

[Report 1952] / Medical Officer of Health, Witham U.D.C.

Contributors

Witham (England). Urban District Council.

Publication/Creation

1952

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/gnxrsmt9>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution license.

This licence permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Library

**WITHAM
URBAN DISTRICT**

REPORT

**OF THE
Medical Officer of Health**

FOR THE YEAR

1952

TOGETHER WITH THE

**Report of the
Chief Sanitary Inspector**

**The Shalford Press, Braintree
Phone 608**



Witham Urban District Council

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Chairman :

Mrs. J. N. PELLY

Members :

J. AGER, Esq.

D. C. BRIGHT, Esq.

W. G. LOVEDAY, Esq. (Resigned July, 1952).

W. HAYWOOD, Esq. (From September, 1952).

D. J. MAIDMENT, Esq., J.P.

T. R. MOTT, Esq.

C. A. WALKER, Esq.

M. F. STRUTT, Esq., J.P., M.C., D.L., T.D. (ex-officio).

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS

Medical Officer of Health :

A. P. KALRA, M.B., M.R.C.S., D.P.H., D.C.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector and Inspector of Meat and other Foods :

E. H. C. WADHAMS, M.R.SAN.I., M.S.I.A., A.M.I.S.E.

Additional Sanitary Inspector :

H. R. D. SCOTT, M.S.I.A.

Clerical Assistant :

R. G. CHAPMAN

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICES,
TOWN HALL,
BRAINTREE.

November, 1953.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MADAM AND GENTLEMEN,

In presenting this Annual Report on your District for the year 1952, it must be understood that I am doing so on behalf of the late Dr. Kalra, and that personally, I have little knowledge of the District, having acted for him only for the last few weeks of the year in question.

From the records and statistics, I can, however, make the following observations and, with the help and advice of the Chief Sanitary Inspector, bring to your special notice a few matters regarding the Sanitary state of the District as a whole.

The year has been particularly free from outbreaks of infectious disease. Once again no case of diphtheria has occurred and the high rate of immunisation against this disease has been maintained.

HOUSING

Although my knowledge of the housing conditions cannot be complete, these conditions are similar to those in the Halstead Urban District, which are well known to me. I therefore wish to make the following observations.

I am informed that the number of persons who at present apply to the Council for tenancies of their houses is approximately 220 and that the Council have, at the present time, schemes in hand, or in preparation, for the erection of about the same number of houses. From this it appears that the housing problem is almost solved with regard to the provision of extra houses.

The other, and perhaps most important problem, from a health point of view, remains, namely, the demolition of the worst type of house and the reconstruction of houses whose standard of fitness is not up to present day requirements.

I am informed that there are 17 houses in the District which, although condemned, some for as long as 15 years, are still inhabited. With the housing programme being advanced to its present stage, there can be no justification in permitting these houses to remain. It may be that a few of the tenants thereof are not those desirable for the tenancies of Council houses, but it must be remembered that a number of such persons greatly improve in their living conditions when given the chance of inhabiting a modern house.

Although, of course, all of the older type of property cannot be dealt with for a considerable time, I think that the Council might be well advised to adopt a definite policy. They might make a survey of the District and schedule the properties into various categories, clearly stating their intention to re-house tenants of the poorer houses and take legal steps to enforce reconstruction or demolition of the houses tenanted by them. They might withhold the tenancies of their houses until legal procedure has produced demolition orders or undertakings to render fit by the owners.

This step I consider important, as it prevents the Council from again having to re-house families from the same bad property and, furthermore, protects intending purchasers from loss by having any legal charge against the property entered in the Land Charges Register.

I understand that the Council has recently dealt with a small number of houses by making Clearance Orders. The time has come when the Council might consider the extension of this method which has the merit of achieving the improvement of an area as a whole, rather than the demolition of individual houses in vicinities which would best be cleared of all properties. A number of isolated properties will, of course, have to be dealt with individually. The survey I recommend would indicate the number of replacement houses which would be required and the Council could then provide for this rehousing progressively as the housing schemes mature.

SEWERS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

No major trouble was experienced with the district sewers during the year, though it is known that some of the older ones are heavily surcharged in wet weather, and defective in parts. The practice of flushing the sewer systems, resumed during the past two years, is thought to have had a beneficial effect in preventing the silting and choking of those lengths known to possess inadequate falls.

Towards the end of the year, work was commenced on the sewerage scheme for Rivenhall. This scheme, which will be completed during 1953, will serve the majority of existing properties in that area, and also the proposed Rivenhall Oak Estate of 82 houses. The scheme will benefit a total future population of 700-800 people, and includes its own treatment works.

The two existing sewage works, at Witham and Silver End, are both overloaded, the former to a gross extent. The Council's scheme of extension for the Witham works has received the approval of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, but sanction for the contract to be placed has not yet been received. The Silver End plant maintains a generally satisfactory standard of purification, and the Council's Consulting Engineers are preparing a scheme for its improvement to present requirements.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. S. RANSON.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
COUNCIL OFFICES,
WITHAM.

To the Chairman and Members of the Urban District Council of Witham.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MADAM AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit, in conjunction with the report of the Medical Officer of Health, my report upon the sanitary circumstances of the Urban District for the year 1952, with details of the public services administered by my Department.

The general sanitary condition of the area remains satisfactory, and no major problems of danger to the health of the community arose during the year. The limitations of the old and overloaded sewer and sewage disposal systems have been offset as far as possible by careful maintenance, and whilst essential improvements and extensions are still awaited, there is no fear of imminent breakdown. It is to be emphasised, however, that care and improvisation cannot maintain indefinitely the satisfactory working of defective and inadequate plant, especially in view of the housing and other developments now proceeding.

The commencement of the main drainage scheme for Rivenhall is a matter for real satisfaction in that the scheme will serve the only remaining unsewered community of any size in the Urban District. At its completion, Rivenhall will take unaccustomed pride of place as that part of the area best served in this respect. It is to be hoped that the Council's proposed improvement schemes for Witham and Silver End will soon provide the same high standard for the remainder of the district.

Housing progress, and the anticipated increased rate of completion in 1953, promises an early solution to the district's housing shortage, but progress with regard to sub-standard properties cannot yet be regarded as satisfactory. A number of houses are becoming so defective that their reconditioning or replacement cannot reasonably be further delayed. At the same time, the general standard of housing accommodation in the area remains high.

The public cleansing services have been maintained satisfactorily throughout the year, though the problem remains of obtaining adequate and suitable labour in competition with better paid industrial employment. Recovery and sale of salvage, though adversely affected by market conditions, again proved its twofold worth in greater refuse disposal efficiency at lower cost than would otherwise be possible.

It is again to be regretted that pressure of work in my Department, mentioned in 1951, and accentuated by sickness of staff in the current year, has delayed the preparation and submission of this Annual Report. Intensity of effort provides no satisfaction to the Officers, while the rate of work is such that nothing can be given the full consideration it deserves, without pause for review or proper planning. Further, the inevitable curtailment of routine inspection and recording, which is the foundation of all good public health administration, merely aggravates the situation by allowing unsatisfactory conditions to reach emergency proportions before they are discovered or make themselves apparent. I propose, therefore, to ask the Council during 1953 to consider the staffing of my Department, with these points in view.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation of the support and assistance I have received from your Council and the Public Health Committee, and for the invaluable co-operation of the Clerk of the Council and the other Officers. Lastly, I would like to record my thanks to my Assistants, Mr. Scott and Mr. Chapman, for their readiness to cope with anything at any time, and to all the staff of the Department for good and willing workmanship throughout the year.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

E. H. C. WADHAMS,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

1. STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

	Witham U.D.C.	England and Wales
Area (in acres)	7,329	
Population (Registrar-General's estimate) ..	8,553	
Number of inhabited houses according to Rate Books	2,645	
Rateable Value	£48,334	
Sum represented by a penny rate	£185	

	Total	Male	Female
Live Births—Legitimate ..	117	59	58
Illegitimate ..	6	4	2
Still Births	4	4	—
Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population	14·3		15·3
Birth Rate corrected by comparability figure of 1·06	15·1		
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 (live and still births) ..	31·4		22·6

Deaths (Registrar-General's estimate)	77	
Death Rate per 1,000 resident population ..	9·002	11·3
Death Rate corrected by comparability figure of 1·02	9·18	
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age	5	
Death Rate of infants under 1 year of age (per 1,000 live births)	40·6	27·6
Death Rate of legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	34·1	
Death Rate of illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	166·6	

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	21
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) ..	0

CAUSES OF DEATH

The Table below was compiled from figures supplied by the Registrar-General and the classification is given under the 36 headings based on the Abbreviated List of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death, 1948.

Cause of Death						Male	Female
1.	Tuberculosis, respiratory	..	..	..	..	2	—
2.	Tuberculosis, other	..	..	..	..	—	—
3.	Syphilitic disease	..	..	..	..	—	—
4.	Diphtheria	..	..	..	..	—	—
5.	Whooping cough	..	..	..	..	—	—
6.	Meningococcal infections	..	..	..	..	—	—
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	..	..	..	..	—	—
8.	Measles	..	..	..	..	—	—
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases	..	..	..	..	—	—
10.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	..	..	..	..	—	2
11.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	..	..	..	..	3	—
12.	Malignant neoplasm, breast	..	..	..	..	—	2
13.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	..	..	..	..	—	1
14.	Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	..	..	..	..	7	6
15.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	..	..	..	..	—	—
16.	Diabetes	..	..	..	..	—	—
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	..	..	..	..	4	6
18.	Coronary disease, angina	..	..	..	..	3	2
19.	Hypertension with heart disease	..	..	..	..	—	—
20.	Other heart disease	..	..	..	..	5	4
21.	Other circulatory disease	..	..	..	..	2	1
22.	Influenza	..	..	..	..	—	—
23.	Pneumonia	..	..	..	..	2	1
24.	Bronchitis	..	..	..	..	2	2
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system	..	..	..	..	—	—
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	..	..	..	..	—	1
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	..	..	..	..	—	—
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis	..	..	..	..	2	1
29.	Hyperplasia of prostate	..	..	..	..	3	—
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	..	..	..	..	—	—
31.	Congenital malformations	..	..	..	..	3	1
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	..	..	..	..	6	2
33.	Motor vehicle accidents	..	..	..	..	1	—
34.	All other accidents	..	..	..	..	—	—
35.	Suicide	..	..	..	..	—	—
36.	Homicide and operations of war	..	..	..	..	—	—
All causes						45	32

DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGE GROUPS DURING 1952
(Registered and Transferred)

Age Group	Registered	No. of Deaths Transferred
Under 1 year	—	5
1 and under 2 years	—	—
2 and under 5 years	—	—
5 and under 15 years	—	—
15 and under 25 years	—	2
25 and under 35 years	—	—
35 and under 45 years	—	1
45 and under 55 years	3	4
55 and under 65 years	3	4
65 and under 75 years	11	9
75 and upwards	21	14
Totals	38	39

2. PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

Cases of Infectious Disease notified in 1952.

	Total cases notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Dead
Scarlet Fever	7	—	—
Whooping Cough	8	—	—
Measles	251	2	—
Acute Pneumonia	4	—	—
Infective Hepatitis	2	—	—
Totals	272	2	—

Tuberculosis—Cases notified in 1952

	Pulmonary Male	Pulmonary Female	Non-pulmonary Male	Non-pulmonary Female
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—
1 and under 5 years	1	—	—	—
5 and under 10 years	1	—	1	—
10 and under 15 years	—	1	—	—
15 and under 20 years	—	1	—	—
20 and under 25 years	—	—	—	—
25 and under 35 years	1	1	—	—
35 and under 45 years	1	—	—	—
45 and under 55 years	3	2	—	—
55 and under 65 years	1	—	—	—
65 and upwards	1	—	—	—
Totals	9	5	1	—

Deaths from Tuberculosis

Pulmonary	Male	2
	Female	—
Non-pulmonary	Male	—
	Female	—
	Total	2

Food Poisoning Notifications 1

HOUSING

The Council continued its building programme throughout the year, during which a further 30 houses, including 4 aged person's bungalows, were completed at Mill Lane, Highfields Road and Howbridge Estate. In the same period, eight houses were erected by private enterprise. At the end of December there were 68 Council houses and 12 private enterprise houses under construction. The number of new houses erected in the Urban District since the end of the war is as follows :

By the Local Authority 317 (includes 84 prefabricated bungalows).

By private enterprise .. 71

The number of applicants for Council houses was 247 at the end of 1952, compared with 271 at 31st December, 1951. In addition, there were 42 applications for aged person's bungalows. The Council's immediate programme includes the extension of the new Howbridge Estate, and the erection of some eighty houses at Rivenhall Oak as soon as the sewerage scheme for that area is completed.

Progress with regard to sub-standard properties continues to be limited. Of the condemned houses still occupied at 31st December, 1951, one became vacant upon the rehousing of the tenants by the Council, and one on the removal to hospital of the sole occupant.

One Demolition Order was sealed in respect of an unfit house, but the house had not been vacated by December 31st. Similarly, clearance and closure proceedings with regard to four houses and two flats were not completed by the end of the year.

There thus remained at the end of 1952, 18 formally condemned properties still occupied. There are a further number of such houses which warrant demolition and the Council have in mind a limited condemnation programme. It is pointless, however, to undertake such action on any considerable scale until the Council is able to give greater priority to slum clearance rehousing.

A certain amount of reconditioning was carried out during 1952, and although work in this direction is still limited by the continuing demand on building labour and materials, some progress in this direction is being made.

The following table gives a summary of action taken in connection with the inspection of houses during 1952 :

1. Inspection of dwellinghouses during the year :

(a) Total number inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	87
(b) Number found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	18
(c) Number (exclusive of those referred to under sub-heading (b)) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	29

2. Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notice :

(a) Number of houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by Local Authority or its Officers	18
(b) Number of other defective conditions remedied after informal action by Local Authority or its Officers	69

3. Action under Statutory Powers—Housing Act, 1936 :	
(a) Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	Nil
(b) Number of dwellinghouses rendered fit after service of formal notice	Nil
(c) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	Nil
(d) Number of dwellinghouses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	1
(e) Number of undertakings accepted	4
4. Action under Statutory Powers—Public Health Act, 1936 :	
(a) Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	1
(b) Number of houses in which defects were remedied under service of formal notice	1
5. Number of dwellinghouses demolished :	
In pursuance of action under Sections 25-33, Housing Act, 1936 (Clearance Orders)	9
6. Housing Act, 1949 :	
Demolition Orders quashed upon houses being made fit	1

WATER SUPPLY

There was no change in the sources of the Public supply in the Urban District ; the Council's Braintree Road Waterworks supply (deep borehole) ; the South Essex Water Company's supply from the Abberton impounding reservoir ; and the Bradwell Springs supply (deep spring) operated by the Crittall Manufacturing Co. Ltd. Silver End and Rivenhall are fed by the Bradwell Springs undertaking, while the remainder of the district normally receives a mixture of all three supplies. All supplies undergo chloramination at the source. During 1952, however, the Braintree Road works was out of operation owing to pump breakdown.

During the period in which the Council's Braintree Road works was out of action, the district's requirements were met by augmented supplies from the South Essex Water Company, with whom the Council have a reservation ensuring ample water for the present and expected needs of the Urban District.

Quality and quantity have been uniformly satisfactory throughout the year, though inadequate capacity and high demand on parts of the mains system caused serious loss of pressure in some parts of the area. During the year, the Council completed the first section of a trunk mains scheme for improving and maintaining the pressure in the urban district as a whole. The temporary subsidiary supply from Messrs. Lord Rayleigh's Farms Incorporated, in the Braintree Rural District, was discontinued.

Samples, submitted periodically for bacteriological and chemical examination showed that all supplies at the source, both before and after treatment, were generally satisfactory. For one short period, following undue demand on the Bradwell Supply for fire fighting purposes, bacterial quality of this water deteriorated. Investigation showed that pumping beyond the normal output of the spring tended to draw into supply contaminated water from a nearby pond. At the same time, the chlorination dosage plant did not prevent the contaminated water passing untreated into the mains. The bacterial contamination was not of a serious nature, but indicated a weakness in the system. After resumption of normal output and super-chlorination of all the mains, bacterial quality resumed its normal high standard. At the Council's request, the Company owning this supply undertook (a) not to draw upon the supply at rates above the optimum output and (b) to instal continuous automatic gaseous chlorine dosing plant.

House Connections, etc.

Number of separate dwellings in the Urban District	2,645
Number of separate dwellings having internal piped mains supply ..	2,539
Estimated population so served	8,221
Number of separate dwellings connected during the year	39
Number of separate dwellings served by standpipe	55
Estimated population so served	176
Remaining houses served by shallow wells, springs or cartage ..	50
Estimated population so served	156

The following extensions to the Council's mains were made during the year :

4in.	592 yards
6in.	217 yards
9in.	2,230 yards

Water Consumption and Future Requirements

Total water supplied by :

1. Braintree Road Waterworks	Nil	gallons
2. Bradwell Springs :		
(a) To Silver End (estimated)	45,625,000	gallons
(b) To remainder of Urban District ..	59,952,000	gallons
3. South Essex Water Company :		
(a) By Trunk Main	52,859,420	gallons
(b) By Braintree R.D.C. main	47,000	gallons
4. Lord Rayleigh's Farms Incorporated ..	727,627	gallons
Total Consumption	159,211,047	gallons

Average consumption per head per day :

Domestic demand	35.28	gallons
Trade demand	16.24	gallons
Average total consumption per head per day	50.97	gallons

The average consumption per head per day in the district continues to increase.

This gradual increase is to be expected with the continuous development of modern housing estates.

Sampling

The following Table shows the number of samples submitted for examination :

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
1. Mains Water :			
Chemical	8	—	8
Bacteriological	36	1	37
2. Other Supplies :			
Chemical	4	1	5
Bacteriological	9	16	25
	<u>57</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>75</u>

The unsatisfactory reports on other than mains supplies, related to two private sources as under :

- (a) Spring supply tapped to serve three houses. Supply polluted by contamination of spring area. An extensive investigation and repeated chlorination were necessary to trace and remedy the source of pollution and the contamination it had created throughout the piped systems. The degree of pollution and the work required to abate it were both considerable, as the main cause of contamination was the presence of some twenty pigs, buried after an outbreak of swine fever, on the route of the spring supply.

To avoid a recurrence of such an event, I have now arranged to be notified by the Diseases of Animal Act authorities of the proposed disposal of all animals slaughtered within the Urban District.

- (b) Private borehole supply at a large pasteurising plant. The supply in this case, normally satisfactory, deteriorated in bacterial quality after borehole and pump repairs. It seems evident that the source of contamination must have been introduced at the time the repairs were carried out, and it was necessary to instal continuous chlorination of this supply over a long period before it finally resumed its normal high standard of purity.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

The following Table shows the drainage facilities in use in the district at 31st December, 1952 :

Houses with	Drainage to						Totals.
	Sewer.	Septic Tanks, etc.	Cesspools.	Ditches via Cesspools.	Direct to Ditches.	No Drainage.	
W.C.'s, Sinks and Drains	2440	7	30	8	—	—	2485
W.C.'s, Gulley Drains, no Sinks	7	—	—	—	—	—	7
Pail Closets, Sinks and Drains	—	—	57	30	35	—	122
Pail Closets and Sinks	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Pail Closets and Gulley Drains only	—	—	—	—	8	—	8
Privies and Gulley Drains only	—	—	—	—	6	—	6
Pail Closets, no Sinks or Drains	—	—	—	—	—	13	13
Privies, no Sinks or Drains	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Total	2447	7	87	38	49	17	2645

Of the 198 properties not at present connected to the sewer, a few are capable of immediate connection, and the proposed sewerage scheme for Rivenhall will provide for the connection of 80 existing dwellinghouses. Prospective future development along the lines at present suggested should allow for the serving of another 20-30 existing houses. There will then remain 80-90 agricultural and isolated properties for which no economic sewerage scheme appears to be possible. The Council already provides a free emptying service for domestic cesspools, three times annually, and additional emptying, when required, on repayment. This service is also available to industrial and agricultural premises not connected to the sewer systems.

The existing sewer systems at Witham and Silver End are both liable to surcharging at times of heavy rainfall. At Witham, where a combined system of soil and surface water drainage predominates, building development has so taken up the available sewer capacity that the marginal capacity available for storm water is inadequate. In addition, certain lengths are known to be in poor structural condition, lacking correct falls, and silted to a considerable extent. At Silver End, where a totally separate system was designed, storm water nevertheless gains access to the sewers, not only causing serious surcharge and flooding, but increasing the flow to proportions far beyond the capacity of the sewage works.

The following extensions to the Council's sewers were laid during the year :

Soil : Rivenhall	6in.	..	..	1,320 yards
	9in.	..	..	860 yards
Howbridge :	6in.	..	..	1,047 yards
	9in.	..	..	657 yards
Surface Water :	9in.	..	..	597 yards
	12in.	..	..	120 yards
	21in.	..	..	447 yards
	27in.	..	..	113 yards
	30in.	..	..	47 yards

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

There are three major sewage disposal plants in the Urban District, two owned by the Council and one administered by the Ministry of Works for the National Assistance Board. The Urban District Sewage Works serves the communities of Witham and Silver End, and the third plant treats sewage from the Board's Hostel for Displaced Persons at Rivenhall Aerodrome Camp. A fourth disposal plant is being installed at Rivenhall to deal with flows from the new sewer system.

Witham Sewage Works

Details of the layout and capacity of this plant have been given in previous reports. No major alterations or improvement has been made and the flow to the works continues to increase with the development of the town. The plant remains, therefore, inadequate for present needs and overloaded by more than 40 per cent. 30 per cent. of effluent samples failed to achieve the required standards of the Essex County Council and the Southend Waterworks Company.

The inadequate and defective condition of the plant has been a source of concern to the Council for a considerable time, and early in 1949 Consulting Engineers were instructed to prepare improvement proposals. This scheme provides for immediate enlargement of the works to cope with present population and for a two or three stage future expansion, should the development of the district require it. Although the first stage of the scheme has received Government approval, sanction for its commencement is still awaited.

Little difficulty was experienced with trade constituents in the sewage during the year. The plant installed by the Crittall Manufacturing Co. Ltd., in June, 1949, continued to operate satisfactorily.

Farmland

The 1951-52 cropping season produced satisfactory results, and a net profit to the Council of £128 from the 20½ acres under cultivation. The crops produced were wheat (10½ acres) and flax (10 acres), both essential commodities. For the 1952-53 season, crops of wheat and clover are already sown, and a further crop of flax is intended.

The farmland at these works has been cultivated by the Council for five years. The following table shows briefly the net financial return for the five cropping seasons :

Season	Crops				Profit			Loss		
					£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1947-48	Wheat, Potatoes	..	..	..	63	7	10	—		
1948-49	Barley, Potatoes	..	..	..	294	1	4	—		
1949-50	Wheat	..	..	..	2	19	0	—		
1950-51	Clover, Mangold, Flax	..	..	..	—			58	7	7
1951-52	Flax, Wheat	..	..	..	128	19	3	—		
					£489	7	5	£58	7	7
	Net Profit	..	..	..	£430	19	10			
	Net acreage annual profit	..	..	..	86	4	0			

The annual profit figure compares with the annual rent of £33 12s. 6d., which the Council previously received when this land was leased to a local farmer.

Silver End Sewage Works

This plant, described in detail in previous reports, serves the community of Silver End, a population of about 2,000. The plant is well designed, except for the siting of the secondary filters, which were added after completion of the original design, and are situated below the humus tanks, thus allowing no facility for removal of secondary humus. In addition, the smaller capacity of the secondary system, involving higher rates of flow, becomes overloaded more easily than the primary section. This is accentuated by the addition of certain trade discharges to the normal sewage flow. The Council's Consulting Engineers are preparing a scheme of extension and improvement to cope with present flows and expected development during the next few years.

The average dry weather flow to the works, gauged during the year, is 100,000 gallons daily. This rate of flow involves a theoretical settlement period of 12-13 hours retention, with dosage to the primary filters of 105 gallons and to the secondary filters of 320 gallons per cubic yard per day. The resulting standard of purification is generally satisfactory.

It has not yet been possible for the Council to house the attendant near the works to facilitate supervision and control, but arrangements have been made for the purchase of a plot of land for this purpose.

Rivenhall Camp Sewage Works

This plant, constructed during the war to serve the Aerodrome, now treats the sewage from some hundreds of displaced persons occupying the camp under the control of the National Assistance Board.

The plant is not working to capacity and has maintained an efficient standard of treatment.

Rivenhall End Sewerage Scheme

This scheme, which the Council have desired for many years to put into operation, has now been approved by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and work is in progress. It will provide for the sewerage of the largest remaining unsewered area in the Urban District, and will not only allow the abolition of cesspools, pail closets and privies, but the development of a housing site at Rivenhall Oak, which has been held up for lack of essential services.

Sampling of Sewage, Effluents, etc.

Seventy samples of effluent were submitted for analysis, and the results were as follows :

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Witham Sewage Works ..	42	20	62
Silver End Sewage Works ..	7	1	8
Totals ..	49	21	70

RIVERS AND STREAMS

The rivers Blackwater and Brain, with tributary streams, pass through the Urban District and contribute appreciably to its natural beauty. The Council is anxious that these water courses shall not become fouled, and my Department has maintained constant supervision to discover and remedy any pollution which may occur. This work is done in close co-operation with the Southend Waterworks Company which draws river water for its supply, and is therefore equally anxious to prevent pollution.

Of the two rivers, the Brain is the lesser, and receives larger quantities of sewage effluent and road surface water on its course. It is also the more liable to trade waste and pollution. Its purity is therefore of a lower standard than that of the Blackwater, but is nevertheless, sufficient to support a certain amount of fish life in the length within the Urban District. It is necessary, however to ensure that no further general deterioration can occur.

The Council's pollution prevention powers passed to the new Essex Rivers Board on October 1st. For the Council, as one of the authorities who have administered their duties energetically and in co-operation with the County Council and the water undertakings, this loss of local control is a matter of some regret, but contact with the Board's officers has already been made. The local knowledge and experience of the Department will be available to them in dealing with any future pollution problems which may arise.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

Of the Public Cleansing services, that of street scavenging, including sweeping, road gritting and snow clearing, is carried out by the Essex County Council and the Urban Council's Highways Department.

The remaining services, refuse collection and disposal, salvage recovery, cesspool and gulley emptying and sewer flushing, are administered by the Council's Public Health Department.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

Collection

The re-organised collection of house refuse for the whole of the Urban District has been maintained during the year, providing a weekly collection from all parts of the area.

There are now two vehicles operating this service ; the 8 cubic yard S.D. freighter, which has now completed its sixth year of continuous service without major breakdown, and the 11 cubic yard S.D. "W" type vehicle, which is used for 2 days per week on collection.

Disposal

Tipping has continued throughout the year on the Council's land adjoining the river Blackwater, where marshland is being made up. It is hoped by tipping in this area, to add some 10 acres of useful agricultural land to that now farmed at the adjoining sewage works. Tipping capacity here will satisfy disposal requirements for the next 5 to 8 years, according to the rate of development of the district, but if development takes place at the rate and to the degree envisaged in the present Town Planning proposals, a large scale disposal scheme will have to be prepared shortly to provide for the needs of the enlarged town.

Salvage

Collection of salvage is effected in conjunction with house refuse collection, with the exception that a special collection is made weekly from trade premises. The seller's market in salvage materials which prevailed at the commencement of 1952, was shortly followed by a severe slump. Figures for the 1952-53 financial year, given below, therefore show an increase in tonnage, but a decrease in income. Nevertheless, a profit of £392 6s. 9d. accrued to the Council, after bonus of £325 8s. 1d. was paid to the collection staff, and it is therefore obvious that the salvage scheme continues to be financially worthwhile, as well as of assistance in reducing disposal problems and costs.

Commodity	1951-52						1952-53					
	Weights			Value			Weights			Value		
	t.	c.	q.	£	s.	d.	t.	c.	q.	£	s.	d.
Waste Paper	86	1	0	1575	15	8	99	14	1	870	6	10
Bones	4	10	0	42	11	3	4	18	2	27	8	0
Rags	3	3	0	92	2	1	3	4	0	92	12	10
Sacking	4	12	3	68	4	9	4	14	0	21	18	9
Iron	60	0	0	234	18	2	92	19	0	413	6	4
Metals		17	2	62	0	3		16	0	78	10	2
Jars	2	10	0	17	5	6	3	9	0	22	7	4
Bottles	4	14	0	27	9	1	4	0	0	17	1	10
Miscellaneous		—		2	5	10		—		7	3	11
Totals	166	8	1	2122	12	7	213	14	3	1550	16	0

Cesspool, Gulley, Emptying and Sewer Flushing

The following work was performed by the Council's cesspool emptier during the year :

Domestic emptyings (free service) ..	131 cesspools, 153 loads.
Rechargeable work	74 cesspools, 147 loads.
Trade Waste	468 loads.

In addition to the above, the sewer systems of the district were flushed on three occasions, and the road gullies on all district roads were cleansed on three occasions.

COSTS

Total net cost of refuse collection, disposal and salvage (detailed in the Table below), rose during the year by £463.

Refuse Collection, Disposal and Salvage

Table showing costs for year ending 31st March, 1953 :

	Total collection and disposal costs with depreciation or loan charges included or excluded.					
	Included			Excluded		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
A. Gross Expenditure	5007	2	1	4802	16	11
B. Gross Income	1614	18	6	1614	18	6
C. Net Cost	3392	3	7	3187	18	5
Unit Costs :						
D. Net cost per ton	1	12	6	1	10	6
E. Net cost per 1,000 population	396	11	5	372	14	6
F. Net cost per 1,000 houses or premises from which refuse is collected	1282	19	5	1205	14	4
Rate Poundage :						
G. Net cost, equivalent rate in £	18	336d.		17	232d.	
H. Percentage of (G) to total rate in £.. .. .	6	94		6	527	

1. Total refuse collected and disposed of in tons (estimated) ..	2086
2. Population	8553
3. Area (statute acres)	7329
4. Weight in cwts. (per 1,000 population) per day (365 days to year)	12
5. Number of houses and premises	2645
6. Rateable Value	£48,335
7. Produce of a penny rate	£184
8. Total rates in £1	22s. 0d.
9. Method of collection—mechanical vehicles	2
10. Method of Tipping. Controlled tipping, i.e. on lines of Ministry's precautions	100 p.c.
11. Average length of journey	7 miles
12. Percentage of refuse collected	100

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

A total of 5,409 visits and inspections were made during the year, as follows :

Housing Acts	365
Public Health Acts	136
Verminous Premises—Visits	13
Disinfestations	14
Complaints (other than dwellinghouses)	48
Slaughterhouse	1018
Butchers' Shops	42
Fish Shops	22
Bakehouses	18
Restaurants	8
Ice Cream Vendors	43
Licensed Premises	15
Food Preparation Premises	169
Dairies	11
Milkshops	3
Sampling—Ice-Cream	52
Water	75
Sewage effluent	45
Shops Acts	7
Factories	52
Infectious Disease—Visits	33
Disinfections	3
Water Supplies	48
Streams and Watercourses	27
Drains and Sewers—Inspected	198
Tested	31
Cesspools, Septic Tanks and Pail Closets	18
Refuse Tips	153
Sewage Works	245
Salvage	196
Rodent Control	2024
Tents, Vans and Sheds	110
Stables and Pig Styes	4
Schools	10
Council House Applicants	16
Miscellaneous	137

In addition, a total of 1,526 interviews were given to owners, builders, tenants and other interested parties.

Nuisances, etc., on Books, with Number of Notices served :

Number of Notices outstanding, 31st December, 1951	..	..	..	23
Number of Intimation Notices served during year	..	..	..	77
Number of Statutory Notices served during the year	..	..	..	2
Number of Notices complied with during year	..	..	..	87
Number of Notices outstanding on Books, 31st December, 1952	..	..	..	15

The following list classified the nuisances and defects dealt with :

Dampness, rising and penetrative	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Defective roofs, parapets, gutters, R.W.P.'s, etc.	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
Defective brickwork, pointing and rendering, etc.	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Defective ceilings and walls	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Defective doors, windows and floors	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Defective external paintwork	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Defective passages	..	..	..	..	..	..	10
Defective yard paving	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Defective W.W.P.'s	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Defective sink waste pipe	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Drainage defects	..	..	..	..	..	..	13
Defective vent pipe	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Inadequate means for disposal of roof water	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Defective water service pipe	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Offensive ditch	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Inadequate cover to well	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Offensive accumulation	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Nuisance from keeping of pigs	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Nuisance from keeping of pigeons	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Inadequate provision for storage of trade refuse	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Absence of/Defective condition of dustbins	..	..	..	..	..	..	49
Vermin Infestations—Woodworm	..	..	..	..	..	..	13
Wasps	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Flies	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Carpet Beetles	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Furniture Beetles	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Golden Spider Beetles	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Earwigs	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Rats and Mice	..	..	..	..	..	..	221

Factories Act, 1937

During the year, a total of 52 visits were paid to factories and workshops throughout the district, which figure does not include visits to Food Preparation Premises also classified as factories, as these are dealt with under another heading. Conditions generally were found to be satisfactory. New sanitary accommodation has been erected to my Department's requirements at four factories, together with the necessary drainage work, whilst drainage alterations have been carried out at another factory. At the end of 1952, the number of outworkers on the register was 495, comprising :

	Witham U.D.C.	Other local authorities
Glove Manufacturers	80	410
Seed Merchants	5	—

Notification of outworkers employed in other districts is made to the local authorities concerned.

Details of the inspections made during the year to premises in the Urban District under the Factories Act, 1937, are given in the Table below :

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

1. INSPECTION for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

Premises	Number of			
	Number on Register.	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Occupiers Prosecuted.
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	8	5	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	40	46	4	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	3	1	—	—
	51	52	4	—

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found :

Particulars.	Number of cases in which defects were found.				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found.	Remedied.	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector.	By H.M. Inspector.	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	3	3	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2)	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperatures (S.3)	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary conveniences (S.7) :					
(a) insufficient	1	—	—	—	—
(b) unsuitable or defective	1	—	—	—	—
(c) not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences (not including offences relating to outworkers)	—	—	—	—	—
Total	5	3	—	—	—

Shops Acts

Twenty-four visits were paid to shops, apart from those dealt with under other headings. No action was taken under the Shops Acts, 1912-1938. The major part of the Shops Act administration is enforced by the Essex County Council.

Movable Dwellings

On several occasions during the year, caravans were stationed on sites within the district. Some of the van dwellers are people lacking housing accommodation, temporarily occupying mobile dwellings while unable to find houses. In some cases, water supply and waste disposal facilities are absent or primitive in the extreme, and the sites available are not always satisfactory. The Council has approved the provision of a properly equipped caravan site, with plots to let at economic rent.

Under the Witham Urban District (Movable Dwellings and Camping Grounds) Order, 1950, there were 6 vans licensed on three sites at the end of the year.

In all cases before licences are issued, the Council has to be satisfied with facilities for water supply, hard standing, refuse disposal and sanitary accommodation.

Insect Pests

Pest infestation, other than by rodents, was not encountered to any serious extent during the year. The following cases were dealt with :

Wasps	5	Woodworm	13
Flies	2	Earwigs	1
Carpet Beetles	1	Furniture Beetles	1
Golden Spider Beetles	1		

In addition, the Council's refuse tips are periodically treated to destroy crickets and other insects. Insecticides used are D.D.T. (5 per cent.) and gammexane, both in liquid and powder form, and cyanide preparations. The latter are used only in cases where the safety of human beings and domestic animals can be ensured. Also for minor household infestations, chiefly by flies of various kinds, a pyrethrum compound giving a quick "knock-down" effect is used.

Rodent Control

The Council conducts its own Rodent Control service, employing a specially trained operative for the purpose. Systematic inspection and treatment routine over a number of years has succeeded in limiting the rodent population of the district to a minimum. The work has been carried out in co-operation with the pest control department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Details of the year's work are as follows :

Inspections made	894
Treatment visits	1143
Infestations found—Mice	10
Minor	209
Major	4
Bodies recovered—Mice	66
Rats	646
Estimated kill—Rats	1351

The whole of the District sewer system was treated with satisfactory results. The following details of the treatments show that sewer infestation was light :

	Witham	Silver End
Manholes, test baited	20	20
Manholes, test baited, showing takes	2	5
Manholes, poison baited	4	10
Manholes, poison baited, showing takes	1	5

A free domestic treatment service is now in operation and is of great assistance in ensuring that my Department is informed of infestation at a very early stage, when they are, of course, much easier to deal with.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Meat Inspection

9,140 animals were killed at the Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse during the year, an increase of 1,252 on 1951. This increase comprised calves (473), sheep and lambs (669), pigs (286), and goats (2), offset by a decrease in cattle (178). This overall increase involved considerably more inspection work. The present figures compare with those of the pre-war year 1938 and last year, as follows :

			1938	1951	1952
Cattle, excluding cows	..	..	710	2,249	1,890
Cows	..	..	12	460	641
Calves	..	..	135	903	1,376
Sheep and lambs	..	..	2,438	2,860	3,529
Pigs	..	..	2,266	1,415	1,701
Totals	..	..	5,561	7,887	9,137

The slaughterhouse serves, not only the Witham Urban District, but the adjoining districts of Maldon Rural District, Maldon Borough, Burnham-on-Crouch Urban District, and part of Braintree Rural District, comprising a population of about 35,000. In addition, during peak kill periods, a certain amount of surplus meat is exported from the Witham slaughterhouse to other areas. The hours of killing are long and irregular, necessitating a large amount of overtime on the part of the Meat Inspectors. Representations to the Ministry of Food on this question resulted in an annual grant to the Council to cover expense incurred on meat inspection for other areas, and to allow payment to the Inspectors in lieu of overtime for the additional work during the peak killing period.

All inspection is carried out on the lines of Memo 62 Foods, issued by the Ministry of Health, with the exception that ante-mortem inspection is not always possible. The high proportion of casualty animals and cows now killed accounts largely for the post-war increase in condemnation.

The following Table sets out the particulars of the animals slaughtered and of inspection and condemnation :

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Goats	Total
Number killed	1890	641	1376	3529	1701	3	9140
Number inspected	1890	641	1376	3529	1701	3	9140
All Diseases Except Tuberculosis :							
Whole carcasses condemned	6	11	30	14	42	—	103
Weight in pounds condemned	1561	5538	1389	815	5677	—	14980
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	832	327	58	347	796	—	2360
Weight in pounds condemned	17512	8190	391	894	3456	—	30443
Percentage affected	44.33	52.73	4.21	9.83	45.5	—	—
Tuberculosis Only :							
Whole carcasses condemned	2	13	2	—	4	—	21
Weight in pounds condemned	850	7599	110	—	581	—	9140
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	197	147	3	—	140	—	487
Weight in pounds condemned	11032	8275	37	—	2503	—	21847
Percentage affected	10.52	24.96	1.36	—	8.46	—	—

In addition, 34 cases (1.33 per cent.) of *Cysticercus Bovis* were detected and in these cases the Ministry of Food's recommended procedure was adopted, i.e. condemnation of parts known to be affected, and refrigeration of the remainder for at least three weeks before issue. It is a noticeable feature of this disease that it most frequently occurs in young well-fattened cattle, and is rarely encountered in old animals.

Milk and Dairies

The local sanitary authority is now responsible only for the supervision of distribution and the registration and licencing of dairies, distributors and dealers. The following local registrations and licences are in force under the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949 :

					Tuberculin Tested	Pasteurised
Dairies	..	..	..	..	—	3
Dealers	..	..	..	..	4	4
Supplementary Dealers	..	..	..	..	2	2

Ice-Cream

The registration of manufacturers and vendors, and their premises, is effected by the Urban Council under the Essex County Council Act, 1933, and supervision is exercised to ensure compliance with the Ice-Cream (Heat Treatment) Regulations, 1947. Although two persons are registered as manufacturers within the Urban District, no ice-cream is at present made in the area. The numbers of registrations at 31st December, 1952, were as follows :

Manufacturers/Vendors	..	..	2
Vendors only	..	..	22
Registered Premises	..	..	24

In addition, many vendors registered in other areas operate within the Urban District.

Every make of ice-cream is sampled periodically to ascertain its standard of bacterial purity. 48 such samples were taken during the year and the results are given below :

Bacteriologist's Description.	Fruit Ices	Ministry of Health's Provisional Grading				Totals
		I.	II.	III.	IV.	
Satisfactory	11	19	5	—	—	35
Passable	2	—	5	—	—	7
Unsatisfactory	4	—	—	2	—	6
Total ..	17	19	10	2	—	48

Of those classified as unsatisfactory, 2 contained organisms of faecal origin and may be regarded as the worst. Sample reports are sent, for information and action, to manufacturers and vendors and local authorities of the district of origin. By co-operation with these authorities and further sampling at stages of production and distribution, it has usually been possible to detect and remedy the faults responsible for unsatisfactory reports.

Hygiene of Food Preparation Premises

The number of premises where food is prepared, stored or retailed, is 99, as follows :

Restaurants	..	..	..	..	..	11
Factory and School Canteens	..	..	..	..	..	9
Manufacturing Butchers	..	..	..	..	..	7
Bakehouses	..	..	..	..	..	6
Fried Fish Shops	..	..	..	..	..	3
Retail Butchers' Shops	..	..	..	..	..	7
Other Retail Food Shops	..	..	..	..	..	34
Retail Wet Fish Shops	..	..	..	..	..	4
Licensed Premises	..	..	..	..	..	18

All are subject to inspection and generally found to satisfy the requirements of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938. 317 visits of inspection were made during the year. In several cases it was necessary to issue warnings concerning lack of cleanliness and other unsatisfactory conditions. Subsequent improvements rendered it unnecessary to consider formal action in these cases. The Table below shows defects required to be remedied during the year :

Re-design and modernisation of :					
Restaurants	..	..	..	..	1
Structural defects	..	..	..	..	2
Inadequate supply of hot water	..	..	..	..	2
Sink and drainage defects	..	..	..	..	2
Lack of cleanliness	..	..	..	..	6
Defective/inadequate sanitary accommodation	..	..	..	..	1
Defective/inadequate washing accommodation	..	..	..	..	1
Defective/inadequate food storage facilities	..	..	..	..	1
Defective/inadequate refuse storage facilities	..	..	..	..	3

Interest in food hygiene among food handlers has been maintained and every effort has been made to foster it.

Prosecution

One prosecution under the Act resulted from the discovery, on inspection, of a joint of diseased pork on a butcher's shop premises. The Bench held that the defendant had sustained his claim that the meat was not intended for sale for human consumption and the case was dismissed.

Condemnation of Food (other than Meat).

As a result of inspections carried out at food shops and food preparing premises in the District, a total of 10 cwts. 2 qrs. 14 lb. of food (other than meat) was voluntarily surrendered to and condemned by my Department.

STAFF

Several changes occurred amongst the manual staff during the year. Details of the Department's Staff at 31st December, 1952, were as follows :

OFFICE :

Chief Sanitary Inspector, Meat and Foods Inspector.
Additional Sanitary Inspector.
Clerical Assistant.

CLEANSING :

1 Foreman-driver.
1 Tip-chargehand.
2 Driver/Loaders.
3 Refuse Loaders.
1 Refuse Loader/Gulley Emptier Attendant.
1 Tiphand.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL :

1 Works' Manager.
4 Labourers.
3 Labourers (Part-time).

OTHER :

1 Disinfector/Rodent Operative (Part-time).

The average age of the permanent outside staff is approximately 43 years.



