

Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda



Provision of Value for Money within Planning Services Task and Finish Panel Tuesday, 8th April, 2008

Place: Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry ext 4246
email: ahendry@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

Councillors Mrs L Wagland (Chairman), R Bassett, M Colling, R Frankel, D Jacobs, G Mohindra, R Morgan, Mrs P Richardson, B Rolfe and H Ulkun

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING (Pages 3 - 6)

To note and agree the minutes from the last meeting of this Panel held on 21 January 2008.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE/ WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 7 - 10)

Attached.

6. PLANNING AGENTS

A few Planning Agents have been invited to the meeting to give the Panel their impression of our system and to enable the Panel to question them in return.

7. PLANNING SERVICES BUDGET (Pages 11 - 14)

To note the latest financial figures on Planning Services (attached).

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed.

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF PROVISION OF VALUE FOR MONEY WITHIN PLANNING
SERVICES TASK AND FINISH PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 21 JANUARY 2008
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 9.50 PM**

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Members Present: | Mrs L Wagland (Chairman), , R Bassett, M Colling, R Frankel, D Jacobs, R Morgan, Mrs P Richardson and H Ulkun |
| Other members present: | Mrs A Grigg and J Knapman |
| Apologies for Absence: | P McMillan and G Mohindra |
| Officers Present | Steve Bacon (Service Business Manager), J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant) |

16. SUBSITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

No substitute Members were reported.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None Declared.

18. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 3 DECEMBER 2007

Noted.

19. TERMS OF REFERENCE/ WORK PROGRAMME

The Terms of Reference and Work Programme were noted and agreed.

20. IT PRESENTATION

The Panel received a presentation from Northgate Solutions the suppliers of the Planning Services IT System. The Panel heard from Mr D Evans (Project Manager) Mr M Baker (Account Director) and Vicky Lindon (Management Consultant).

A full copy of the presentation was circulated to Members.

In response to the presentation, the Panel asked for ideas for securing further improvement? In response, Mr Baker saw value in looking at existing work practices as there was potential for improving these systems. It was noted that J Preston was in the process of undertaking a further review of the services to identify improvements. A Business Review of the Service was also underway.

The Panel requested the following information:

Provision of Value for Money within Planning Services Task and Finish Panel Monday, 21 January 2008

- cost/benefit analysis of the IT system – details of savings, impact on performance, systems in place at other Councils –processes used, best practice, future work;
- Performance Information – benchmarking data, costs/benefits;
- The Performance Delivery Grant (PDG) – details of allocation, success of the measures, approaches applied by other Councils with details of outcomes,
- Officer time spent on cases - It was questioned whether there was provision on the software for tracking the costs and officer time spent on cases?
- Costs per application;

It was stressed that the information should be prepared in a 'user friendly' format, short bullet points.

ACTION: Northgate Solutions/J Preston to prepare report

S Bacon reported that an order had been placed for the installation of the Anite System earlier on in the day. As a result it was hoped that the system would be up and running by April 2008. It was envisaged that the system would provide an opportunity for further cost savings.

A Member also reported on the systems in place at Hackney Council. For the past 3 years, the Council had provided an On Line Planning Portal. It was suggested that the Panel should look at the operation on the systems possible through a fact finding visit to the Council.

21. STATISTICS - REVISED 2007/08 AND ESTIMATE 2008/09

The Panel received details of the Planning Services Budget covering the period 2001 – 2008.

The Panel expressed a wish for:

- more concise details of the budget for the last two years - information showing how the budgets totalled up.
- the narratives to be expanded for clarification.
- Appeals Decisions - to assess performance in this area,
- time taken to deal with Planning Cases, costs of an 'average case'

Action: R Sharp to provide the information.

22. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PLANNING SERVICES - UPDATE OF DOCUMENT

Noted that officers were still preparing the information asked for by the last meeting. It was hoped that further information would be available for the next meeting.

23. CONSULTATION ARRANGMENTS - PLANNING AGENTS, APPLICANTS, LOCAL COUNCILS ETC

The Panel expressed a wish to canvass views on the quality of the Councils planning services:

Provision of Value for Money within Planning Services Task and Finish Panel Monday, 21 January 2008

They expressed a wish for this to cover;

- The Members of the three Area Planning Sub – Committees
- The Town and Parish Councils (including the clerks)
- Sample the views of individual applicants
- Role of Members invited to speak at appeal
- Planning Agents –

It was suggested that officers look at adapting existing surveys on customer satisfaction in planning surveys to avoid any unnecessary duplication of work. It was therefore suggested that steps should be taken to find out what already existed.

It was also considered beneficial to invite an appropriate Legal Services Officer to the next meeting,

24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None raised.

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20 March 2008 in Committee Room 1.

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Revised Terms of Reference

To consider in detail the provision of Value for Money within the following Planning Services focusing specifically on:

- Development Control (including Appeals)
- Forward Planning
- Building Control
- Enforcement
- Administration and Customer Support
- Economic Development
- Environment Team

To gather evidence and information in relation to these functions through the receipt of:

- performance monitoring documents,
- Best Value Review of Planning Services (updated version)
- benchmarking exercises,
- consultation with Planning Committee Members, customers and IT Suppliers.

To identify problems, possible solutions, barriers to success;

To review the measures introduced since 2004 to improve performance within Development Control namely the success of

- the 'Hit Squad',
- the Service restructure,
- the new IT system
- the application of the Planning Delivery Grant.

To consider whether the reporting arrangements for all of the above matters and those for the Section 106s, appeals are sufficient and recommendation accordingly.

To evaluate all relevant facts in relation to the topics under review in an objective way and to produce recommendations for future action accordingly;

To establish whether there are any resource implications arising out of the topics under review and advise Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget Process 2008/09;

To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at appropriate intervals and to submit a final report by March 2008.

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Provision of Value for Money within Planning Services Task and Finish Panel

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| <p>3 December 2007</p> | <p>BVPI schedules – to receive the latest schedules</p> <p>Best Value Review of Planning Services - Copy of the updated plan– (2006/07)</p> <p>Copy of the recent Customer Services Presentation (Planning Services)</p> | <p>Schedules were submitted to the Panel on 3 December</p> |
| <p>21 January 2008</p> | <p>Best Value Review of Planning Services - Copy of the updated plan– (2006/07) Review actions agreed at last meeting</p> <p>review the new IT system and consult with the suppliers</p> <p>Consultation with Members, Planning Agents, Applicants etc</p> | |

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Agenda Item 7

Income and Expenditure for all Planning and Economic Development Services

| 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | | ESTIMATE 2008/09 | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | Original Estimate | Revised Estimate | Gross Expend | Gross Income | Net Expend | |
| £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | |
| Direct Services | | | | | | | | |
| 131 | 110 | 83 | 101 | 135 | Economic Development | 182 | 0 | 182 |
| 3 | 17 | 19 | 20 | 21 | Bus Shelters | 23 | 0 | 23 |
| 203 | 194 | 187 | 200 | 206 | Countrycare | 248 | 21 | 227 |
| 145 | 186 | 199 | 224 | 180 | Conservation Policy | 209 | 0 | 209 |
| 209 | 365 | 454 | 627 | 477 | Forward Planning | 761 | 73 | 688 |
| 13 | 89 | 85 | 113 | 144 | Town Centre Enhancements | 135 | 4 | 131 |
| 704 | 961 | 1,027 | 1,285 | 1,163 | Total Direct Services | 1,558 | 98 | 1,460 |
| Regulatory Services | | | | | | | | |
| 346 | 290 | 260 | 253 | 232 | Planning Appeals | 243 | 3 | 240 |
| 392 | 390 | 520 | 613 | 573 | Development Control Enforcement | 523 | 2 | 521 |
| 681 | 620 | 506 | 412 | 596 | Development Control | 1,152 | 669 | 483 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Building Control Fee Earning * | 674 | 674 | 0 |
| 89 | 130 | 155 | 162 | 169 | Building Control Non Fee Earning | 176 | 0 | 176 |
| 1,508 | 1,430 | 1,441 | 1,440 | 1,570 | Total Regulatory Services | 2,768 | 1,348 | 1,420 |
| 2,212 | 2,391 | 2,468 | 2,725 | 2,733 | Total (Transferred to GF Summary) | 4,326 | 1,446 | 2,880 |
| Support and Trading Services | | | | | | | | |
| 181 | 209 | 527 | 511 | 529 | Planning Administration | 632 | 72 | 560 |
| (154) | (176) | (496) | (481) | (498) | Recharged to this Portfolio | (595) | (68) | (527) |
| (27) | (36) | (31) | (29) | (30) | Recharged to other Portfolios | (37) | (4) | (33) |
| 0 | (3) | (0) | (0) | (0) | Total | (0) | 0 | (0) |
| 2,212 | 2,388 | 2,468 | 2,725 | 2,733 | Portfolio Total | 4,326 | 1,446 | 2,880 |
| 1,927 | 2,237 | 2,310 | 2,371 | 2,326 | Continuing Services Budget | | | 2,460 |
| 73 | 27 | 19 | 14 | 105 | Continuing Services Budget - Growth | | | 20 |
| (25) | (65) | (19) | (9) | (100) | Continuing Services Budget - Savings | | | (27) |
| 1,975 | 2,199 | 2,310 | 2,376 | 2,331 | Total Continuing Services Budget | | | 2,453 |
| 580 | 419 | 286 | 364 | 490 | District Development Fund - Expenditure | | | 627 |
| (343) | (227) | (128) | (15) | (88) | District Development Fund - Savings | | | (200) |
| 237 | 192 | 158 | 349 | 402 | Total District Development Fund | | | 427 |
| 2,212 | 2,391 | 2,468 | 2,725 | 2,733 | Portfolio Total | | | 2,880 |

* Building Control Ringfenced Account

| | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|----|-------------------|----|
| 197 | 118 | 57 | 15 | 15 | Opening Balance | 35 |
| (79) | (61) | (42) | (44) | 20 | Surplus/(Deficit) | 1 |
| 118 | 57 | 15 | (29) | 35 | Closing Balance | 36 |

Main Income generating Items - Included above

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 379 | 547 | 535 | 580 | 540 | Development Control | |
| 71 | 66 | 48 | 3 | 55 | Fees & Charges | 605 |
| | | | | | Planning Del Grant | 23 |
| 543 | 511 | 553 | 581 | 648 | Building Control Fee Earning | |
| 0 | 0 | 9 | 23 | 5 | Fees & Charges | 674 |
| | | | | | Planning Del Grant | 0 |

Costs of the New Computer systems

NORTHGATE SYSTEM COSTS

| | | 2007/08 To month 10 £000 | 2006/07 Actual £000 | 2005/06 Actual £000 | 2004/05 Actual £000 | Total 04/07 Actual £000 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Revenue Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Training | MVM Consultants/Northgate | | | 5 | 11 | |
| | Terraquest | | | | 8 | |
| | Other | | | 2 | | |
| Professional Fees | Terraquest | 17 | 74 | 40 | 73 | |
| | MVM | 12 | 31 | 8 | | |
| | Other | | 9 | 47 | | |
| Computer - Other | | | | | 5 | |
| TOTAL | | 28 | 114 | 103 | 97 | 314 |
| Capital Expenditure | | | | | | |
| | Hardware | | | | 17 | |
| | Software | 22 | 14 | 110 | 93 | |
| TOTAL | | 22 | 14 | 110 | 110 | 234 |
| Grand Total | | 51 | 128 | 213 | 207 | 548 |

Revenue Funded By

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|--|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Planning Delivery Grant 2 | | | 85 | | 91 | |
| Planning Delivery Grant 3 | 6 | | 14 | | | |
| Planning Delivery Grant 4 | 41 | | | | | |
| | 47 | | 99 | - | 91 | 190 |

Balance from Revenue G Fund

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------|
| | | | | | | 124 |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------|

Capital Funded By IEG

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Planning Delivery Grant 3 | | | | 45 | 80 | |
| Planning Delivery Grant 5 (available) | 40 | | | | | |
| | 40 | | - | 45 | 80 | 125 |

Balance from Capital Receipts

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------|
| | | | | | | 109 |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------|

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--|------------|
| Grand Total | | | | | | 548 |
|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--|------------|

Current year not included in Total

Source: CIPFA 2007 Draft Statistics 2007/08 Estimated

| Essex District Councils | | Area in Hectares | Staff per 1000 pop. | Planning Applications Submitted | No. of Appeals | Average Planning Fee 06/07 £ | Alleged breaches investigated | Population 30-Jun-07 |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ** Not declared | | | | | | | | |
| Epping Forest | | 33,898 | 0.44 | 2276 | 130 | 235 | 783 | 122,200 |
| Basildon | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Braintree | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Brentwood | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Castle Point | | 4,508 | 0.27 | 927 | 25 | 241 | ** | 87,900 |
| Chelmsford | | 34,225 | 0.61 | 2836 | 97 | 270 | 1070 | 160,000 |
| Colchester | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Harlow | | 3,054 | 0.26 | 456 | ** | 688 | 100 | 78,000 |
| Maldon | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Rochford | | 16,951 | 0.40 | 1220 | ** | ** | ** | 79,500 |
| Tendring | | 33,774 | 0.20 | 1956 | 90 | 289 | 564 | 143,000 |
| Uttlesford | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Audit Commission "Family" | | | | | | | | |
| Brentwood | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Broxbourne | | 5,144 | 0.23 | 1301 | 72 | 285 | 370 | 86,500 |
| Chelmsford | | 34,225 | 0.61 | 2836 | 97 | 270 | 1070 | 160,000 |
| Dacorum | No Return | | | | | | | |
| East Hampshire | | 51,440 | 0.51 | 2363 | 93 | 292 | 520 | 110,100 |
| East Herts | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Hertsmere | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Mid Sussex | | 33,402 | 0.41 | 2241 | 19 | 307 | 97 | 128,100 |
| North Herts | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Reigate & Banstead | No Ret | | | | | | | |
| Sevenoaks | No Return | | | | | | | |
| South Oxfordshire | No Return | | | | | | | |
| Spelthorne | | 5,116 | 0.27 | 1021 | 67 | ** | 352 | 92,100 |
| Test Valley | | 62,754 | 0.53 | 2358 | 66 | 265 | 493 | 114,000 |
| Three Rivers | | 8,882 | 0.34 | 1738 | 95 | 411 | 697 | 85,400 |
| Tunbridge Wells | | 10,970 | 0.47 | 2785 | 85 | 211 | 611 | 106,200 |
| Epping Forest | | 33,898 | 0.44 | 2276 | 130 | 235 | 783 | 122,200 |



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Income and Expenditure for all Planning and Economic Development Services

| 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | | | ESTIMATE 2008/09 | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|--|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | Original Estimate | Revised Estimate | | Gross Expend | Gross Income | Net Expend |
| £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Direct Services | | | | | | | | |
| 131 | 110 | 83 | 101 | 135 | Economic Development | 182 | 0 | 182 |
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| 13 | 89 | 85 | 113 | 144 | Town Centre Enhancements | 135 | 4 | 131 |
| 704 | 961 | 1,027 | 1,285 | 1,163 | Total Direct Services | 1,558 | 98 | 1,460 |
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| 392 | 390 | 520 | 613 | 573 | Development Control Enforcement | 523 | 2 | 521 |
| 681 | 620 | 506 | 412 | 596 | Development Control | 1,152 | 669 | 483 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Building Control Fee Earning | 674 | 674 | 0 |
| 89 | 130 | 155 | 162 | 169 | Building Control Non Fee Earning | 176 | 0 | 176 |
| 1,508 | 1,430 | 1,441 | 1,440 | 1,570 | Total Regulatory Services | 2,768 | 1,348 | 1,420 |
| 2,212 | 2,391 | 2,468 | 2,725 | 2,733 | Total (Transferred to GF Summary) | 4,326 | 1,446 | 2,880 |
| Support and Trading Services | | | | | | | | |
| 181 | 209 | 527 | 511 | 529 | Planning Administration | 632 | 72 | 560 |
| (154) | (176) | (496) | (481) | (498) | Recharged to this Portfolio | (595) | (68) | (527) |
| (27) | (36) | (31) | (29) | (30) | Recharged to other Portfolios | (37) | (4) | (33) |
| 0 | (3) | (0) | (0) | (0) | Total | (0) | 0 | (0) |
| 2,212 | 2,388 | 2,468 | 2,725 | 2,733 | Portfolio Total | 4,326 | 1,446 | 2,880 |
| 1,927 | 2,237 | 2,310 | 2,371 | 2,326 | Continuing Services Budget | | | 2,460 |
| 73 | 27 | 19 | 14 | 105 | Continuing Services Budget - Growth | | | 20 |
| (25) | (65) | (19) | (9) | (100) | Continuing Services Budget - Savings | | | (27) |
| 1,975 | 2,199 | 2,310 | 2,376 | 2,331 | Total Continuing Services Budget | | | 2,453 |
| 580 | 419 | 286 | 364 | 490 | District Development Fund - Expenditure | | | 627 |
| (343) | (227) | (128) | (15) | (88) | District Development Fund - Savings | | | (200) |
| 237 | 192 | 158 | 349 | 402 | Total District Development Fund | | | 427 |
| 2,212 | 2,391 | 2,468 | 2,725 | 2,733 | Portfolio Total | | | 2,880 |

Main Income generating Items - Included above

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| | | | | | Planning Del Grant | 23 |
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| 0 | 0 | 9 | 23 | 5 | Fees & Charges | 674 |
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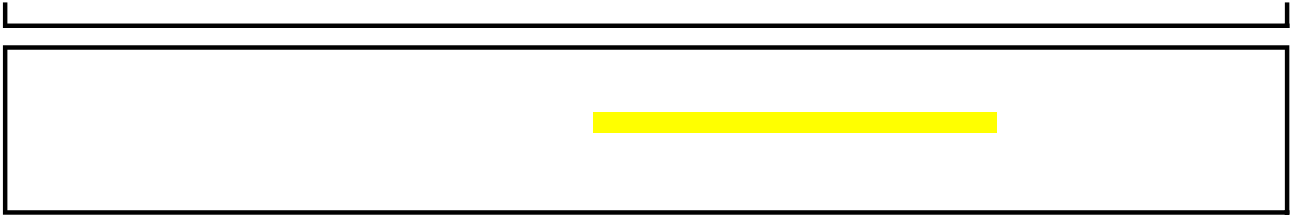
Costs of the New Computer systems

NORTHGATE SYSTEM COSTS

| | 2007/08 To month 10 | 2006/07 | 2005/06 | 2004/05 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Revenue Expenditure | | | | |
| Training | MVM Consultants | | 4,940 | 7,800 |
| | Northgate | | 63 | 3,250 |
| | Terraquest | | | 7,832 |
| | Other | | 2,340 | |
| Professional Fees | Terraquest 17,478 | 73,517 | 39,842 | 73,375 |
| | MVM Consultants | | 3,120 | |
| | Northgate 12,475 | 31,460 | 4,680 | |
| | Other | 9,472 | 47,471 | |
| Computer - Other | | | | 5,498 |
| TOTAL | 29,953 | 114,449 | 102,456 | 97,754 |
| Funded By | | | | |
| Planning Delivery Grant 2 | | 85,000 | | 91,140 |
| Planning Delivery Grant 3 | 6320 | 13,680 | | |
| Planning Delivery Grant 4 | 41,000 | | | |
| | 47,320 | 98,680 | - | 91,140 |
| Balance from Revenue G Fund | | | | 124,839 |
| Capital Expenditure | | | | |
| Hardware | | | | 17,197 |
| Software | 21,675 | 14,417 | 110,414 | 92,558 |
| TOTAL | | 14,417 | 110,414 | 109,755 |
| Funded By | | | | |
| IEG | | | | 80,280 |
| Planning Delivery Grant 3 | | | 45,000 | |
| | | | 45,000 | 80,280 |
| Balance from Capital Receipts | | | | 125,280 |
| went live August 2005 | | | | |
| Grand Total | | | | 549,246 |

Source: CIPFA 2007 Draft Statistics 2007/08
Estimated

| Essex District Councils | Area in Hectares | Staff per 1000 pop. | Planning Applications Submitted | No. of Appeals | Average Planning Fee 06/07 £ | Alleged breaches investigated | Population 30-Jun-07 |
|----------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| ** Not declared | | | | | | | |
| Epping Forest | 33,898 | 0.44 | 2276 | 130 | 235 | 783 | 122,200 |
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| Brentwood | No Return | | | | | | |
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| Colchester | No Return | | | | | | |
| Harlow | 3,054 | 0.26 | 456 | ** | 688 | 100 | 78,000 |
| Maldon | No Return | | | | | | |
| Rochford | 16,951 | 0.40 | 1220 | ** | ** | ** | 79,500 |
| Tendring | 33,774 | 0.20 | 1956 | 90 | 289 | 564 | 143,000 |
| Uttlesford | No Return | | | | | | |
| Audit Commission "Family" | | | | | | | |
| Brentwood | No Return | | | | | | |
| Broxbourne | 5,144 | 0.23 | 1301 | 72 | 285 | 370 | 86,500 |
| Chelmsford | 34,225 | 0.61 | 2836 | 97 | 270 | 1070 | 160,000 |
| Dacorum | No Return | | | | | | |
| East Hampshire | 51,440 | 0.51 | 2363 | 93 | 292 | 520 | 110,100 |
| East Herts | No Return | | | | | | |
| Hertsmere | No Return | | | | | | |
| Mid Sussex | 33,402 | 0.41 | 2241 | 19 | 307 | 97 | 128,100 |
| North Herts | No Return | | | | | | |
| Reigate & Banstead | No Return | | | | | | |
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| Spelthorne | 5,116 | 0.27 | 1021 | 67 | ** | 352 | 92,100 |
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| Three Rivers | 8,882 | 0.34 | 1738 | 95 | 411 | 697 | 85,400 |
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