs to be made to that when setting an instalment plan.

The instalment plan should be made by ACS Finance Team as they are aware of what ongoing payments will need to be made and how much someone could afford as an additional instalment

Deferred Payment Debt

For people in residential care who own a property but have capital under £23,250.00, a Deferred Payment Agreement may be the option chosen.

Where a Legal Charge can be registered against the property land title, the accruing debt is secured. However there are occasions where it is not possible to secure with a land charge from the start of the placement. The land title may need to be corrected or capacity issues resolved. In this circumstance the resident or family member will be asked to sign a Letter of Agreement. This together with a chronology of evidence would be put to County Court in cases of dispute over payments.

Differing codes will be used to identify secured or un-secured debts for accountancy purposes.

Unrecoverable Debt

It should be considered whether a debt is uneconomic to pursue. All debt should follow the action timetable but following the 2nd letter it may be written off as uneconomic to collect. In general this would be for invoices under £50.00.

If all actions have been taken it may be that the debt is considered unrecoverable.

- 1) An estate may not have sufficient funds to pay invoices after death. The payment of funeral charges has first call on an estate. A request should be requested from family advising that the estate was spent on funeral .
- 2) Safeguarding investigation results in referral to the SBC Court of Protection Team for protection of finances. Once access has been gained to benefits/pensions/capital then there may be sufficient to pay all outstanding invoices. However it could also be that COP Team can pay future invoices once access has been gained to funds but that previous debt is written off. Although we refer to Police for investigation into financial abuse, very often they are unable to substantiate allegations and funds are not recovered. In this instance debt prior to SBC gaining access to funds is identified and written off.
- 3) Legal advice that cost of legal action would mean it uneconomical to pursue.

Distinction needs to be made between a waiver and a write-off.

- Waiver, charge should be made for a service but circumstances dictate that it is not reasonable to apply a charge
- Write-off, a charge has been correctly applied but has not been able to be collected

Write-Off Process

Once all recovery actions have been exhausted and it is the agreement of the Finance Officer and Finance Team Manager that a debt will not be pursued:

- 1) Debt memo completed, signed as seen by Finance Team Manager and approved by Group Manager Customer Services and Finance. Copy of CIVICA action report to evidence actions taken.
- 2) Under £5k no further authority is required
- 3) Over £5k the papers will be signed as seen by Finance Team Manager and Group Manager and passed to AR Team for Director of Financial Services approval.
- 4) Write off documentation forwarded to AR Team and copy kept on client file on CIVICA system

Corporate authority levels for write-off:

Up to £5k Assistant Manager
Up to £10,000 Manager
Between £10,000 and £25,000 Director
£25, 000 and above Cabinet

Waiver of Charges

An invoice is raised following financial assessment. There are occasions when it is not reasonable to apply a charge

- 1) Service user/family not advise about charges at the start of care
- 2) Contradictory advice given regarding health funding and social care charges
- 3) Death prior to completion of the form, dependant on records kept.

The Finance Officer will email the relevant Team Manager with circumstances of the individual care. If Team Manager agrees the waiver, the response email will be filed on CIVICA If a charge is waived then no charge should be made. Any invoice raised should be cancelled and records kept on CIVICA.

Exempt from Charges

All service users are financially assessed to ascertain what they should pay for services. There may be rare occasions where the social worker will ask the Operational Team Manager for someone to be made exempt from charges. This may be if someone is threatening harm to themselves or others by applying a charge. Other examples could be waiting for application of benefits, family appropriating income and capital and awaiting safeguarding outcome.

A form is sent to the Finance Team; it should hold details of exemption and be time limited.

Charges to Health Authority

Following formal notification of eligibility for health funding, if a recharge needs to be made an invoice is raised by the Senior Payments Officer.

Invoices are raised monthly and any non-payment will be picked up by the Senior Payments Officer and resolved in conjunction with the Group Manager

Charges to Other Local Authorities

If another Local Authority places residents in Southend-on-Sea City Council establishment's invoices are raised at the full cost of care.

The other Local Authority will be responsible for collection of their own client contributions.

Collection of income will be the responsibility of the Finance Manager. Before placement a copy agreement should be made available to the Finance Manager in case of any query.

There should be no debt recovery necessary, at times there may be adjustments necessary in the event of service adjustment.

Residential Care Home Debt

If a care home owes money to the authority due to an overpayment of fees, it will generally be deducted from payments to providers. There may be occasion when the care home has closed or changed ownership and an invoice needs to be raised. Usual debt recovery action will be followed.

Recording

- Monthly report is kept electronically
- Report is noted with actions taken
- Officer will note Civica system with actions taken and initiate a Civica record sheet
- Monthly meeting with Debt Officers, Finance Manager and Group Manager
- Monthly summary of outstanding debt, identifies real debt not amounts involved in direct debits.

Credit Notes

An invoice may need to be credited, either in part or wholly, if information is made known to the Department after an invoice has been raised. For example:

- Reassessment of finances results in lower charge, invoice to be reduced. Financial assessment on CIVICA
- Home care visits/ day services charged for that did not take place. Provider information saved on CIVICA
- Date of death not made known to Finance Team, care charges made after death. Ensure date of death recorded on Carefirst

The Finance Officer will raise the credit on Agresso, ensuring documentary evidence is recorded on the EDRMS system or on Carefirst, or noted on the Access database. A Finance Manager will approve the credit on the Agresso system, ensuring separation of duties.

Parked Debt

The recovery process can be halted if a debt is parked. If an invoice is parked then the reminder cycle will not be applied. Invoices should only be parked as a last resort and the Finance Officer needs to keep the parked item as a task to follow up. No invoice should be parked indefinitely. The Finance Officer should use the notes field to record why the invoice is being suspended

For example: service user deceased and with solicitor for probate.

: With Safeguarding and no contact to be made at this time

All parked invoices are reported on monthly by the AR Manager and sent to ACS Finance Manager for action.

The Complaint Date - Holding Reminders

The reminder cycle can be changed by inputting a complaint date against the invoice. Once the date arrives then the reminder cycle will again be activated.

The complaint date should be used in cases where the officer wishes the reminder cycle to be reinstated as opposed to be parked, in which case no reminders will be produced at any point. For example:

- Family member going on holiday, hold for 2 weeks.
- Application made for benefit

Managing Safeguarding Concerns

Unpaid invoices may be the first sign of financial abuse.

If contact is not made or reasons for non-payment are not acceptable, within the workflow the matter will be referred to allocated social worker. If there is no allocated worker the referral is made to the Access Team. A form SETSAF1 is completed and the circumstances of the debt, contact attempted, responses received all noted on the form.

The following investigation may result in referral to Police and family meetings.

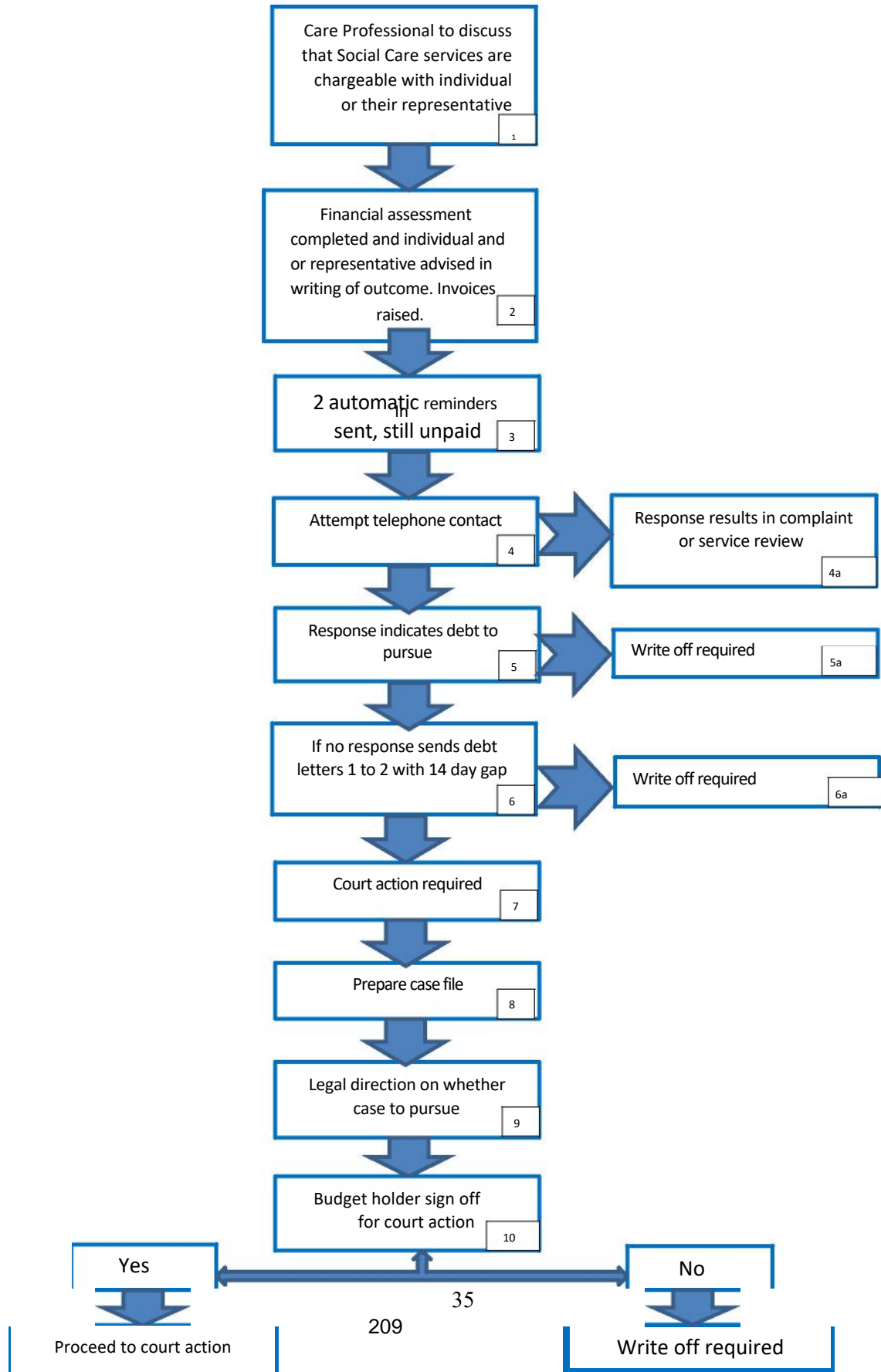
It is possible that the adult freely gave away monies and there is no fraud case to answer.

In some cases the adult may have given money away when they retained capacity to manage their own money , but now having lost capacity nothing can be proven.

Application may be made by family or Southend Council for court appointed deputy. Once access to money has been arranged , it will be looked at to ascertain how much money is available to pay outstanding invoices. At that point early invoices may need writing off if the financial abuse happened at that time.

Every safeguarding case will be looked at on an individual basis.

Debt Process Flowchart



This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 11 January 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: No
Title of Report: **LA Maintained Community School Term Dates 2025/26**

Executive Director: Michael Marks
Report Author: Cathy Braun, Head of Access and Inclusion
Chrissy Papas, School Place Planning & Admission
Manager
Executive Councillor: Cllr Helen Boyd

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. School term and holiday dates are set annually. This paper relates to the academic year 2025/26.
- 1.2. Council is only responsible for setting term dates for LA maintained community schools.
- 1.3. Prior to cabinet approval of proposed dates, consultations were taken with Essex County Council, the Regional group and all Southend schools (including, community, foundation, voluntary aided, academy and free schools) as well school union bodies.

2. Recommendations

- It is recommended that Cabinet:**
- 2.1. **Agree the school term and holiday dates for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1 for LA maintained community schools and as a guide to all schools in the city.**

3. Background

- 3.1. There is no national determination of school term dates. Historically the Council has set the term dates for LA maintained schools in Southend. In the main, academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools have chosen to adopt dates set by the Council, although there is no requirement to do so.
- 3.2. In view of the cross border movement with Essex County Council of both pupils and staff, the coordination with Essex has been an important

principle. The proposed dates are predominantly in line with the Eastern Region term dates.

- 3.3. The Eastern Region, and Essex County Council have not yet determined their final dates, however we are aware that both bodies prefer to have a longer Autumn Term, and shorter Spring Term.
- 3.4. School term dates are determined in accordance with legal requirements, identifying that there should be 190 pupil days and five non-pupil days allocated to staff development.
- 3.5. Schools have the autonomy to set the five allocated non-pupil days in accordance with the individual needs of the staff development for the school. However, schools are encouraged to consider using the non-pupil days where school weeks are not full teaching weeks.
- 3.6. It is recommended that we proceed with the dates as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.7. For information, a copy of the previously agreed term dates for the next academic year 2024/25 are also included as appendix 2.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. The proposed term dates for 2025/26 are set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.2. A consultation was held with all schools in the city between 29 September to 9 November 2023.
- 4.3. Only one response was received, which was in support of the proposed dates.
- 4.4. The recommended term dates provide consistency with neighbouring authorities, whilst remaining compliant with legislation.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. To ensure consistency with neighbouring authorities, incorporate public holidays and provide the statutory number of days, alternatives are very limited.
- 5.2. The Eastern Region, and Essex County Council have not yet determined their final dates, so aligning to their current proposals does not guarantee that dates would align.
- 5.3.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. There are no direct financial implications for the Council. The administration of the term dates, and core revenue funding for the running of a School is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

7. Legal Implications

7.1. The determination of term dates for community schools is a statutory requirement.

8. Policy Context

8.1 Coordination with Essex is important for pupils and staff.

9. Carbon Impact

9.1. None envisaged

10. Equalities

10.1. In line with the Equality Act 2010, the proposed term dates are clear that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, in that they are the same for all pupils in the city.

11. Consultation

11.1. A consultation with all schools in the city and union representatives for schools and teaching staff was undertaken in the period 9 November to 7 December 2020.

12. Appendices

12.1. **Appendix 1:** - Proposed Southend-on-Sea Term dates 2025/26

12.2. **Appendix 2:** - Determined Southend-on-Sea Term dates 2024/25

13. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	
Executive Director(s)	Michael Marks	
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Boyd	

This page is intentionally left blank

Southend-on-Sea School

Term and Holiday Dates for Community and Maintained Schools 2025-26

Autumn Term																												
September 2025							October 2025							November 2025							December 2025							
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5						1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30						27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31					
Spring Term																												
January 2026							February 2026							March 2026							April 2026							
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
			1	2	3	4							1							1			1	2	3	4	5	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30				
														30	31													
Summer Term																												
May 2026							June 2026							July 2026							August 2026							
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5							1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
																					31							

= Schooldays

= School holidays

= Bank holidays

In addition, schools allocate five non-pupil days out of the school days indicated, or the equivalent in disaggregated twilight sessions.

Autumn Term:	1 September 2025 – 19 December 2025 <i>Half Term 27 – 31 October</i>	75 days
Spring Term:	5 January 2026 – 27 March 2026 <i>Half Term 16 February - 20 February</i>	55 days
Summer Term:	13 April 2026 – 20 July 2026 <i>Half Term 25 – 29 May</i>	65 days
		195 days

Please note: The above dates may vary for individual schools, especially Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies, who can set their own term dates. You are strongly advised to check with your child's school before making any holiday or other commitments.

This page is intentionally left blank

Determined Southend-on-Sea School Term and Holiday Dates for Community and Maintained Schools 2024/25

Autumn Term																											
September 2024							October 2024							November 2024							December 2024						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1		1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30																					30	31					
Spring Term																											
January 2025							February 2025							March 2025							April 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
6	7	8	9	10	11		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
20	21	23	24	25	26	27	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
														31													
Summer Term																											
May 2025							June 2025							July 2025							August 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4							1		1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31
							30																				

= Schooldays
 = School holidays
 = Bank holidays

In addition, schools allocate five non-pupil days out of the school days indicated, or the equivalent in disaggregated twilight sessions.

Autumn Term:	3 September 2024 – 20 December 2024 <i>Half Term 28 October – 1 November</i>	74 days
Spring Term:	6 January 2025 – 4 April 2025 <i>Half Term 17 February - 21 February</i>	60 days
Summer Term:	22 April 2025 – 23 July 2025 <i>Half Term 26 May –30 May</i>	61 days
		195 days

Please note: The above dates may vary for individual schools, especially Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies, who can set their own term dates. You are strongly advised to check with your child’s school before making any holiday or other commitments.

This page is intentionally left blank