



Agenda

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 October 2018 at 7.00 pm

Brentwood County High School, Shenfield Common, Seven Arches Road,
Brentwood CM14 4JF

Membership (Quorum – 3)

Cllrs Russell (Chair), Mrs Hones (Vice-Chair), Barrell, Chilvers, Haigh, Keeble, Mrs Middlehurst, Nolan and Mrs Slade

Substitute Members

Cllrs Barrett, Cloke, Naylor, Reed, Trump and Tumbridge

Agenda

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7. Urgent Business

An item of business may only be considered where the Chair is of the opinion that, by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the Minutes, the item should be considered as a matter of urgency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. L. R. B.' with a large, sweeping underline.

Chief Executive

Town Hall
Brentwood, Essex
09.10.2018

Information for Members

Substitutes

The names of substitutes shall be announced at the start of the meeting by the Chair and the substitution shall cease at the end of the meeting.

Where substitution is permitted, substitutes for quasi judicial/regulatory committees must be drawn from Members who have received training in quasi- judicial/regulatory decision making. If a casual vacancy occurs on a quasi judicial/regulatory committee it will not be filled until the nominated member has been trained.

Rights to Attend and Speak

Any Members may attend any Committee to which these procedure rules apply.

A Member who is not a member of the Committee may speak at the meeting. The Member may speak at the Chair's discretion, it being the expectation that a Member will be allowed to speak on a ward matter.

Members requiring further information, or with specific questions, are asked to raise these with the appropriate officer at least two working days before the meeting.

Point of Order/ Personal explanation/ Point of Information

Point of Order

A member may raise a point of order at any time. The Mayor will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these Procedure Rules or the law. The Member must indicate the rule or law and the way in which they consider it has been broken. The ruling of the Mayor on the point of order will be final.

Personal Explanation

A member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation must relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the member which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate, or outside of the meeting. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.

Point of Information or clarification

A point of information or clarification must relate to the matter being debated. If a Member wishes to raise a point of information, he/she must first seek the permission of the Mayor. The Member must specify the nature of the information he/she wishes to provide and its importance to the current debate. If the Mayor gives his/her permission, the Member will give the additional information succinctly. Points of Information or clarification should be used in exceptional circumstances and should not be used to interrupt other speakers or to make a further speech when he/she has already spoken during the debate. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a point of information or clarification will be final.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to Information and Meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council and Committees. You also have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Dates of the meetings are available at www.brentwood.gov.uk.

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to make recordings, these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

If you wish to record the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment then please contact the Communications Team before the meeting.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of

these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

 **Private Session**

Occasionally meetings will need to discuss some of its business in private. This can only happen on a limited range of issues, which are set by law. When a Committee does so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

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 **Access**

There is wheelchair access to the meeting venue from the Main Entrance. If you do wish to attend this meeting, please contact the clerk should you have specific accessibility needs. There is an induction loop in the meeting room.

 **Evacuation Procedures**

Evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point in the Car Park.



Minutes

Audit and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday, 25th July, 2018

Attendance

Cllr Russell (Chair)	Cllr Keeble
Cllr Mrs Hones (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mrs Middlehurst
Cllr Barrell	Cllr Nolan
Cllr Haigh	

Apologies

Cllr Chilvers

Absent

Cllr Mrs Slade

Substitute Present

Cllr Naylor (substituting for Cllr Chilvers)

Officers Present

Kim Anderson	-	Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager
Zoey Foakes	-	Governance & Member Support Officer
Alistair Greer	-	Principal Accountant (Financial Reporting)
Debbie Hanson	-	Ernst & Young, External Audit
Steve Summers	-	Chief Operating Officer
Jacqueline Mellaerts	Van -	Chief Financial Officer

100. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Chilvers and substituted by Cllr Naylor.

101. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 June 2018 were approved as a true record.

102. Annual Statement of Accounts 2017/18

The Council's External Auditors, Ernst & Young had substantially completed their audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2017/18.

The report presented the findings and the final Financial Statements including the Annual Governance Statement.

External Audit proposed to issue an unqualified audit opinion for the Statement of Accounts 2017/18 and an unqualified value for money conclusion.

E&Y presented their findings and explained to members the Adjusted and unadjusted differences made to the audited statement of accounts.

2017/18 was the first year the Council had worked to the earlier statutory deadline of 31st May, which was signed by the Interim Chief Finance Officer, to publish an unaudited Statement of Accounts. The revised deadline for the publication of the accounts following External Audit to issue their opinion was 31st July 2018, which was expected to be met following this Committee.

Members of Committee had been informed that due to the tight timescales following the Audit, it was not possible to publish this report alongside the Agenda on 17th July 2018.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Russell and **SECONDED** by Cllr Hones to move the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED** that:

1. **The Audit Results Report 2017/18 in Appendix A is considered, and findings of External Auditors are noted.**
2. **The amended Letter of Representation attached in Appendix B is approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee (appended to the minutes).**
3. **The Annual Governance Statement included in Appendix C is approved and signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.**
4. **The Statement of Accounts for 2017/18 attached in Appendix C is approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee and the Interim Chief Finance Officer.**

Reasons for Recommendation

To enable the Council to meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 in respect of approval of the financial statements and the annual governance statement.

An amended version of Appendix B was tabled at committee and appended to these minutes.

103. Leisure Strategy Working Group Report

The report within the agenda contained the report and recommendations of the Leisure Strategy Working Group which met on 9 July 2018, for consideration by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The Members of the Working Group consisted of the following Members: Cllrs Hossack, Poppy, Tierney, Davies and Barrett and they were supported by the following Officers: Philip Ruck, Kim Anderson and Stuart Anderson.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Russell and **SECONDED** by Cllr Middlehurst to approve the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

To note the Leisure Strategy Working Group and agree the recommendations contained within and refer it to the 11 September Community Health and Housing Committee.

Reasons for Recommendation

As part of the Council's due diligence in delivering a successful Leisure Strategy, Members and officers needed to have a complete picture of the associated costs, risk profiles of the Borough's Leisure facilities and identify opportunities for income generation.

Comments received from Sport England as part of the Local Development Plan consultation, stated that a Leisure Strategy was required that assessed Council owned sports and leisure facilities in order that the Council could continue to work with partners to ensure that appropriate provisions were made for the residents of Brentwood. The strategy should not only consider how the Council could provide services, but also how other partners could. The strategy should also use current sports facility evidence to identify strategic priorities to then inform what would be included in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Following the feasibility work, the Council would then be able to determine which projects would be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and those funded by planning obligations.

The Council's Asset Management Strategy 2014/15 also set out the need to obtain maximise income where possible from its asset portfolio.

104. Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 Update

The report provided the 2018/19 draft scrutiny work programme for members consideration and as attached at Appendix A (of the report).

Members should note that the workplan was a timeline of the latest and proposed working position of the working groups and **not** the actual timeline of the subject matter or project being reviewed. These timelines were subject to change depending on the work and outcomes of the working groups.

The Committee were requested to consider the draft work programme at Appendix A (of the report) and agree any amendments.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Russell and **SECONDED** by Cllr Barrell to approve the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Committee considers the Scrutiny work programme 2018/19 attached at Appendix A (of the report) and agree any amendments for approval.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Constitution required that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee agrees its Scrutiny work programme at each meeting of the Committee.

105. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business. The meeting concluded at 7.25pm.

17 October 2018

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Annual Audit Letter 2017/18

Report of: *Jacqueline Van Mellaerts – Interim Chief Finance Officer*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the Committee with the Annual Audit Letter issued by the external auditors, Ernst & Young, following the completion of the audit of the 2017/18 accounts.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the contents of the report and the Annual Audit Letter attached in Appendix A be noted.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The purpose of the Annual Audit Letter is to communicate to members, and to the public and other stakeholders, the key issues arising from the audit of the accounts, which the external auditors consider should be brought to the attention of the Council.
- 3.2 The Annual Audit Letter is attached to this report as Appendix A. It contains the following sections:-
- a) Executive Summary – Results of the 2017/18 audit process
 - b) Purpose and Responsibilities – Purpose of the Letter, Appointed Auditors and the Council.
 - c) Financial Statements Audit – key issues identified as part of the audit.
 - d) Value for Money – Arrangements put in place by the Council to secure value.

- e) Other Reporting Issues – Further observations.
- f) Data Analytics – Explanation and results of the use of data analytics.
- g) Focused on your future – Impact of new accounting standards in future years.
- h) Audit Fees – Summary of fees paid for the year ended 31 March 2018

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The detailed findings from the audit work were contained in the Final Audit Results Report, which was issued by Ernst & Young on 24th July 2018, this was review by senior management and then noted by Committee on 25th July 2018.
- 4.2 The 2017/18 Statement of Accounts were approved by Committee on 25th July 2018 and signed by the Chair of the Committee and the Interim Chief Finance Officer.
- 4.3 The Annual Audit Letter identifies the findings from the Final Audit Results Report, and reports matter that are most significant for the Council.
- 4.4 Officers are satisfied with the contents of the Audit Letter, none of which are contentious.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 A system of sound financial control and governance arrangements underpins all of the services and priorities of the Council.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 None

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 The Council is responsible for putting in proper arrangements for secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, which underpins the Corporate Plan.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts Interim Chief Finance Officer

Tel & Email 01277 312 500

jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.1 The Value for Money section of the Letter makes reference to the Medium Term Financial Plan, and the work being carried out by officers to reduce the cumulative funding gap. The external Auditors did not identify any significant weaknesses in these arrangements.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey; Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email 01277 312 860 daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.2 All relevant legal considerations have been taken into account in the compilation of this report.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.3 None

9. Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

- 9.1 Annual Audit Results Report 2017/18 report to Committee on 25th July 2018.

10. Appendices to this report

- Appendix A - Annual Audit Letter 2017/18

Report Author Contact Details:

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Brentwood Borough Council

Annual Audit Letter for the year
ended 31 March 2018

August 2018

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EY

Building a better
working world

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Focused on your future



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Audit Fees



Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) have issued a 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies'. It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the PSAA website (www.psa.co.uk)

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The 'Terms of Appointment (updated 23 February 2017)' issued by PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Annual Audit Letter is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Members of the audited body, and is prepared for their sole use. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure - If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.



01

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

We are required to issue an annual audit letter to **Brentwood Borough Council** following completion of our audit procedures for the year ended 31 March 2018.

Below are the results and conclusions on the significant areas of the audit process.

Area of Work	Conclusion
Opinion on the Council's	Unqualified - the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2018 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended
▶ Financial statements	
▶ Consistency of other information published with the financial statements	Other information published with the financial statements was consistent with the Annual Accounts.
Concluding on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness	We concluded that you have put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in your use of resources

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Area of Work	Conclusion
Reports by exception:	
▶ Consistency of Governance Statement	The Governance Statement was consistent with our understanding of the Council.
▶ Public interest report	We had no matters to report in the public interest.
▶ Written recommendations to the Council, which should be copied to the Secretary of State	We had no matters to report.
▶ Other actions taken in relation to our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014	We had no matters to report.

Area of Work	Conclusion
Reporting to the National Audit Office (NAO) on our review of the Council's Whole of Government Accounts return (WGA).	The Council is below the specified audit threshold of £500 million. Therefore, we did not perform any audit procedures on the consolidation pack.

Executive Summary (cont'd)

As a result of the above we have also:

Area of Work	Conclusion
Issued a report to those charged with governance of the Council communicating significant findings resulting from our audit.	Our Audit Results Report was presented to the Audit Committee on 25 July 2018.
Issued a certificate that we have completed the audit in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice.	We issued our audit completion certificate on 25 July 2018.

In December 2018 we will also issue a report to those charged with governance of the Council summarising the certification work we have undertaken.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council 's staff for their assistance during the course of our work.

Debbie Hanson

Executive Director

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP



02

Purpose and Responsibilities

Purpose and Responsibilities

The Purpose of this Letter

The purpose of this Annual Audit Letter is to communicate to Members and external stakeholders, including members of the public, the key issues arising from our work, which we consider should be brought to the attention of the Council.

We have already reported the detailed findings from our audit work in our 2017/18 Audit Results Report to the 25 July 2018 Audit and Scrutiny Committee, representing those charged with governance. We do not repeat those detailed findings in this letter. The matters reported here are the most significant for the Council.

Responsibilities of the Appointed Auditor

Our 2017/18 audit work has been undertaken in accordance with the Audit Plan that we issued on 14 March 2018 and is conducted in accordance with the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), and other guidance issued by the National Audit Office.

As auditors we are responsible for:

Expressing an opinion:

- ▶ On the 2017/18 financial statement; and
- ▶ On the consistency of other information published with the financial statements.

Forming a conclusion on the arrangements the Council has to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

▶ Reporting by exception:

- ▶ If the annual governance statement is misleading or not consistent with our understanding of the Council;
- ▶ Any significant matters that are in the public interest;
- ▶ Any written recommendations to the Council, which should be copied to the Secretary of State; and
- ▶ If we have discharged our duties and responsibilities as established by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Code of Audit Practice.

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office (NAO) on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The extent of our review and the nature of our report are specified by the NAO. The Council is below the specified audit threshold of £500 million. Therefore, we did not perform any audit procedures on the return.

Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for preparing and publishing its statement of accounts accompanied by an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). In the AGS, the Council reports publicly each year on how far it complies with its own code of governance, including how it has monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in year, and any changes planned in the coming period.

The Council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.



03

Financial Statement Audit

Financial Statement Audit

Key Issues

The Council's Statement of Accounts is an important tool for the Council to show how it has used public money and how it can demonstrate its financial management and financial health.

We audited the Council's Statement of Accounts in line with the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), and other guidance issued by the National Audit Office and issued an unqualified audit report on 26 July 2018

Our detailed findings were reported to the 25 July 2018 Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The key issues identified as part of our audit were as follows:

Significant Risk

Conclusion

Misstatements due to fraud or error

The financial statements as a whole are not free of material misstatements whether caused by fraud or error.

As identified in ISA (UK and Ireland) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.

At Brentwood Council, we identified the potential for the incorrect classification of revenue spend as capital as a particular area where there is a risk of fraud in revenue recognition.

To address this risk we focused on aspects of the financial statements where management could inappropriately inflate income or understate expenditure, primarily:

- Material accounting estimates.
- Accruals near year end
- Journal entries.
- Unusual transactions

We obtained a full list of journals posted to the general ledger during the year, and analysed these journals using criteria we set to identify any unusual journal types or amounts. We then tested journals that met our criteria and tested these to supporting documentation. We did not identify any inappropriate journals.

We considered the accounting estimates relating to pensions and property valuations as the most susceptible to bias. We challenged the significant assumptions in the actuarial pension valuation and found no indication of management bias in these estimates. Our work on the property valuations found no material errors in the balances presented within the financial statements.

We performed sample testing on additions to the property, plant and equipment balance and found that these items met the relevant accounting requirements to be capitalised. Our testing did not identify any expenditure which had been inappropriately capitalised.

We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.

We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

We did not identify any other material transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business.

Overall our audit work did not identify any material issues or unusual transactions to indicate any misreporting of the Council's financial position, that revenue or expenditure has been incorrectly recorded or that management has overridden control.

Financial Statement Audit (cont'd)

The key issues identified as part of our audit were as follows: (cont'd)

Other Key Findings	Conclusion
<p>Property, plant and equipment valuations</p> <p>Property, plant and equipment (PPE) represents a significant balance in the Council's accounts and is subject to valuation changes, impairment reviews and depreciation charges.</p> <p>Material judgemental inputs and estimation techniques are required to calculate the year-end PPE balances held in the balance sheet.</p> <p>As the Council's asset base is significant, and the outputs from the valuer are subject to estimation, there is a higher inherent risk PPE may be under/overstated or the associated accounting entries incorrectly posted.</p> <p>As (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of experts and assumptions underlying fair value estimates</p>	<p>We are satisfied that the Council's valuers have the necessary qualifications and experience. We have undertaken appropriate audit procedures to verify and critically challenge the basis of valuation adopted by the valuer in relation to the Council's property.</p> <p>Our testing has not identified any material misstatements from inappropriate judgements being applied to the property valuation estimates.</p> <p>We considered the underlying assumptions made by the expert valuer and concluded that the overall valuation estimate was not unreasonable and did not result in a material misstatement of the value of property, plant and equipment.</p>
<p>Pension liability valuation</p> <p>The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS19 require the Council to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in which it is an admitted body.</p> <p>The Council's current pension fund deficit is a highly material and sensitive item and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet.</p> <p>The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary. As with other councils, accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement and due to the nature, volume and size of the transactions we consider this to be a higher inherent risk.</p>	<p>We assessed and were satisfied with the competency and objectivity of the Council's actuary: Barnett Waddingham. EY Pensions team and PwC (Consulting Actuary to the NAO) reviewed the work of the actuary. We challenged the significant movement in the actuarial valuation and found no indication of management bias in this estimate.</p> <p>We have received reports from the Essex Pension Fund Auditor and the EY actuarial team.</p> <p>The report from the Essex Pension Fund Auditor identified material movements in the pension assets and related disclosures, as a result of significant movements in the asset values between the date of the estimates used by the actuary to produce the IAS19 report and the year end.</p> <p>As a result, the Council obtained a revised IAS 19 report and updated the accounts to reflect the new figures. This resulted in an increase in the pension liability of £1.429 million and a corresponding increase in the pension reserve.</p> <p>The accounting entries and disclosures are in line with our expectations and the Code.</p>

Financial Statement Audit (cont'd)

Our application of materiality

When establishing our overall audit strategy, we determined a magnitude of uncorrected misstatements that we judged would be material for the financial statements as a whole.

Item	Thresholds applied
Planning materiality	We determined planning materiality to be £1.053 million (2016/17: £932 million), which is 2% of gross expenditure reported in the accounts of £52.678 million. We consider gross expenditure to be one of the principal considerations for stakeholders in assessing the financial performance of the Council.
Reporting threshold	We agreed with the Audit and Scrutiny Committee that we would report to the Committee all audit differences in excess of £52k (2016/17: £46k)

We also identified the following areas where misstatement at a level lower than our overall materiality level might influence the reader. For these areas we developed an audit strategy specific to these areas. The areas identified and audit strategy applied include:

- ▶ Remuneration disclosures including any severance payments, exit packages and termination benefits:
- ▶ Related party transactions.

We evaluate any uncorrected misstatements against both the quantitative measures of materiality discussed above and in light of other relevant qualitative considerations.



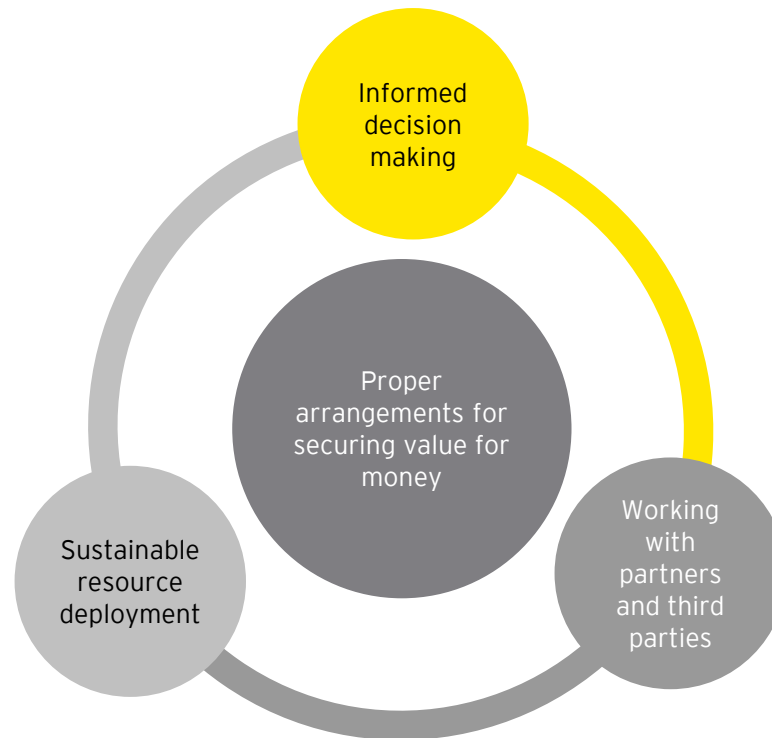
04 Value for Money

Value for Money

We are required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. This is known as our value for money conclusion.

Proper arrangements are defined by statutory guidance issued by the National Audit Office. They comprise your arrangements to:

- ▶ Take informed decisions;
- ▶ Deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and
- ▶ Work with partners and other third parties.



We identified one significant risk around these arrangements related to the Council's future financial position. The table below presents our findings in response to the risk in our Audit Planning Report and any other significant weaknesses or issues we want to bring to your attention.

We have performed the procedures outlined in our Audit Plan. We did not identify any significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people, and working with partners and other third parties.

We therefore issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 26 July 2018.

£ Value for Money (cont'd)

Significant Risk	Conclusion
<p>The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy identified a net budget gaps of just under £0.7 million at the end of 2020/21. This assumes the Council will achieve savings or generate additional income of just over £3.8 million over the period of the MTFS.</p> <p>The Council has a number of initiatives to deliver the MTFS, including the development of the Town Hall and town centre and leisure strategies. More recently, the Council is developing plans to establish a wholly owned company and procure a joint venture partner to develop assets commercially in order to generate revenue for the Council.</p> <p>These schemes will commit the Council to significant levels of funding over a number of years. The effectiveness of governance, financial and risk management arrangements related to these key decisions are crucial.</p>	<p>We have assessed the arrangements in place supporting these developments, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the governance, financial and risk management arrangements in place • the financial implications and key decisions being made • how the Council is working with other bodies and partners. <p>We have not identified any issues in the review of the arrangements in place for these developments. We note that, with the exception of the Town Hall development, a number of the projects are at a relatively early stage and the risks faced by the Council related to these projects will impact in 2018/19 and 2019-/20, when we will revisit these arrangements as part of our value for money assessment. In relation to arrangements in place during 2017/18, we note that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council has engaged appropriate external advisors to provide support in relation to areas such as the procurement of a joint venture partner ▪ Appropriate governance arrangements have been put in place with regular updates provided to the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee and the establishment of a Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee. ▪ In relation to the Town Hall development which is the most advanced of the projects, there is evidence that the Council has undertaken appropriate research, consultations and cost-benefit analysis <p>We are therefore satisfied that the information provide to Members and Officers in respect of these projects is appropriate and is based on third party assessments and advice from appropriately knowledgeable professionals with relevant experience. We have seen evidence to indicate that this advice has been utilised in the discussions and decisions around the projects.</p>



05

Other Reporting Issues



Other Reporting Issues

Whole of Government Accounts

The Council is below the specified audit threshold of £500 million. Therefore, we did not perform any audit procedures on the consolidation pack.

Annual Governance Statement

We are required to consider the completeness of disclosures in the Council's Annual Governance Statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work, and consider whether it is misleading.

We completed this work and did not identify any areas of concern.

Report in the Public Interest

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether, in the public interest, to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit in order for it to be considered by the Council or brought to the attention of the public.

We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

Written Recommendations

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to designate any audit recommendation as one that requires the Council to consider it at a public meeting and to decide what action to take in response.

We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a written recommendation.

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Other Reporting Issues (cont'd)

Objections Received

We did not receive any objections to the 2017/18 financial statements from members of the public.

Other Powers and Duties

We identified no issues during our audit that required us to use our additional powers under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Independence

We communicated our assessment of independence in our Audit Results Report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on **July 2018**. In our professional judgement the firm is independent and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff has not been compromised within the meaning regulatory and professional requirements.

Control Themes and Observations

It is the responsibility of the Authority to develop and implement systems of internal financial control and to put in place proper arrangements to monitor their adequacy and effectiveness in practice. Our responsibility as your auditor is to consider whether the Authority has put adequate arrangements in place to satisfy itself that the systems of internal financial control are both adequate and effective in practice.

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. As we have adopted a fully substantive approach, we have therefore not tested the operation of controls.

Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control we are required to communicate to you significant deficiencies in internal control.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements of which you are not aware.



06 Data Analytics



Use of Data Analytics in the Audit

Analytics Driven Audit

Data analytics

We used our data analysers to enable us to capture entire populations of your financial data. These analysers:

- ▶ Help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be the focus of our substantive audit tests; and
- ▶ Give greater likelihood of identifying errors than traditional, random sampling techniques.

In 2017/18, our use of these analysers in the Authority's audit included testing journal entries and employee expenses, to identify and focus our testing on those entries we deem to have the highest inherent risk to the audit. We have included further detail on the work we did on journals in this Letter.

We capture the data through our formal data requests and the data transfer takes place on a secured EY website. These are in line with our EY data protection policies which are designed to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of business and personal information.

Journal Entry Analysis

We obtain downloads of all LG financial ledger transactions posted in the year. We perform completeness analysis over the data, reconciling the sum of transactions to the movement in the trial balances and financial statements to ensure we have captured all data. Our analysers then review and sort transactions, allowing us to more effectively identify and test journals that we consider to be higher risk, as identified in our audit planning report.



Data Analytics

Journal Entry Data Insights

The graphic outlined below summarises the journal population for 2017/18. We review journals by certain risk based criteria to focus on higher risk transactions, such as journals posted manually by management, those posted around the year-end, those with unusual debit and credit relationships, and those posted by individuals we would not expect to be entering transactions.

The purpose of this approach is to provide a more effective, risk focused approach to auditing journal entries, minimising the burden of compliance on management by minimising randomly selected samples.

EY Helix - GLASS: Journal Entry Data Insights - Brentwood Borough Council - 31/03/2018

Facts and Figures

Number of Journals Posted:

90,295

Average Number of Journals Posted per Day:

223

Average Number of Lines per Journal:

3

Operational Efficiencies

Manual Journals Posted at weekend:

118

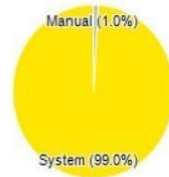
Manual journals where gross amount is < £5:

10

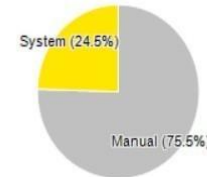
Journal lines with zero value:

351

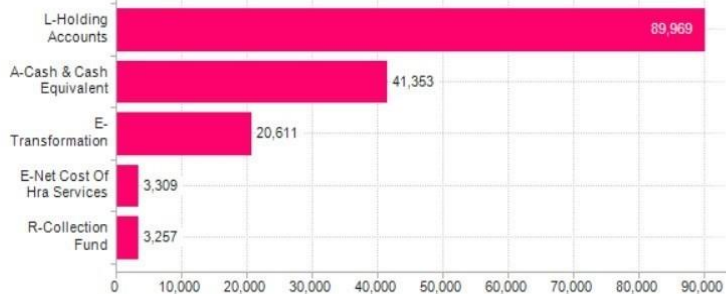
Manual v System by Volume



Manual v System by Value



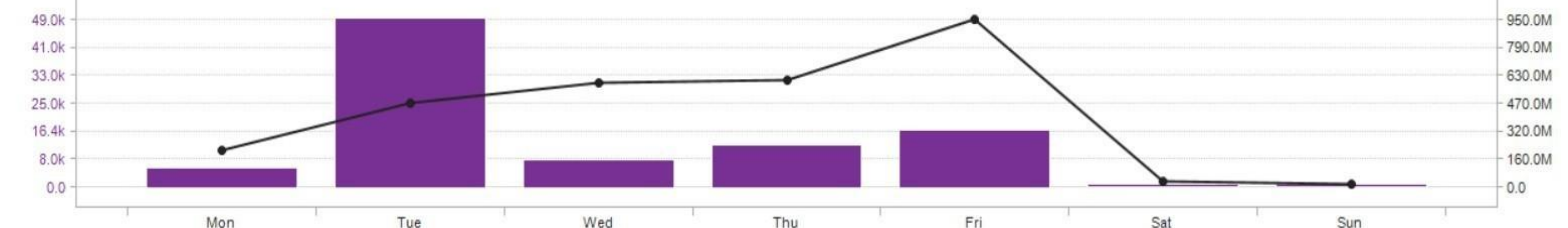
Top Five Activity Accounts



Bottom Five Activity Accounts



Days of the Week





07

Focused on your future



Focused on your future

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom introduces the application of new accounting standards in future years. The impact on the Council is summarised in the table below'

Standard	Issue	Impact
IFRS 9 Financial Instruments	<p>Applicable for local authority accounts from the 2018/19 financial year and will change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How financial assets are classified and measured; ▶ How the impairment of financial assets are calculated; and ▶ The disclosure requirements for financial assets. <p>There are transitional arrangements within the standard and the 2018/19 Accounting Code of Practice for Local Authorities has now been issued, providing guidance on the application of IFRS 9. In advance of the Guidance Notes being issued, CIPFA have issued some provisional information providing detail on the impact on local authority accounting of IFRS 9, however the key outstanding issue is whether any accounting statutory overrides will be introduced to mitigate any impact.</p>	<p>The Council's view is that the impact of this standard on the Authority's financial statements will be immaterial. The Council will need to keep this standard under continued focus during 2018/19 because statutory overrides may be introduced by Central Government.</p>
IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers	<p>Applicable for local authority accounts from the 2018/19 financial year. This new standard deals with accounting for all contracts with customers except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Leases; ▶ Financial instruments; ▶ Insurance contracts; and ▶ For local authorities; Council Tax and NDR income. <p>The key requirements of the standard cover the identification of performance obligations under customer contracts and the linking of income to the meeting of those performance obligations.</p> <p>Now that the 2018/19 Accounting Code of Practice for Local Authorities has been issued it is becoming clear what the impact on local authority accounting will be. As the vast majority of revenue streams of Local Authorities fall outside the scope of IFRS 15, the impact of this standard is likely to be limited.</p>	<p>Given the nature of the Council's income streams, it is unlikely that the future implementation of IFRS 15 will have a material impact on the financial statements of the Council. The vast majority of the Council's income streams are taxation or grant based, and are therefore outside the scope of IFRS15.</p> <p>The following income streams which are within the scope of IFRS 15 may be considered material by the Council in making its assessment of the impact on IFRS 15 in its 2018/19 accounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fees and charges for services under statutory requirements, .g. application fees for taxi licenses or planning fees; • sale of goods provided by the authority e.g. retail sales at leisure centres, concessionary sale at local authority theatres; and • charges for services provided by a local authority e.g. maintenance for council dwellings or transport fares



Focused on your future (cont'd)

Standard	Issue	Impact
IFRS 16 Leases	<p>It is currently proposed that IFRS 16 will be applicable for local authority accounts from the 2019/20 financial year.</p> <p>Whilst the definition of a lease remains similar to the current leasing standard; IAS 17, for local authorities who lease a large number of assets the new standard will have a significant impact, with nearly all current leases being included on the balance sheet.</p> <p>There are transitional arrangements within the standard and although the 2019/20 Accounting Code of Practice for Local Authorities has yet to be issued, CIPFA have issued some limited provisional information which begins to clarify what the impact on local authority accounting will be. Whether any accounting statutory overrides will be introduced to mitigate any impact remains an outstanding issue.</p>	<p>Until the 2019/20 Accounting Code is issued and any statutory overrides are confirmed there remains some uncertainty in this area.</p> <p>However, what is clear is that the Council will need to undertake a detailed exercise to identify all of its leases and capture the relevant information for them. The Council must therefore ensure that all lease arrangements are fully documented.</p>



08 Audit Fees

Audit Fees

As part of our reporting on our independence, we set out below a summary of the fees paid for the year ended 31 March 2018. Our fee for 2017/18 is in line with the scale fee set by the PSAA and reported in our July 2018 Annual Results Report.

	Final Fee 2017/18 £	Planned Fee 2017/18 £	Scale Fee 2017/18 £	Final Fee 2016/17 £
Total Audit Fee - Code work	70,876**	68,006	68,006	69,326*
Total Audit Fee - Certification of grant claims and returns (housing benefit subsidy audit)	33,606 ***	33,606	33,606	28,565

* The 2016/17 audit fee includes a scale fee variation increase of £1,320 in relation to additional work to address value for money conclusion significant risks.

** We are proposing an additional fee of £2,870 as a result of additional work that had to be done to support our value for money conclusion as a result of the significant risk identified in relation to the various projects the Council has initiated to bridge the medium term budget gap. These include the redevelopment of the Town Hall, review of the Leisure Strategy, setting up a wholly owned company and plans to establish a joint venture arrangement with a private developer. This has yet to be agreed with management and PSAA

*** We have not yet completed our certification of the Council's Housing benefit and subsidy claim and therefore cannot confirm the final fee. We will report the final fee in our claims and certification report to be issued by December 2018

We confirm we have not undertaken any non-audit work outside of the PSAA's requirements.

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ED None

EY-000070901-01 (UK) 07/18. CSG London.

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ey.com

17 October 2018

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Internal Audit Progress Report

Report of: *Greg Rubins, Head of Internal Audit (BDO)*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report is intended to inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of progress made against the approved internal audit plan for 2018/19, which was approved by the Audit Committee in March 2018.

1.2 The following reports have been finalised since the last Committee and a summary of our findings is included in the progress report:

- Building Control (Substantial/Substantial assurance)
- Commercial Activities (Substantial/Substantial assurance)
- Planning (Substantial/Substantial assurance)

The full reports are available on request.

1.3 A Summary of outstanding Recommendations from previous audits are included in Appendix B. There was a total of 80 high and medium recommendations to be completed, of which 42 have been completed and 5 are not yet due.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee receives and notes the contents of the Internal Audit Progress Reports attached in Appendix A.

2.2 That the Committee received and notes the contents of the Internal Audit Follow Up Report attached in Appendix B

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 This report is intended to inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of progress made against the 2018/19 internal audit plan. It summarises the work we have done, together with our assessment of the systems reviewed and the recommendations we have raised. Our work complies with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. As part of our audit approach, we have agreed terms of reference for each piece of work with the risk owner, identifying the headline and sub-risks, which have been covered as part of the assignment. This approach is designed to enable us to give assurance on the risk management and internal control processes in place to mitigate the risks identified.
- 3.2 The Audit Committee approved the 2018/19 annual audit plan in March 2018. The progress against plan is reported at every Audit and Scrutiny Committee during 2018/19.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The following reports have been finalised since the last Committee and a summary of our findings is included in the progress report:
- Building Control (Substantial/Substantial assurance)
 - Commercial Activities (Substantial/Substantial assurance)
 - Planning (Substantial/Substantial assurance)

The full reports are available on request.

4.2 Building Control Conclusion

We were able to confirm with reference to information held by the Council that in practice all the requirements for building regulations are being followed. The service is delivering verdicts on building notices and full plans in a timely manner and in a way that covers all of the requirements. This leads us to the conclusion of substantial assurance on the design and effectiveness and of the controls in place.

4.3 Planning Conclusion

Overall, we found that the processes conducted and controls in place concerning planning applications are effective in ensuring that applications are uploaded, validated and processed in an accurate and timely manner. The procedures notes used need to include Brentwood Borough Council bespoke processes and explicit time frames, however we found that the processes and controls were well understood and

applied consistently, therefore we have concluded an opinion of substantial assurance over both design and operational effectiveness of the controls in place.

4.4 Commercial Activities Conclusion

The Council has undertaken some major decisions in an attempt to improve its commercial activities to raise additional income to support and improve services for residents of the Borough. It has created a separate commercial arm and is entering in to a Joint Venture Partnership, whilst ensuring it retains a strong governance structure, to be able to react to potential commercial opportunities without previous delays in decision making process, thus enabling it to react on a more commercial footing. This has already resulted in the commercial arm purchasing a significant asset, as the Wholly Owned Company could make a commercial decision as it has been given the power to make such decisions under the agreement set up. In regards to the Joint Venture, the Council will have an equal share and the agreement will not be able to be changed without appropriate approval.

In our view the Council has taken the requisite steps to obtain the necessary approvals, set up appropriate governance structures and identify and mitigate initial risks. However, as the Council has recognised, the establishment of these commercial operations represents a significant risk and this will need to be managed carefully as the commercial activities progress. We have included a number of areas for the Council to consider in the Appendix to this report.

4.5 A Summary of outstanding Recommendations from previous audits are included in Appendix B. There was a total of 80 high and medium recommendations to be completed, of which 42 have been completed and 5 are not yet due.

4.6 This is regularly monitored by Senior Officers and will be followed up again ahead of the next Audit and Scrutiny Committee, along with other recommendations due by 31st December 2018.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 To monitor the progress of work against the internal audit plan.

6. Consultation

6.1 Not applicable.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 Good financial management underpins all priorities within the Corporate Plan.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Interim Chief Finance Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312829 / Jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Head of Legal Services

Tel & Email 01277 312860 / daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 None

10. Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Internal Audit Progress Report 2018/19

Appendix B – Internal Audit Follow Up Report 2018/19

Report Author Contact Details:

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BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee 17 October 2018

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SUMMARY OF 2018/19 WORK

Purpose of Report

This report is intended to inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of progress made against the 2018/19 internal audit plan. It summarises the work we have done, together with our assessment of the systems reviewed and the recommendations we have raised. Our work complies with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. As part of our audit approach, we have agreed terms of reference for each piece of work with the risk owner, identifying the headline and sub-risks, which have been covered as part of the assignment. This approach is designed to enable us to give assurance on the risk management and internal control processes in place to mitigate the risks identified.

Internal Audit Methodology

Our methodology is based on four assurance levels in respect of our overall conclusion as to the design and operational effectiveness of controls within the system reviewed. The assurance levels are set out in Appendix 1 of this report, and are based on us giving either "substantial", "moderate", "limited" or "no". The four assurance levels are designed to ensure that the opinion given does not gravitate to a "satisfactory" or middle band grading. Under any system we are required to make a judgement when making our overall assessment.

For audits with a substantial or moderate assurance opinion, the executive summaries from the final report will be included in the Internal Audit Progress Report.

For audits with a limited or no assurance opinion, the full report will be included with the papers.

2018/19 Internal Audit Plan

The following reports have been finalised, and the executive summaries are included in this report:

- Commercialisation
- Building Control
- Planning

The following audits are in progress or due to take place in Q3 and will be presented to the next Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 23 January 2018:







- Corporate Projects
- Local Development Plan
- PCI / DSS Compliance
- Workforce Strategy and Organisational Structure

Changes to the Plan

There have been no changes made to the audits within the approved internal audit plan for 2018/19. Management has requested changes to the timings of the two audits below:

- Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity - moved from Q2 to Q4 (to allow for arrangements with Basildon Council to be confirmed and in operating)
- General Data Protection Regulations - moved from Q2 to Q4 (to allow for the new systems and process to become embedded, and provide a sufficient basis for audit testing)

REVIEW OF 2018/19 WORK

Audit	Executive Lead	Due Date	Planning	Fieldwork	Reporting	Design	Effectiveness	
Risk Management and Governance Arrangements	Sue White	Q4 Jan 2018	✓ Scoping meeting					
Main Financial Systems	Phoebe Barnes	Q3/ Q4 Dec 2017	✓ Scoping meeting					
Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity	Sue White	Q4 Mar 2019	✓ Draft ToR					
General Data Protection Regulations	Daniel Toohey	Q4 Mar 2019	✓					
Local Development Plan	Phil Drane	Q3 Dec 2018	✓ Draft ToR					
Commercial Activities	Chris Leslie	Q1/Q2 Jun to Sep 2018	✓	✓	✓ Final			
Corporate Projects	Steve Butcher	Q3 Dec 2018	✓ Draft ToR					
Workforce Strategy and Organisation Structure	Phil Ruck	Q3 Dec 2018	✓ Draft ToR					
Housing - Homelessness	Stuart Morris	Q4 Jan 2018	✓ Scoping meeting					
Building Control	Gary Sampson-Price	Q1 May/ Jun 2018	✓	✓	✓ Final			
Planning	Andy Millard	Q1 May/ Jun 2018	✓	✓	✓ Final			
PCI / DSS Compliance	Christopher Houghton/ Tim Huggins	Q2 Jul 2018	✓	✓	✓ Draft			
Counter Fraud	Jacqueline Van Mellaerts	Q4 Jan to Mar 2019	✓ Scoping meeting					
Follow Up	Jacqueline Van Mellaerts	Ongoing	-----See separate follow up report-----					

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – BUILDING CONTROL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE:

Design	Substantial	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.
Effectiveness	Substantial	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

High

0

Medium

0

Low

2

TOTAL NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS: 2

BACKGROUND:

Brentwood Borough Council (“the Council”) is responsible for ensuring that all building works within its jurisdiction are compliant with government building regulations. Compliance is undertaken either by the Council’s building control team or independently using an approved inspector. If an approved inspector is used, then the Council’s responsibility extends to ensuring that the inspector is appropriately qualified before relinquishing the duty.

The building control team receives either the full plans to the proposed works or a building notice. When full plans are received, these are most likely to have been prepared by a professional such as an architect, and the building control team can directly review these plans against the building regulations and approve or reject accordingly. A building notice can consist of plans of varying detail, and the onus is on the building control team to query and obtain the required information, either directly from the applicant or during onsite inspections.

Inspections on the works are carried out when required or requested, with any issues arising being fed back to the constructors. When construction is finished, the building works are inspected a final time before a completion notice is issued, otherwise the constructors will be advised on which regulations are not being adhered to.

The building control team also respond to reports of unauthorised building works, usually referred by the public, to ensure that no construction is taking place without the appropriate approval and consideration of the regulations.

GOOD PRACTICE:

- Approved inspectors have been appropriately vetted
- Building notices are reviewed and authorised correctly and in a timely manner
- Full plans are reviewed and authorised correctly and in a timely manner
- Inspections are carried out onsite when required and are appropriately recorded and followed up where necessary
- Completion certificates are issued with sufficient evidence and in a timely manner
- Reports of unauthorised works are acted upon in a timely manner

KEY FINDINGS:

- Inspections are monitored using hard copy documentation, meaning that it takes longer to access information and makes information harder to analyse
- Formal policies and procedures were not provided during the audit and no digital copies were extant.

CONCLUSION:

We were able to confirm with reference to information held by the Council that in practice all the requirements for building regulations are being followed. The service is delivering verdicts on building notices and full plans in a timely manner and in a way that covers all of the requirements. This leads us to the conclusion of substantial assurance on the design and effectiveness and of the controls in place.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – PLANNING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE:

Design	Substantial	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.
Effectiveness	Substantial	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

High

0

Medium

0

Low

1

TOTAL NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS: 2

BACKGROUND:

Brentwood Borough Council (“the Council”) recognised that it was performing poorly in relation to planning applications and in 2016 entered into a working relationship, through a Service Level Agreement, with Thurrock Council. A review of the planning application process was undertaken and some new processes were introduced to improve performance. The Council is ranked 4th in England for its performance in dealing with planning applications when previously it was ranked 92nd.

Planning decisions are made by the planning officers employed by the Council. The strategic overview is managed by Thurrock Council officers and administration of the service is undertaken by Brentwood Council officers.

On average the Council receives 2,100 planning applications and 350 pre-applications a year, 81% of which are applied for electronically through the National Planning Portal. The remaining 19% of applications are received by post or email.

The Planning Team has introduced the Enterprise database to manage applications and electronic applications from the National Planning Portal via an automatic upload. The administration team will allocate the application once it is satisfied that the validation requirements have been met.

Members approve the fees for the planning application on an annual basis. The Planning Team must run a rolling cycle of three accounting years and is not permitted to make a profit on running the service.

Fees are paid electronically through the National Planning Portal or the Council’s Call Centre.

GOOD PRACTICE:

- Applicants are notified of rejected planning applications in a timely manner and that the reasons conveyed to the applicant matched the officer’s report
- Manual applications are reviewed and uploaded to the planning portal accurately and on a timely basis
- Planning application fees were charged in accordance with those approved by the Council

-
- Applications are loaded onto the public access system to provide the opportunity for public objections to be raised
 - Where objections are raised, these are considered by the officer when preparing the validation report and are published in the final officers report
 - Planning applications are processed in a timely manner for submission to members for decision
 - Parameters built into the planning system means that applications cannot be approved unless the balance on the account has been paid in full
 - Performance data is generated from the portal including metrics such as time taken to progress the application, complaints, appeals and objections. A monthly monitor is used to discuss the performance of the team overall as well as individual performances at meetings between senior management and the team.
 - The service level agreement between Brentwood Borough council and Thurrock council contains an appropriate suite of key performance indicators that are reviewed each month, with remedial actions taken as necessary.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Procedural documentation should be reviewed to ensure that the processes that are bespoke to Brentwood Borough Council are clearly identified, and they should include key timeframes for each stage of the application.

CONCLUSION:

Overall, we found that the processes conducted and controls in place concerning planning applications are effective in ensuring that applications are uploaded, validated and processed in an accurate and timely manner. The procedures notes used need to include Brentwood Borough Council bespoke processes and explicit time frames, however we found that the processes and controls were well understood and applied consistently, therefore we have concluded an opinion of substantial assurance over both the design and operational effectiveness of the controls in place.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE:

Design	Substantial	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives
Effectiveness	Substantial	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

High	0
Medium	0
Low	0

TOTAL NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS: 0

BACKGROUND:

The Council has projected a shortfall in future years due to significant financial pressures over the medium to long term and has been examining opportunities to fill this gap and generate surpluses from its asset base and help support the sustainability of the Council. A review of the Council asset base was undertaken to identify potential assets, which could generate capital and revenue returns and assist in bridging the Council's shortfall. Twenty four sites were identified initially through the exercise as good opportunities and a business plan developed to outline how the potential income could be raised.

The Council decided to develop an Asset Development Plan and soft tested the market to identify the ways of delivering the plan, including a joint venture partner, and to gauge interest. There was significant interest and the Council decided to opt for a Joint Venture partnership arrangement and is currently tendering for this opportunity. The Council has also set up Severn Arches Investment Limited, a Wholly Owned Company (WOC), as a first step to deliver the plan so that funding is kept separate from Council finances. The WOC will be funded initially by a £30m loan from the Council to purchase investment property. The Council will secure this financing from the Public Works Loan Board or other funding bodies where required. The WOC is being developed to not only develop Council sites identified but also where appropriate invest in purchasing new sites to add to the Council's asset base.

The audit undertook a review of the Council's commercial activities in relation to the creation of the Wholly Owned Company and process to appointment the Joint Venture Partner and the governance structure in place to ensure there was sufficient monitoring and authorisation required to protect the Council's commercial activities. We reviewed the tender process to ensure it met with the Council's and OJEU procedures and received the appropriate authorisation. We provided some best practice guidance on the issues to address and consider whilst in the standstill period from selection to formally signing contracts with a joint venture partner.

GOOD PRACTICE AND KEY FINDINGS:

- The Council has yet to formally compile an asset development plan, as this will be done with a procured partner, but has undertaken some initial soft market testing to establish the best approach for identifying and then developing sites in the borough on a commercial basis. It has appointed external expertise to support the internal management in its move to a more commercial outlook.
- The Council has decided to move forward by developing a Wholly Owned Company, Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL), to work separately to and with a Joint Venture Partner potentially to develop an initial 24 nominated sites and other possible opportunities identified. The Wholly Owned Company has been correctly registered with Companies House. A plan was developed which outlined the proposal for moving forward which was presented to Policy, Projects & Resources Committee for initial approval and then for approval by the Ordinary Council.
- The approach for developing sites within the borough and creating a Wholly Owned Company and entering in to a Joint Venture Partnership has received approval from the Policy, Procurement and Resources Committee and the Ordinary Council. The full Council approval was given at an Extraordinary Council meeting to ensure there were no potential delays in tendering for a joint venture partner and enable work to commence once the appointment is approved.
- A full procurement process was undertaken, meeting the Council's procedures and OJEU's legal requirements, with external specialists brought in to support the Council in outlining the specifications and to help judge the tender responses when received. The Project Manager, the Executive Director of Commercial Services, ensured that external expertise was appointed and has ensured training has been undertaken for the appointed internal staff who make up the tender panel, the project board and those who would be involved in the post tender negotiations, and those who will be appointed as directors of the Wholly Owned Company.
- A sound governance structure has been devised for the Wholly Owned Company and Joint Venture Partnership. Both have been or will be given delegated authority to undertake commercial projects but only on the terms of the agreements or contracts in place. This cannot be changed without the approval of the Ordinary Council. All progress and decisions by the Wholly Owned Company are monitored and approved by a Project Board and the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee. The arrangements were presented to the Ordinary Council after a presentation by the Executive Director for Commercial Services outlining in detail the proposed structure which was approved.
- The Wholly Owned Company is 100% owned by the Council and the two Directors appointed are the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer. The governance structure allows the Wholly Owned Company to make commercial decisions without seeking committee or Ordinary Council approval but has a set agreement that outlines the business approach and what areas cannot be stepped outside of without Ordinary Council approval.
- The Joint Venture Partnership will be owned 50% each by the Council and the appointed partner. Contracts will be set in place and will clearly show the arrangements the partnership can enter in to and this will not be allowed to be changed without obtaining appropriate approval.
- The asset development plan will be monitored by the Project Board and the Policy, Project and Resources Committee (PP&RC). Updates are to be presented at all meetings to ensure management and members are kept fully aware of progress and decisions being taken. Business Plans on commercial proposals, with input from the external expertise appointed, are presented to the PP&RC for consideration of plans and potential benefits to be realised.
- The strategic risk register has been updated to highlight the Council's move to greater commercial activities and for the initial loan to the Wholly Owned Company to purchase their first asset. It has outlined the mitigating circumstances, how decisions will be monitored and the governance structure in place. The risk register is monitored by the Regulatory and Governance Committee and a report is presented at each committee on the position of each risk and highlighting those which have changed. The most recent meeting, in July 2018, showed that commercial activities had had its risk level raised due to the creation of the

Wholly Owned Company and the initial loan from the Council to the company. This register was approved by the committee.












- The reports being presented to the various committees and boards were found to contain sufficient detail to enable Members to be made fully aware of the current position of the commercial activities of the Council and the governance in place. The reports are available to the public on the Council's website as part of the committee papers and is therefore ensuring transparency in the Council's commercial activities and the approach it is taking.

CONCLUSION:

The Council has undertaken some major decisions in an attempt to improve its commercial activities to raise additional income to support and improve services for residents of the Borough. It has created a separate commercial arm and is entering in to a Joint Venture Partnership, whilst ensuring it retains a strong governance structure, to be able to react to potential commercial opportunities without previous delays in decision making process, thus enabling it to react on a more commercial footing. This has already resulted in the commercial arm purchasing a significant asset, as the Wholly Owned Company could make a commercial decision as it has been given the power to make such decisions under the agreement set up. In regards to the Joint Venture, the Council will have an equal share and the agreement will not be able to be changed without appropriate approval.





In our view the Council has taken the requisite steps to obtain the necessary approvals, set up appropriate governance structures and identify and mitigate initial risks. However, as the Council has recognised, the establishment of these commercial operations represents a significant risk and this will need to be managed carefully as the commercial activities progress. We have included a number of areas for the Council to consider in the Appendix to this report.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Quality Assurance as per the Internal Audit Charter	KPI Results	RAG Rating
Annual Audit Plan delivered in line with timetable	Two audits have been deferred at management's request, as detailed on page 3	
Actual days are in accordance with Annual Audit Plan	To date this KPI has been met	
Customer satisfaction reports - overall score at least 70% for surveys issued at the end of each audit	No surveys have been received relating to 2018/19 as yet	
Annual survey to Audit Committee to achieve score of at least 70%	Survey to be issued in March 2019	
At least 60% input from qualified staff	To date this KPI has been met	
Issue of draft report within 3 weeks of fieldwork 'closing' meeting	The first two audit reports (Building Control and Planning) were deferred for issue pending agreement and signing of the new contract with BDO as the Council's internal audit provider	
Finalise internal audit report 1 week after management responses to report are received	To date this KPI has been met	
Positive result from any external review	An external audit review has not been undertaken during 2018/19 to date	
Audit sponsor to respond to terms of reference within one week of receipt and to draft reports within two weeks of receipt	To date this KPI has been met	
Audit sponsor to implement audit recommendations within the agreed timeframe	To date, 55% of recommendations falling due for implementation have been completed. The Internal Audit Follow Up Report has further details.	
Internal audit to confirm to each meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee whether appropriate co-operation has been provided by management and staff	We can confirm that for the audits undertaken to date, management and staff have supported our work, their co-operation has enabled us to complete our work in line with the terms of reference through access to records, systems and staff as necessary	

APPENDIX 1

OPINION SIGNIFICANCE DEFINITION

Level of Assurance	Design Opinion	Findings from review	Effectiveness Opinion	Findings from review
Substantial 	Appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks.	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.	No, or only minor, exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.
Moderate 	In the main, there are appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks reviewed albeit with some that are not fully effective.	Generally a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives with some exceptions.	A small number of exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	Evidence of non compliance with some controls, that may put some of the system objectives at risk.
Limited 	A number of significant gaps identified in the procedures and controls in key areas. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	System of internal controls is weakened with system objectives at risk of not being achieved.	A number of reoccurring exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	Non-compliance with key procedures and controls places the system objectives at risk.
No 	For all risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Poor system of internal control.	Due to absence of effective controls and procedures, no reliance can be placed on their operation. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Non compliance and/or compliance with inadequate controls.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Manager, BDO LLP
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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our audit and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. The report has been prepared solely for the management of the organisation and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. BDO LLP neither owes nor accepts any duty to any third party whether in contract or in tort and shall not be liable, in respect of any loss, damage or expense which is caused by their reliance on this report.

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17 October 2018

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Formal Complaints and Performance Indicators Working Group Report

Report of: Steve Summers, Chief Operating Officer

Wards Affected: All

This report is: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report submits the report and recommendations of the Formal Complaints and Performance Indicators Working Group for consideration by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the Formal Complaints and Performance Indicators Working Group report, as attached at Appendix A, and agree the recommendations contained within it.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Committees Terms of Reference include responsibility for the monitoring of Council service performance including Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints.

4 Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To ensure the Council provides modern and effective customer services.

5 References to Corporate Plan

- 5.1 The vision of Transformation includes an action to improve the Council's governance arrangements, leading to faster, more effective decision-making. An effective scrutiny function is an essential element of that priority.

6 Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Deputy S151 Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312829 /

jacquelinevanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Monitoring Officer & Head of Legal Services

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk

6.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

7 Background Papers

7.1 None.

8 Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Formal Complaints and Performance Indicators Working Group Report.

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Steve Summers, Chief Operating Officer

Telephone: 01277 312500

E-mail: steve.summers@brentwood.gov.uk

Date 20th September 2018

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints Working Group Draft Report

Working Group Members

Cllr Pound
Cllr Chilvers
Cllr Russell

Apologies
Cllr
Barrett
Cllr Reed

Supporting Officers

Steve Summers – Chief Operating Officer
Sarah Bennett – Customer Services Manager

Scope

The scope of the Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints Working Group is set out below:

1. To monitor and consider the Council's service Performance Indicators.
2. To consider in detail Formal Complaints received by the Council.
3. To consider how Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints are reported to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee
4. To make recommendations to the appropriate Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

Meeting Date

20th September 2018
Attached as Addendum 1 are the notes of the meeting.

Terms of Reference

The Working Groups Terms of Reference are attached at Addendum 2.

1. Report Recommendations

The report recommendations are set out in full below.

R.1 To note and agree the proposed changes to the Council's Formal Complaints Policy.

R.2 That the working group continue to monitor the outcomes of the Formal Complaints for the second quarter 2018/19.

R.3. That the working group continue to monitor the outcomes of the Performance Indicators for the second quarter 2018/19.

2. Introduction

2.1 Following a review in 2015 of its complaints procedure the Council currently operates a three stage complaints process for customers to take issue with any perceived failure to provide a service, failure to respond to requests or failure to adhere to standards on the part of the Council and its officers.

2.2 The council uses a variety of performance indicators to monitor how well services are performing in meeting the needs of service users. The council has set of key indicators of performance, the "toplines". The topline include a variety of indicators that relate to the delivery of the Council's priorities.

2.3 The topline measure performance across a range of council activity including: planning, housing, streetscene and revenue and benefits.

3. Explanation of Recommendations

Explanation

The working group were advised that officers had reviewed the Council's Formal Complaints Policy and had amended the policy as set out below:

- Changed from three stages to two.
- Changed the response time from 20 working days to 10 working days
- Introduction of Unreasonable & Persistent Behaviour Policy

Officers advised that these changes would streamline the process and provide a quicker response for the complainant. The changes were in line with Local Government Ombudsman advice and a report would go to the Regulatory & Governance Committee in October, then onto P,P&R Committee in November.

Recommendation 1

To note and agree the proposed changes to the Council's Formal Complaints Policy.

Explanation

Attached as Addendum 5 is the previous Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee report from 2017/18 which outlines actions taken in response to formal complaints received in 2017. The working group noted the following:

- There had been no formal complaints for Planning in the 1st quarter of 2018/19.
- There had been 10 Housing complaints in the 1st quarter of 2018/19 as compared to 38 for 2017/18. Officers advised that regular meetings are held with the Housing service to review issues arising.
- There had been 9 Revenue & Benefits complaints in the 1st quarter of 2018/19 as compared to 31 for 2017/18. Officers advised that regular meeting were held between Brentwood and Basildon to identify where there was issues and possible solutions. It was also noted that there had been a previous trend of lack of communication from the department to residents in the previous year. No such trend existed in the 1st quarter of 2018/19.

Recommendation 2

That the working group continue to monitor the outcomes of the Formal Complaints for the second quarter 2018/19.

Explanation

Officers advised the working group on actions that have been developed for Housing and Streetscene with regards to Performance Indicators as set out below.

Housing

- Average re-let times for Local Authority Housing

The average re-let time has increased in Q1. This is mainly due to a less desirable property being re let after a long period of time. Work is continuing through our weekly void meetings to ensure turnaround times are a priority. There has also been a large number of voids in recent weeks.

- Level of Arrears at the end of quarter

Arrears do fluctuate throughout the quarter; however, the current figure is high. Despite the push from Estates Officers during patch campaigns the figure has increased. We are seeing a larger number of people moving to Universal Credit which is impacting greatly on our arrears figure.

- Households living in temporary accommodation

The figures show a broad consistency across the year and evidence continuing effort to ensure that temporary accommodation remains in check. Measures towards creating a more effective 'move-on' process are starting to make a successful impact.

Streetscene

- Officers were currently developing a new Waste Strategy which would identify options for future recycling and waste improvements.

LGO outcomes

- 2 decisions have been made by the LGO regarding complaints registered with them. 1 was not investigated, and the 2nd was not upheld.

Recommendation 3

That the working group continue to monitor the outcomes of the Performance Indicators for the second quarter 2018/19.

Addendum 1

**Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints Working Group
Minutes of Meeting 20 September 2018
Seven Arches Road**

Present: Cllr Jan Pound (JP), Cllr Karen Chilvers (KC) and Cllr Will Russell (WR)

Also present: Steve Summers (SS) – Chief Operating Officer
Sarah Bennett (SB) – Customer Services Manager

Apologies: Cllr Gareth Barrett, Cllr Mark Reed

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, which was the first meeting of the group for this financial year.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Barrett and Reed.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approved.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

Officers reminded the working group that following the previous Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee a document detailing what actions have been developed for Housing, Planning Services and Revenue and Benefits with regards to Formal Complaints had been sent to Committee members.

5. Terms of Reference

These are attached to these minutes.

6. Review of reports provided

6.1 Formal Complaints

An overview of the key aspects of the Councils Formal Complaints Policy was provided by SS to the Working Group. Recent advice had been provided by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) that best practice had suggested that complaints policies should have a two-stage approach rather than the three stage approach the Council's Policy currently adopted. A review of the Complaints policy has now been conducted which reduces the process to two stages. The intention of this is to provide a speedier resolution for the complainant.

Action: Draft Complaints Policy 2018 to be reported to Regulatory & Governance Committee in October.

- 6.2 A presentation was provided to the Working Group on Formal Complaints (Addendum 3) received by the Council for the previous four years. This identified an increase in formal complaints made over this period, but it was acknowledged that the new policy in 2015 had provided greater access for complainants.

The Working Group reviewed individually the complaints received for the period April to Jun 2018 and noted that of the 30 complaints, a majority were against Housing and Revs & Bens.

It was agreed that SS will continue to review these issues with Senior Officers from Housing and Revs & Bens.

Action: For the Working Group to monitor these complaints against future quarters to identify concerns or themes.

6.3 Performance Indicators

The Working Group were provided with data for the Council's topline Performance Indicators for April to June 2018 (Addendum 4) and went through them individually.

Action: To continue to review progress of Performance Indicators each quarter.

7. **Any Other Business**

None.

8. **Date of next meeting**

Next meeting will take place in December 2018 – date to be finalised.

Addendum 2

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Performance Indicators & Formal Complaints Working Group – September 2018

Members of Working Group
Crs. Pound, Chilvers, Barrett, Reed and Russell.

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and consider the Council's service Performance Indicators.

2. To consider in detail Formal Complaints received by the Council.
3. To consider how Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints are reported to the
Audit & Scrutiny Committee.
4. To make recommendations to the appropriate Audit & Scrutiny
Committee.



Members Working Group Formal Complaints Q1 2018/19

April - June 2018

Brentwood's Formal Complaint Process

1. Stage one - Officer from service replies in 20 working days
2. Stage two – Senior Officer from service replies in 20 working days
3. Stage three – Senior Officer from another service replies in 20 working days
4. Local Government Ombudsman/Local Government Housing Ombudsman

Brentwood's Formal Complaint Process

Does it work?

Review pending



Formal Complaints received

Department	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Assets	0	2	0	1	1
Customer Service	0	0	0	1	1
Community Services	0	0	0	2	1
Governance	0	0	1	1	0
Housing	10	11	32	30	38
Env Health & Licensing	0	1	1	0	1
Legal	3	0	2	1	0
Parking	0	0	0	0	1
Planning	10	4	23	13	10
Revs & Bens	9	2	12	9	31
Streetscene	1	3	5	3	5
Total	33	23	76	61	89

Formal Complaints received April – June 2018

Department	April – June 2018
Customer Service	3
Environmental Health	1
Housing	10
Parking	1
Revenues & Benefits	9
Streetscene	6
Total	30

Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Customer Service

No	Complaint	Outcome
1	Refusal of Customer Service Advisor (CSA) to connect complainant to Officer. Felt CSA was rude and unhelpful.	Not upheld (Stage 2)
2	Misinformation supplied in relation to whether the Land Charges search was working in Reception.	Upheld (Stage 1)
3	Original Housing Benefit documents not sent back to complainant, despite requesting in writing.	Upheld (Stage 1)

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Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Environmental Health

No	Complaint	Outcome
1	Handling of noisy neighbour complaint.	Not upheld (Stage 1)

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Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Housing

No	Complaint	Outcome
1	Hygiene issues at Railway Square.	Part upheld (Stage 2)
2	State of property when moving in and incorrect LCTS calculation (partly responded by Basildon BC).	Part upheld (Stage 1)
3	Handling of Housing advice enquiry and subsequent decision.	Not upheld (Stage 1)
4	Loss of documents supplied for Housing Application and conflicting information provided by Housing staff.	Not upheld (Stage 2)
5	Oakray cancelled 2 gas inspection appointments, but complainant was then sent £1000 fine for refusing access.	Upheld (Stage 1)

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Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Housing

No	Complaint	Outcome
6	Waiting over 2 years for repairs to bathroom.	Part upheld (Stage 1)
7	Issue with Service Charge direct debit and no response from Leasehold Officer.	Upheld (Stage 1)
8	Handling of housing case and conduct of Homeless Prevention Officer.	Not upheld (Stage 1)
9	Time taken to address mother's Housing Application.	Not upheld (Stage 1)
10	Mishandling and lack of compassion shown when terminating late mother's property.	Not upheld (Stage 1)

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Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Parking

No	Complaint	Outcome
1	Persistent chasing of PCN.	Not upheld (Stage 1)

Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Revenue & Benefits

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No	Complaint	Outcome
1	Liability made against deceased persons property, despite two notifications.	Upheld (Stage 1)
2	Persued by bailiffs despite agreed arrangement being in place.	Upheld (Stage 1)
3	DD confirmation contained bank details, which complainant feels left him open to fraud.	Upheld (Stage 3)
4	Delay in setting up DD resulting in Final Demand being inaccurately issued. Also, a piece of correspondence was sent out on Basildon BC headed paper.	Upheld (Stage 1)
5	Conflicting figures provided in relation to LCTS.	Not upheld (Stage 1)

Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Revenue & Benefits

No	Complaint	Outcome
6	Delay in processing Council Tax refund.	Part upheld (Stage 1)
7	Handling of Council Tax summons and termination of call by Recovery Officer.	Not upheld (Stage 1)
8	Delay in processing Council Tax refund and no response to numerous emails.	Upheld (Stage 1)
9	Delay in processing Council Tax refund and no response to online enquiry to try and resolve issue.	Upheld (Stage 1)

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Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Streetscene

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No	Complaint	Outcome
1	Repeated issue with overflowing bins in Norman Crescent and no response to numerous reports made.	Part upheld (Stage 3)
2	Mess left behind in bin shed at Limes Court and no response to 2 telephone calls and an online form regarding this issue.	Upheld and £75 compensation paid for cleaning (Stage 2)
3	Damage to vehicles and grass verge caused by mowing team.	Not upheld (Stage 1)
4	Poor quality of football pitch at KGPF resulting in injury and postponed matches.	Not upheld (Stage 2)
5	Repeated missed collections and no response to previous informal complaints.	Part upheld (Stage 1)

Formal Complaints – April to June 2018

Streetscene

No	Complaint	Outcome
6	Dog waste smeared across driveway after refuse collection.	Part upheld (Stage 1)

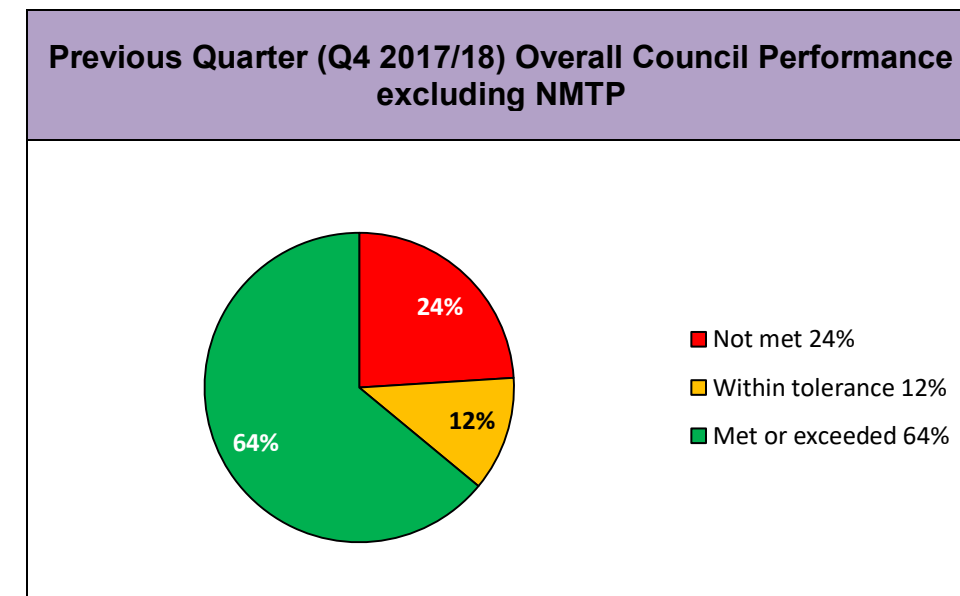
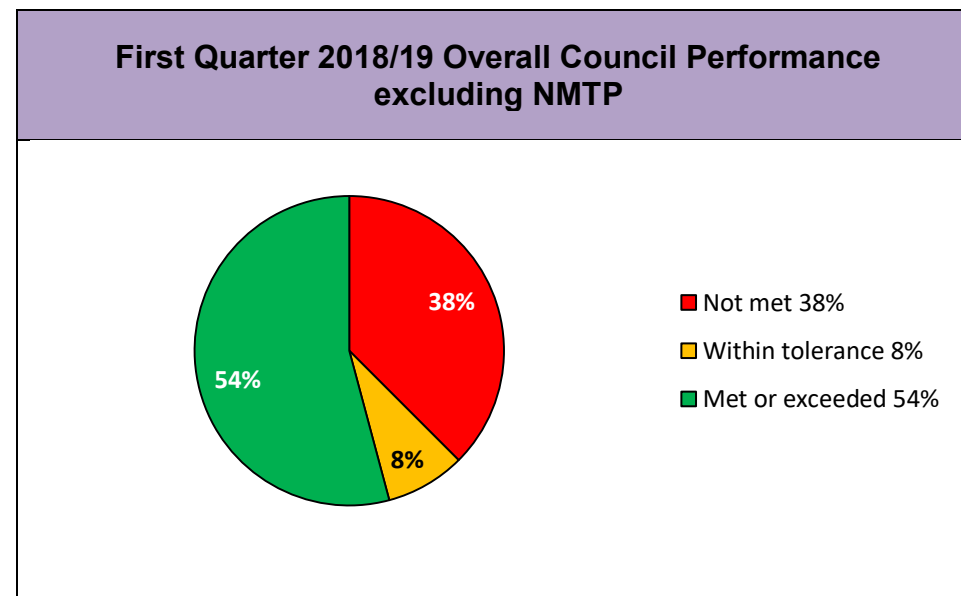
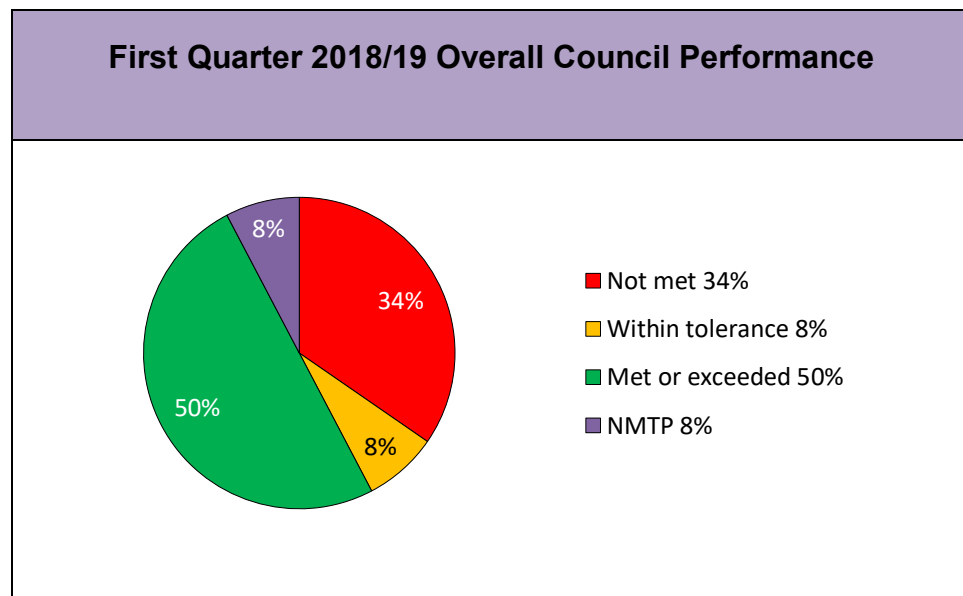
Formal Complaints – April 2017 to March 2018

Local Government/Housing Ombudsman

No	Service	Original Complaint Date	Complaint	Outcome
1	Operational Services	2.9.17	Lack of response to multiple reports concerning operatives at Larkins Playing Field	LGO decided not to investigate as further investigation would not achieve any more than the apology already issued
2	Planning	20.7.17	Failure to address neighbour concerns and lack of consultation with effected parties	Not upheld
3	Planning	3.8.17	Decision does not adequately consider the impact of the development on adjoining neighbours	Ongoing

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Performance Dashboard - First Quarter 2018/19




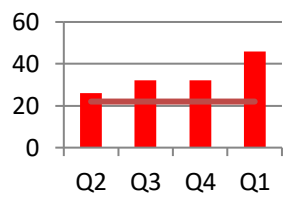


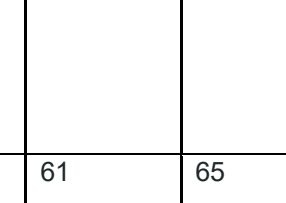


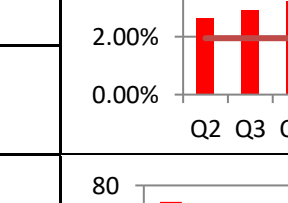


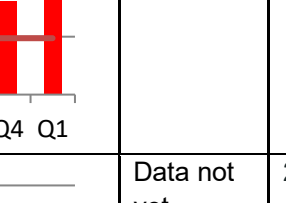


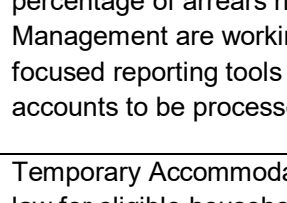

First Quarter 2018/19 Performance by Department

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Dept.							NMTP		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Contact Centre	0	0%	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%	4
Environmental Health	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Finance	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2
Housing	4	50%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	6
Human Resources	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	1
ICT	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Planning	1	20%	0	0%	3	60%	1	20%	5
Revenues and Benefits	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	3
Street Scene and Environment	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2
Total	9	32%	2	8%	13	52%	2	8%	26
<i>Previous Quarter Total</i>	8	31%	4	15%	13	50%	1	4%	26



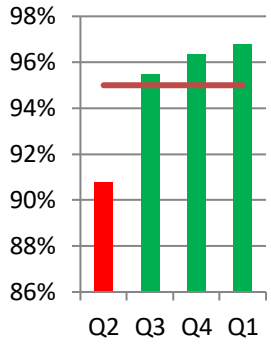




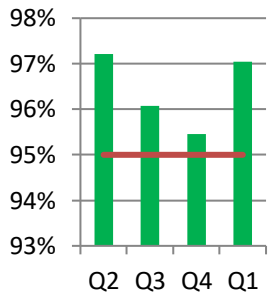




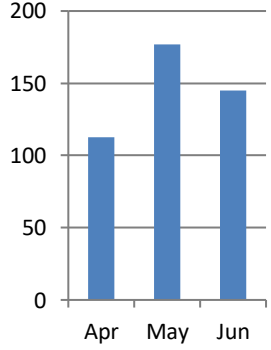


Key

	Current performance is below target by more than the specified target deviation.
	Current performance is below target but is within tolerance.
	Current target has been met or exceeded.
NMTP	Not measured this period.
	Performance for the quarter or year to date is improving (up) or deteriorating (down) compared to previous quarter or across the year.



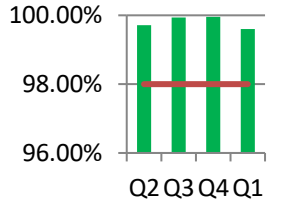



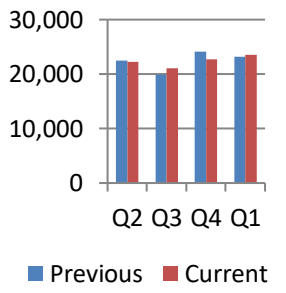




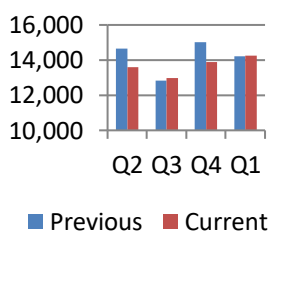








Dept. & PI C	Performance Indicator	Measure	Previous Quarterly Results			2018/19 Quarterly Results				2018/19 Year to Date			Commentary
			Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Q4 Result	Q1 Result	Q Target	Q Status/Trend	Q Graphic	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD Status/Trend	
Housing H01	Average re-let times for Local Authority Housing	Monthly	26 Days (20 Days GN & 37 Days SH)	32 Days (19 Days GN & 72 days SH)	32 Days (33 Days GN, 26 days SH)	46 Days (32 Days GN, 115 Days SH)	22 days	 ↓		46 days	22 days	 ↓	The average re-let time has increased in Q1. This is mainly due to a less desirable property being re let after a long period of time. Work is continuing through our weekly void meetings to ensure turnaround times are a priority. There has also been a large number of voids in recent weeks.
Housing H02	% Rent collected from current tenants only as a percentage of rent due	Monthly	98.02%	98.75%	98.15%	98.51%	98.05%	 ↑		98.51%	98.05%	 ↑	Rent collection has dropped slightly in Q1 despite increased efforts from Housing Officers to reduce the rent arrears. This appears to be from a large number of accounts going into lower level arrears and the increase in Universal Credit claimants that we are now getting. Officers have completed their arrears drive and are now processing arrears by patch focussing on the lower level as much as the higher level arrears. Reports have been changed to highlight less frequent payers and those in receipt of UC to allow officers to be more focused on which accounts to process.
Housing H03	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	Quarterly	2.64%	2.94%	3.24%	3.72%	1.95%	 ↓		3.72%	1.95%	 ↓	Due to the slight decrease in arrears collection the percentage of arrears has increased slightly. Estates Management are working to reduce this through more focused reporting tools which will allow the more high-risk accounts to be processed in a more timely manner.
Housing H04	Households living in temporary accommodation	Monthly	71	58	61	65	29	 ↓		Data not yet available	29	 ↓	Temporary Accommodation ('TA') provision is required by law for eligible households presenting as homeless. Nationally figures for TA have risen every quarter since 2011, with a 65% increase since 2010. Within the last 12 months the use of TA by Brentwood Borough Council has been kept relatively static compared to the national backdrop. As part of the new statutory 'Prevention Duty' (Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) the Housing Options team has been working hard to overcome the competing challenges of rising homelessness and lack of affordable housing within the Borough.
Housing H05	Gas servicing in Council homes	Quarterly	100%	99.45%	99.53%	99.87%	100%	 ↑		99.87%	100%	 ↑	Gas compliancy is always a top priority for Housing. We have a robust court process to ensure 100%. There has been a slight increase in compliancy since Q4 however, due to availability of the court we were unable to be 100% compliant. We are now working in advance and ensuring court dates are provisionally booked to ensure 100% compliancy.

Dept. & PI C	Performance Indicator	Measure	Previous Quarterly Results			2018/19 Quarterly Results				2018/19 Year to Date			Commentary
			Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Q4 Result	Q1 Result	Q Target	Q Status/Trend	Q Graphic	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD Status/Trend	
Housing H06	Level of Arrears at the end of quarter	Quarterly	£352,790	£381,487	£390,066	£430,135	Reduction from previous quarter		Thousands £500 £400 £300 £200 £100 £0 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1	£430,135	Reduction from previous quarter		Arrears do fluctuate throughout the quarter; however, this figure is high. Despite the push from Estates Officers during patch campaigns the figure has increased. We are seeing a larger number of people moving to Universal Credit which is impacting greatly on our arrears figure.

Dept. & PI Code	Performance Indicator	Measure	Previous Quarterly Results			2018/19 Quarterly Results				2018/19 Year to Date			Commentary
			Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Q4 Result	Q1 Result	Q Target	Q Status/Trend	Q Graphic	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD Status/Trend	
Street Scene and Environment E01	Residual household waste per household	Quarterly	120.94kg	124.01kg	126.73kg	128.42kg	109kg		 130 120 110 100 90 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1	128.42kg	109kg		Estimated as statistics to be verified by ECC
Street Scene and Environment E02	Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion	Quarterly	45.94%	43.62%	38.1%	43.99%	53.00%		 60% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% 0% Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1	43.99%	53.00%		Estimated as statistics to be verified by ECC
Environmental Health EH01	Food safety/hygiene standards in food premises	% of broadly compliant food premises - Quarterly	99.26%	99.41%	99.4%	99.7%	97%		 100% 95% 90% Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1	97%	97%		Broad compliance across food premises continues due to the concerted actions of this department.

Dept. & PI Code	Performance Indicator	Measure	Previous Quarterly Results			2018/19 Quarterly Results				2018/19 Year to Date			Commentary
			Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Q4 Result	Q1 Result	Q Target	Q Status/Trend	Q Graphic	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD Status/Trend	
Finance F01	% of invoices from local suppliers paid within 20 days	Monthly	90.76%	95.46%	96.32%	96.78%	95%	 		96.78%	95%	 	Finance continues to be proactive in progressing invoices for payment when the due date is approaching, and in resolving purchase order mismatches. Accounts Payable officers are spending some time each week in departments where invoices need to be expedited to ensure all are authorised in time to meet the targets. Dip in performance for local invoices is due to staffing issues in some areas where a combination of compassionate, sick and annual leave occurred simultaneously, and other staff were not able to authorise invoices as they had no knowledge of the work/services completed.
Finance F02	% of invoices from all suppliers paid within 30 days	Monthly	97.22%	96.07%	95.45%	97.04%	95%	 		97.04%	95%	 	Finance continues to be proactive in progressing invoices for payment when the due date is approaching, and in resolving purchase order mismatches. This action helps improve performance. Accounts Payable officers are spending some time each week in departments where invoices need to be expedited to ensure all are authorised in time to meet the targets.
Human Resources HR03	Number of days sickness lost per month	Monthly	N/A	N/A	N/A	Apr 112.5 May 177 Jun 145	No target.	 		145 days	No target.	 	This PI replaces HR01 'days lost to short-term sickness' and HR02 'days lost to long-term sickness' from 2017/18. This PI has been revised due to the transition to a new HR provider.

Dept. & PI Code	Performance Indicator	Measure	Previous Quarterly Results			2018/19 Quarterly Results				2018/19 Year to Date			Commentary
			Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Q4 Result	Q1 Result	Q Target	Q Status/Trend	Q Graphic	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD Status/Trend	
Revs and Bens CT01	Council Tax collection	Monthly	58.15%	85.06%	98.37%	23.5%	30.32%			23.5%	30.32%		We continue to employ a more robust and structured recovery process issuing more reminder notices, final notices and taking Court hearings on a monthly basis. The Recovery team are currently unable to take payments on behalf of Brentwood BC, which reduces the teams ability to collect outstanding Council Tax. Debt busting days have proven a great success for Basildon Council and once the Recovery team are able to take payments on behalf of Brentwood this should also help improve the collection. Automated payment arrangements are now issued with Summons notices, which help reduce customer contact although the recovery team still receive a high volume of telephone calls.
Revs and Bens FT03	Time taken to process new Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support claim	Quarterly	24 days	24 days	21 days	22 days	24 days			22 days	24 days		Performance for Q1 is 2 days above target. As always the service is always keen to explore new ways of working, and embracing new IT ideas, we are exploring IT solution which can automate some of our processing streams, which we hope will reduce processing times and improve our customer's journey. The team will continue to resolve escalated complex enquiries through to conclusion and enable resolution of cases of extreme hardship or vulnerability whilst improving the customer journey. We are continuing to work closely with our Systems Team and software provider to ensure that our system is as efficient as possible as this is still impacting on our ability to process claims as efficiently as possible. .
Revs and Bens CT05	Time taken to process Housing benefit and Council Tax Support Change of Circumstances	Quarterly	14.5 days	16 days	9 days	16 days	12 days			16 days	12 days		To continue to pay Housing Benefit accurately we need information to support the customers circumstances, which we rely on the customers to provide. This information can also come to us from the DWP, HMRC, the Rent Service as well as landlords. Until the information required has been provided and is complete, a change of circumstances cannot be actioned. All of this will impact on claim processing times. We are exploring IT solutions which can automate some of our processing streams, which we hope will reduce processing times and improve our customer's journey.

Dept. & PI Code	Performance Indicator	Measure	Previous Quarterly Results			2018/19 Quarterly Results				2018/19 Year to Date			Commentary	
			Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Q4 Result	Q1 Result	Q Target	Q Status/Trend	Q Graphic	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD Status/Trend		
ICT ICT01	Website uptime	Quarterly	99.72%	99.94%	99.96%	99.6%	98%	 		99.6%	98%	 	Drops in website availability can be attributed to a number of factors, usually external, such as a power surge or cut.	
P S S	Contact Centre CC01	Telephone calls received via auto attendant	Quarterly	22,218	21,052	22,694	23,518	No target.	 		23,518	No target.	 	This figure depicts the number of calls received by the Contact Centre via the main Council telephone no. 01277 312500. We continue to monitor trends associated with these statistics. Q1 tends to be the busiest quarter for the Contact Centre.
	Contact Centre CC02	Telephone calls taken by the Contact Centre for those services undertaken by the Contact Centre	Quarterly	13,579	12,960	13,882	14,248	No target.	 		14,248	No target.	 	This figure depicts the number of calls received via the main Council telephone no. 01277 312500 and that have selected the applicable service from the options provided in the auto attendant. It does not include calls that have selected option '0'. The services currently undertaken by the Contact Centre are Environmental Health, Licensing, Planning and Building Control, Street Scene and Housing Services.
	Contact Centre CC03	% of telephone calls resolved for those services undertaken by the Contact Centre	Quarterly	81%	80%	81%	83%	80%	 		83%	80%	 	As above. The individual outcomes per service for this quarter range from 7% - 93%. Monthly meetings continue to be held with the service areas to identify areas of improvement and training needs.
Contact Centre CC04	Website sessions	Quarterly	130,524	126,172	152,406	156,141	No target	 		156,141	No target.	 	Website sessions are affected by seasonal variances, with the start of the financial year and the summer months providing more hits on average. This trend is reflected in previous years. Comparison with 2017/18 Q1 shows an increase of 10,000 (7%) in comparison with the same period last financial year.	

Dept. & PI Code	Performance Indicator	Measure	Previous Quarterly Results			2018/19 Quarterly Results				2018/19 Year to Date			Commentary
			Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Q4 Result	Q1 Result	Q Target	Q Status/Trend	Q Graphic	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD Status/Trend	
Planning P01	Number of new homes approved to be built in the Borough	Annual	NMTP	NMTP	492	NMTP	NMTP	NMTP		NMTP	No target	NMTP	The gross number of new homes approved to be built in the Borough. This gives an indication of new homes expected to be completed in the Borough in future. Approvals for new homes help towards the Borough's supply of homes, specifically the required five-year housing supply (published annually).
Planning P02	% of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications	Quarterly	46.2%	41.6%	26.7%	40%	31%			40%	31%		Cumulative total for 2017/18 is 33.9% which is within target.
Planning P03	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'Major' application types	Quarterly	100%	100%	100%	88.9%	50%			88.9%	50%		Consistently high performance achieved throughout 1. Changes previously made within the service are now imbedded, so use of EOT agreements, pre-applications discussions as well as PPA.
Planning P04	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'Minor' application types	Quarterly	97.1%	98.3%	100%	100%	70%			100%	70%		Consistently high performance achieved for 4 th quarter running. Changes made within service are now imbedded, staffing levels are correct as well as the use of EOT agreements.
Planning P05	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'Other' application types	Quarterly	98.0%	99.4%	100%	100%	80%			100%	80%		As above, exceeding targets due to previous changes now being imbedded in team. Currently performing in top 10 in country and best in Essex.

Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee – 2017/18

Subject: Formal Complaints
Report by: Steve Summers, Chief Operating Officer
Date: March 2018

1. Background

This report has been compiled following a resolution from the Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee on the 19th March 2018 on what actions have been or will be taken in response to Formal Complaints that have been received for Housing, Planning and Revenue and Benefit Services from April to December 2017.

The report also includes how many formal complaints each department have received in the final quarter of 2017/18 to provide information on the progress in this matter.

The future actions for the Housing Service will be delivered within a 6 month period, for both Planning and Revenue and Benefits the Formal Complaints will continued to be monitored by the services and appropriate action taken where necessary.

Formal complaints will continue to be reviewed by officers, the Performance Indicators/Formal Complaints Members Working Group and the Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee.

2. Formal Complaints – April to December 2017

Formal Complaints received 2013 -2016/17

Department	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Housing	10	11	32	30
Planning	10	4	23	13
Revs & Bens	9	2	12	9

3. Housing

3.1 Formal Complaints received 2017

Department	April-Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Total
Housing	24	6	30

+ From 1.1.18 to 31.03.18 – 8 Formal Complaints received for Housing Services

3.2 Outcomes

	April-Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Total
Not Upheld	12	2	14
Partially Upheld	4	2	6
Upheld	7	1	8
Ongoing	1	1	2
Total	24	6	30

3.3 Common Themes of Complaint types

- Lack of Contact, response or Communication
- Property Issues, (Disrepair, general repairs, damp)
- Temporary Accommodation
- Mishandling of casework
- Loss of Documents

3.4 Customer Service

3.4.1 Actions taken to date

- Customer Charter awareness training held at team meetings

3.4.2 Actions to be taken

- All Housing Staff to attend Customer Awareness Training – to be completed by 30.06.18
- Key Housing Staff to attend Complaint Handling Training – to be completed by 31.07.18
- Review and simplify our existing processes to ‘free up’ staff time in order to spend more time with our customers – to be completed by 31.09.18

3.5 Disrepair issues (Inc general repairs)

3.5.1 Actions to be taken

- Review our current re-let standards – to be completed by 31.09.18
- Review our existing response times to carry out inspections or repairs – to be completed by 30.06.18
- Improve our communication with our customers - ongoing

3.6 Loss of documentation

Housing has been historically a paper-based service which has led to misplacement of documentation, which in part is due to the high volume of documents that are received.

3.6.1 Actions taken to date

- Housing have now recently introduced a new 'Document Management system' which will mean we can now hold information electronically which will reduce the likelihood of loss of documentation.

3.6.2 Actions to be taken

- We are also in the process of finalising the new 'On-Line' Housing application form which speed up the Housing Application Process, reduce the likelihood for misplaced documents and allow staff to spend more time with our customers. To be completed by 30.06.18.

4. Planning

4.1 Formal Complaints received 2017

Department	April-Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Total
Planning	7	1	8

+ From 1.1.18 to 31.03.18 – 2 Formal Complaints received for Planning Services

4.2 Outcomes

	April-Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Total
Not Upheld	3	0	3
Partially Upheld	2	0	2
Upheld	0	1	1
Ongoing	2	0	2
Total	7	1	8

4.3 Common Themes of Complaint types

- Lack of Contact, response or Communication
- Delays in administration of application

4.3.1 Actions taken to date

- Applications are being dealt with in a more timely manner leading to less complaints about delays in obtaining planning permission.
- Where there is a need to require more time on planning applications officers are making extensive use of extension of times which agents generally agree and are happier as they are in regular contact with officers.
- The agents forum held on a regular basis allows them to voice concerns with the department and gives us a chance to rectify any issues.
- Applications are being validated quicker leading to less delays and less annoyance to applicants.
- Increased promotion of pre-application discussion. A number of applicants are choosing this route and given the pre-application process has been improved this provides customers with a more efficient service which leads to more productive outcomes on subsequent planning applications.
- Enforcement is being more efficient and accessible to public/members with the issue of a monthly report leading in the future to an online system.
- Better return of complaints received over the phone. People are being phoned back reducing the number of written complaints.

5. Revenue & Benefits

5.1 Formal Complaints received 2017

Department	April-Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Total
Revenue & Benefits	8	10	18

+ From 1.1.18 to 31.03.18 – 13 Formal Complaints received for Revenue & Benefits.

5.2 Outcomes

	April-Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Total
Not Upheld	1	0	1
Partially Upheld	2	1	3
Upheld	5	9	14
Ongoing	0	0	0
Total	8	10	18

5.3 Common Themes of Complaint types

- Lack of Contact, response or Communication
- Delays in processing changes to Council Tax
- Delays in processing Housing Benefit Claims

5.3.1 Action taken to date

- Short term additional resource obtained
- Recruitment undertaken to ensure fully staffed

17 October 2018

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 Update

Report of: *Phil Ruck, Chief Executive*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the 2018/19 draft scrutiny work programme for members consideration and is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.2 Members should note that the workplan is a timeline of the latest and proposed working position of the working groups and **not** the actual timeline of the subject matter or project being reviewed. These timelines are subject to change depending on the work and outcomes of the working groups.
- 1.3 The Committee is requested to consider the draft work programme at Appendix A and agree any amendments.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the Scrutiny work programme 2018/19 attached at Appendix A and agree any amendments for approval.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 At the Annual Council it was agreed that the committee structure would include the introduction of an Audit & Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The Policy, Projects and Resources Committee agrees the Corporate Projects and scope that it requires to be reviewed by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee in 2018/19.
- 3.3 The Audit & Scrutiny Committee also has responsibility to review decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions. In addition it has

responsibility for the monitoring of Council service performance, including Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints.

- 3.4 The Scrutiny work programme should not include management or staffing issues which are the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service.

4 Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Constitution requires that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee agrees its Scrutiny work programme at each meeting of the Committee.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 None.

6 References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 The vision of Transformation includes an action to improve the Council's governance arrangements, leading to faster, more effective decision-making. An effective scrutiny function is an essential element of that priority.

7 Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Interim Chief Finance Officer
S151 Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312829/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services

Tel & Email: 01277 312860/daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.2 There are no direct legal implications arising directly from this report.

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 None

9 Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Amended Work Programme 2018/19

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Phil Ruck, Chief Executive
Telephone: 01277 312500
E-mail: phil.ruck@brentwood.gov.uk

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Audit & Scrutiny Committee

2018-19 Draft Scrutiny Work programme

Subject Matter	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Leisure Strategy 1509 97	Phase 1 -King George's Playing Fields improvements, Play Area Strategy development Community Halls preliminary Market Engagement exercise			Review of business plan for KGPF, Development of the Play Area Strategy		Capital bids for any works to King George's Playing Fields works subject to planning approval and to support play area strategy			
Scope	1. Review the approach to the delivery of the Leisure Strategy. 2. Review the outcome of the consultation with residents and visitors on options of new activities for King George's Playing Fields.								
Membership 2018/2019	Cllrs Mrs Tierney, Hossack, Poppy, Barrett & Mrs Davies								
Detailed timeline									
1. Leisure Strategy Working Group Meeting 9th July - review progress of Alliance Leisure Services business plan for King George's Playing Fields									
2. Audit and Scrutiny Committee 25 July 2018 - minutes and recommendations from LSWG to be referred to Community Health and Housing 11 September for consideration									
3. Report to Community Health and Housing 11 September 2018 - also recommendation that the LSWG also review the development of the Play Area Strategy									

4. Leisure Strategy Working Group Meeting (24 September) development of the Play Area Strategy with minutes and recommendations to 4 December Community Health and Housing Committee

5. Leisure Strategy Working Group Meeting 18 November 2018 - minutes and recommendations to 5 March Community Health and Housing Committee

6. Report to Policy Projects and Resources Committee 15 February 2019- for any budgetary requirements for King George's Playing Fields improvements and Play Area Strategy

Subject Matter	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Town Centre						Review work		Consult on Design Guide	

Scope Review content of Design Guide Consultation responses.

Membership 2018/2019 Cllrs Ms Slade, Wiles, McLaren, Barrett and Kendall

Detailed timeline

1. Working Group Meeting - 06.12.17

2. Working Group Meeting - 23.01.18

3. Town Centre Guide due by 31.03.18

4. Working Group Meeting 25.09.18

5. Public consultation - To be coordinated with REG 19 of LDP November 2018

Subject Matter	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Local Development Plan					Review work				Report to Committee

Scope
 1. Review the Council's Plan making process as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
 2. Review efforts to ensure that necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters have been made.
 3. Review subjects and issues covered by LDP evidence base to ensure it is appropriate and proportionate.

Membership 2018/2019 Cllr Kerslake, Bridge, McCheyne, Ms Sanders Keeble, Mynott, Morrissey

Detailed timeline

1. Working Group Meeting 28.11.17

2. Working Group Meeting 19.12.17

3. Working Group Meeting 09.01.18 - Housing Evidence Focus

4. Working Group Meeting 30.01.18 - Infrastructure Delivery Plan focus

5. Working Group Meeting 20.02.18 - Cancelled

6. Working Group Meeting 13.03.18 - Initial Green Belt discussion

Subject Matter	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Performance and Formal Complaints	Collate Data	Review with services	Member Working Group	Report to Committee	Review work	Member Working Group	Report to Committee	Review work/Member working Group	Report to Committee
Membership 2018/2019	Cllrs Mrs Pound, Russell, Reed, Barrett, Chilvers								
Detailed timeline									
1. Working Group Meeting - 20th September 2018									
2. Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee - 17th October 2018									
3. Working Group Meeting - Nov/Dec 2018									
4. Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee - 23rd Jan 2019									

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Members Interests

Members of the Council must declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests and the nature of the interest at the beginning of an agenda item and that, on declaring a pecuniary interest, they are required to leave the Chamber.

- **What are pecuniary interests?**

A person's pecuniary interests are their business interests (for example their employment trade, profession, contracts, or any company with which they are associated) and wider financial interests they might have (for example trust funds, investments, and asset including land and property).

- **Do I have any disclosable pecuniary interests?**

You have a disclosable pecuniary interest if you, your spouse or civil partner, or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner have a disclosable pecuniary interest set out in the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

- **What does having a disclosable pecuniary interest stop me doing?**

If you are present at a meeting of your council or authority, of its executive or any committee of the executive, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of your authority, and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest relating to any business that is or will be considered at the meeting, you must not :

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, of if you become aware of your disclosable pecuniary interest during the meeting participate further in any discussion of the business or,
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

- **Other Pecuniary Interests**

Other Pecuniary Interests are also set out in the Members' Code of Conduct and apply only to you as a Member.

If you have an Other Pecuniary Interest in an item of business on the agenda then you must disclose that interest and withdraw from the room while that business is being considered

- **Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Non –pecuniary interests are set out in the Council's Code of Conduct and apply to you as a Member and also to relevant persons where the decision might reasonably be regarded as affecting their wellbeing.

A 'relevant person' is your spouse or civil partner, or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner

If you have a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the Authority and you are present at a meeting of the Authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest whether or not such interest is registered on your Register of Interests or for which you have made a pending notification.

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee provides advice to the Council and the committees on the effectiveness of the arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, including all relevant strategies and plans. Without prejudice to the generality of the above, the terms of reference include those matters set out below;

Audit Activity

- (a) To approve the Annual Internal Audit risk based plan of work.
- (b) To consider the Head of Internal Audit's annual report and opinion, and a summary of Internal Audit activity and the level of assurance it can give over the Council's corporate governance, risk management and internal control arrangements.
- (c) To consider regular progress reports from Internal Audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale.
- (d) To consider the External Auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
- (e) To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- (f) To consider the arrangements for the appointment of the Council's Internal and External Auditors.
- (g) To be responsible for the Council's strategic and budgetary framework and its implementation.

Accounts

- 1) To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- 2) To review and agree the Council's Annual Governance Statement.
- 3) To consider the External Auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Scrutiny Activity

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee acts as the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee with all the powers under Part 3 of the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012 and discharges the functions under section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 (local authority scrutiny of crime and disorder matters). Without prejudice to the generality of the above, the terms of reference include those matters set out below:

- 1) Responsible to scrutinise major Corporate projects as identified and agreed by the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee.
- 2) To report to the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee or the appropriate committee on the progress of the major Corporate projects and to make relevant recommendations as required.
- 3) To establish working groups (in line with agreed protocols) to undertake the major Corporate projects work programme, including setting their terms of reference, the reporting arrangements, and to co-ordinate and review the work of the working groups.
- 4) Responsibility for the monitoring of Council service performance, including Performance Indicators and, Formal Complaints, making reports if required to any committee, or subcommittee, any officer of the Local Authority, or any joint committee on which the Local Authority is represented, or any sub-committee of such a committee.
- 5) To review and/or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions of the Local Authority.
- 6) To deal with those issues raised through the 'Councillor Call for Action' scheme in line with agreed protocols and procedures.
- 7) To review and/or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.

8) To make reports or recommendations to the Local Authority with respect to the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.