

Council AGENDA

Monday 28th March 2022 at 7.15pm

**Council Chamber, Braintree District Council, Causeway House,
Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB**

This meeting is a public meeting. The Council is continuing to maintain social distancing at all its public meetings. In order to ensure the safety of everyone involved, members of the public are recommended to watch the meeting live via the Council's YouTube channel and not attend the venue unless they are participating in the meeting or have been advised to do so by the Governance Team.

<http://www.braintree.gov.uk/youtube>

Members of the Council are requested to attend this meeting to discuss the business set out in the Agenda.

Membership:-

Councillor J Abbott	Councillor H Johnson	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt
Councillor J Baugh	Councillor A Kilmartin	Councillor P Schwier
Councillor Mrs J Beavis	Councillor W Korsinah	Councillor Mrs G Spray
Councillor K Bowers	Councillor D Mann	Councillor P Tattersley
Councillor G Butland	Councillor T McArdle	Councillor P Thorogood
Councillor J Coleridge	Councillor J McKee	Councillor N Unsworth
Councillor G Courtauld	Councillor A Munday	Councillor R van Dulken
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham	Councillor Mrs I Parker	Councillor D Wallace
Councillor T Cunningham	Councillor Mrs J Pell	Councillor T Walsh
Councillor C Dervish	Councillor I Pritchard	Councillor L Walters
Councillor P Euesden	Councillor M Radley	Councillor Miss M Weeks
Councillor T Everard	Councillor S Rehman	Councillor D White
Councillor Mrs D Garrod	Councillor F Ricci	Councillor Mrs S Wilson
Councillor A Hensman	Councillor B Rose	Councillor J Wrench
Councillor S Hicks	Councillor J Sandum	Councillor B Wright
Councillor P Horner	Councillor V Santomauro	
Councillor D Hume	Councillor Mrs W Scattergood	

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence to the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

A WRIGHT
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBER – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS
Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Pecuniary Interests (OPI)
or Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI).

Any Member with a DPI, OPI or NPI must declare the nature of their interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Members must not participate in any discussion of the matter in which they have declared a DPI or OPI or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting. In addition, the Member must withdraw from the Chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless the Member has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.

Public Question Time - Registration and Speaking:

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time. Members of the public may ask questions of the Council on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the district.

Members of the public wishing to participate are requested to register by contacting the Governance and Members Team by email (governance@braintree.gov.uk) by **midday on the second working day** before the day of the Committee meeting. For example, if the Committee meeting is due to be held on a Tuesday, the registration deadline is midday on Friday, (Where there is a bank holiday you will need to register by midday the previous Thursday).

Public Question Time Speakers may participate in person, choose to participate virtually, or ask for their statements to be read out by an Officer. The Speaker preference must be indicated upon registration.

The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register for Public Question Time if they are received after the registration deadline.

All questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be heard within the 3 minutes allotted to each speaker.

The Chairman of the Committee has discretion to amend the order in which questions/statements are presented to the Committee.

Public Attendance at Meeting:

Public attendance is welcomed, but is subject to restrictions due to the Council's arrangements for keeping Causeway House Covid secure and visitors safe.

Public attendance limited and will be on a first come first served basis with priority given to any Public Registered Speakers. In order to maintain safe distances, the Council may have to refuse entry to members of the public. The public may not be able to sit in the Council Chamber. If this is the case, members of the public will be able to observe the meeting from a public gallery through a large monitor.

Alternatively, the Council's meetings are all webcast and are available via the Council's YouTube channel and can be viewed by the public as a live broadcast or as a recording following the meeting.

Public Speakers and public attendees are required to attend on their own, and where possible, only one representative of any community group, family household or company should attend. Members of the public intending to come to the meeting venue to observe the meeting are recommended to contact the Governance and Members Team to reserve a seat within the public gallery.

The Council request Members of the public to use face coverings, unless an exemption's applies, as they move around the venue and when using communal areas. Once seated, face coverings can be removed. Please do not attend the meeting if you are feeling unwell. The Council would recommend that anyone who is intending to attend the meeting take a lateral flow test on the morning of the meeting. This will help to protect you and others.

Health and Safety:

Any person attending meetings are requested to take a few moments to familiarise themselves with the nearest available exit, indicated by the fire evacuation signs. In the event of an alarm you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by Officers. You will be assisted to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building.

Mobile Phones:

Please ensure that your mobile phone is switched to silent during the meeting in order to prevent disturbances.

Webcast and Audio Recording:

Please note that this meeting will be webcast and will be available on the Council's YouTube channel.

Documents:

Agendas, Reports, Minutes and Public Question Time questions and statements can be accessed via www.braintree.gov.uk

Data Processing:

For further information on how the Council processes data, please see the Council's Privacy Policy. https://braintree.gov.uk/info/200136/access_to_information/376/privacy_policy

Your Comments:

We welcome comments to make our services as efficient and effective as possible. If you have any suggestions regarding the meeting you have attended, you can send these to governance@braintree.gov.uk

PUBLIC SESSION

Page

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

To declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice where necessary before the meeting.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 21st February 2022 (copy previously circulated).

4 Public Question Time

(See paragraph above)

5 To receive any announcements/statements from the Chairman and/or Leader of the Council.

6 Motion by Councillor Graham Butland - Expression of Support for the People of Ukraine

5 - 6

7 Changes to the Appointments Committee

7 - 9

8 Horizon 120: The Plaza

10 - 12

9 Cabinet's Report to Full Council

13 - 26

Following the presentation of the Cabinet's report to Full Council the Chairman will invite Councillors to ask questions of the Cabinet.

Any Councillor may ask up to two questions, the Leader of the Opposition may ask up to four questions, which relates to the functions of the Leader and Cabinet Members, the powers and duties of the Council or matters pertaining to the District. Questions are not restricted to the contents of the Cabinet Member's report.

Where a verbal response cannot be given at the meeting a written response will be issued to all Councillors within 10 working days of the meeting.

A period of up to 1 hour is allowed for this item. Council Procedural Rule 12.13 applies

.

Agenda Item: 6

Report Title: Motion by Councillor Graham Butland Expression of Support for the People of Ukraine	
Report to: Council	
Date: 28 th March 2022	For: Debate
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: Not applicable
Motion Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland Motion Seconded by: Councillor James Abbott Motion Support by: Councillors Mrs J Pell, D Mann and T Cunningham	
Enquiries to: Emma Wisbey, Governance and Members Manager	

1. Motion:

Braintree District Council is appalled by the horrific devastation in Ukraine, the loss of life and the escalating humanitarian crisis facing that country.

In the light of this, and as a way of expressing support for members of our community who are from or have ties with Ukraine this Council:-

- a) Condemns the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine and stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and their families and friends
- b) Stands ready, to work with partner agencies, to provide support to those affected by this War
- c) Will work with and support the efforts of our local communities to provide help and comfort to those in need
- d) Will encourage our residents to support the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Appeal

2. Constitution provisions:

Appropriate Notice of the Motion has been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedural Rule 12.17 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution.

Notice of Motion was received on 13th March 2022 at 22:34hrs giving 9 clear working days' notice and contains the names of five Councillors supporting the Motion including the proposer and seconder

3. **Amendments to Motion on Notice:**

In accordance with Council Procedural Rule 12.20 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution, no amendments to the Motion shall be moved unless written notice has been given to the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer by 12 noon on the third working day before the meeting of Full Council, namely 12noon on Wednesday 23rd March 2022.

Agenda Item: 7

Report Title: Changes to the Appointments Committee	
Report to: Council	
Date: 28 th March 2022	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council (cldr.gbutland.gov.uk)	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council has a number of Committees whose membership is determined to by the Council. This report outlines the update to the membership of the Appointments Committee and sets out the steps necessary to ensure that the Appointment Committee remains relevant to the recruitment being undertaken at any time.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Council to agree:
- 2.1.1 The membership of the Appointment Committee be increased by one to enable representation of the Labour Group on the Appointment Committee for the recruitment process for the Chief Executive;
- 2.1.2 To appoint Councillor David Mann to the vacancy as the representative of the Labour Group;
- 2.1.3 Authority is delegated to the Monitoring Office to make consequential amendments to the Constitution.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Council is required to have an Appointments Committee as part of its recruitment process for its Statutory and Senior Officers as defined in the Council's Constitution.
- 3.2 The Appointments Committee are responsible for conducting the recruitment process, including interviews for these posts. Appointments of a Statutory Officer is made by Council, following a recommendation from the Appointments Committee at the conclusion of the recruitment process.

- 3.3 Following the notice of retirement of the Council's Chief Executive, Andy Wright, it is now necessary for the Council to commence a recruitment process to appoint a new Chief Executive.
- 3.4 The Appointment Committee is made up of 6 Members:
- Councillor Graham Butland,
 - 3 Cabinet Members (to be appointed by the Leader),
 - Councillor James Abbott, and
 - Councillor Mick Radley
- 3.5 The current membership has representation from all Political Groups except for the Labour Group.
- 3.6 For the appointment of the Chief Executive only, it is considered that all Political Groups should be represented on the Appointments Committee. Consequently, it is recommended that for the purpose of appointing a new Chief Executive, the Appointment Committee's membership be increased by one and Councillor David Mann, as representative of the Labour Group be appointed to that vacancy.
- 3.7 Councillor Butland as Leader of Council may determine the relevant Cabinet Members to the Cabinet Member positions on the Appointment Committee. In advance of the publication of the Agenda for the Appointment Committee, Councillor Butland wishes to advise that the following Cabinet Members will be appointed to the Appointment Committee for the recruitment of the Chief Executive: Councillors Tom Cunningham, Mrs Gabrielle Spray and Richard van Dulken.
- 3.8 The recommendations set out in this report will help the Council to deliver the following Corporate Objectives:
- A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services.

4. Options

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to amend the Appointment Committee. However, that would mean that the Appointments Committee would not have all the Political Groups represented and involved in the recruitment process for the Chief Executive. Accordingly, this is not the recommended option.
- 4.2 The recommended option is for the Council to agree the recommendations set out in this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising out of the recommendations set out in this report.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Article 5 of the Council's Constitution provides that it is a function of Council to approve Council committees, their terms of reference and the appointments to them. The provisions set out in this report are in line with that requirement.
- 6.2 All appointments to Council Committees are required to appoint in accordance with the requirements set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to allocate seats to Political Groups on a politically proportionate basis for the 2021/22 Civic Year. However, Council agreed in the establishment of the Appointment Committee that the requirements would not apply to this Committee.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1 There are no other implications arising out of the recommendations set out in this report.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 8.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 8.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out in this instance, as the provisions relating to the membership of the Appointments Committee are set out within the Councils Constitution. Any equality impact was assessed at that point.

9. List of Appendices

- 9.1 None.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1 [Council meeting - 7th October 2019.](#)
- 10.2 [Council meeting – 21st July 2021](#)
- 10.2 The Council's Constitution – Officer Employment Procedure Rules.

Report Title: Horizon 120: The Plaza	
Report to: Council	
Date: 28 th March 2022	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No:
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: Kim Cole, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer Kim.cole@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Council that it became necessary to use the Special Urgency Provision set out in the Braintree District Council (the Council) Constitution.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 15 February 2022, relating to Horizon 120: The Plaza.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Council's arrangements set out that Cabinet are responsible for taking Key Decisions. In doing so it is necessary that the Council give 28 days' notice of that decision. This is achieved through the publication of the Council's Decision Planner.
- 3.2 However, in accordance with the Special Urgency Procedure, set out within paragraph 15.17 of the Constitution, it became necessary for the Monitoring Officer, on 14th February 2022, to seek consent from the Chairman of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee, to dispense with the 28 day notice period, and agree that the decision should be taken.
- 3.3 Further, in accordance with paragraph 13.11, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, agreed that a matter of urgency had arisen in connection with the work of the Cabinet, and that it required a decision to be taken before the next available meeting of Cabinet. Accordingly, authority to take the urgent Key Decision was invested in the Leader of the Council, Councillor Graham Butland.
- 3.4 Notice of the use of the Special Urgency Provision was published on the Council's website and at its offices.
- 3.5 The Council continues to progress with the development of the Horizon 120 site in Great Notley. The project has now reached the stage where the Plaza is due to be constructed, with an expected completion date of July 2022. The

Plaza building on the Horizon 120 site will be managed by the Council and will be used by Braintree District Council Staff, Tenants of the building and visitors to the building. In order to ensure that the building is ready at the point of opening, it is necessary to ensure that there is sufficient connectivity and furniture in situ. The Council approved the budget for the overall Horizon 120 project, which included the provision for these services to be provided, namely for the Connectivity and associated ICT Services and for the office/conference furniture. Both elements must be in place for the opening of the Plaza in July 2022.

- 3.6 The Council was made aware that the connection and all furniture orders had a lead in time of between 90-120 days, depending on the level of work needed. With the expected opening of the Plaza taking place in July 2022, and in light of the procurement likely to take up to 6 weeks, there was insufficient time to complete the procurement and lead in time for the connection and furniture delivery before the opening of the Plaza, should the Council delay taking the decision until the next available meeting of Cabinet. Accordingly, it was not possible to give the necessary 28 days' notice of its intention to take a Key Decision or now take the matter before Cabinet, without putting at risk the opening of the Plaza. The Council had little option but to look to use its Special Urgency Procedure, in allowing this decision to be taken by the Leader of the Council.
- 3.7 Accordingly on 15th February 2022, the Leader of the Council approved the following decisions:

Internet Connectivity and Associated ICT Services

- 3.7.1 Agree to undertake the appropriate procurement process for the provision of the Internet connectivity and associated ICT Services in line with the budget set out in the Confidential Appendix (of the Decision Report).
- 3.7.2 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Operational), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation to award the contract(s) at the conclusion of the procurement process, provided the contract(s) are within the approved budget as set out in the Confidential Appendix (of the Decision Report).

Plaza Furniture

- 3.7.3 Agree to undertake a procurement through the Crown Commercial services and ESPO Framework for the provision of securing furniture for the Plaza in line with the budget set out in the Confidential Appendix (of the Decision Report).
- 3.7.4 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Economic), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Skills to award the contract(s) at the conclusion of the procurement process, provided the contract(s) are within the approved budget as set out in the Confidential Appendix (9 of the Decision Report).

3.9 A copy of the decision report is available on the Council's website.

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising out of this report. All financial implications arising out of the decision taken by the Leader were considered, and are set out within that decision report.

7. Legal Implications

The use of the Special Urgency provision and the decision taken by the Leader of the Council, was in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Report Title: Cabinet's Report to Full Council	
Report to: Council	
Date: 28 th March 2022	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: N/A	

1. **Introduction**

This report covers the main activities of all Cabinet Members since the last ordinary meeting of full Council.

2. **Councillor Graham Butland - Leader of the Council**

2.1 **External Meetings Attended**

Since the last meeting I have, or will have, attended the following external meetings:

- 2 March EELGA Assembly
- 4 March Transport East Forum
- 7 March Health & Social Care in Mid Essex
- 8 March EELGA Spring Infrastructure and Growth Panel meeting
- 9 March Opening of Travelodge Hotel, Braintree
- 10 March Essex Leaders and Chief Executives
- 14 March Success Essex Board Meeting
- 16 March Essex Health and Wellbeing Board
- 18 March SELEP Strategic Board
- 23 March EELGA and Transport East visit to East Suffolk and Freeport East

2.2 **Essex Leaders & Chief Executives Meeting**

The agenda included a presentation from the new Chief Fire Officer for Essex, an update report on the local position in Essex regarding Coronavirus, and a briefing on the development of the Essex Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

Following the normal meeting, the Leaders held a session to discuss how they wished to take forward the Government's Levelling Up White Paper. It was agreed to establish three working Groups to determine how Greater Essex may wish to tackle the issue.

The work will be divided into three groups, each chaired by a Leader from one of the three upper tier authorities and each working group will focus on a particular set of thematic issues and outcomes as follows:

- Economy, skills and the environment (strategic role in delivering services; giving adults the skills for the adult labour market; supporting local businesses)
- Transport, infrastructure and housing (local control of sustainable transport; local control of infrastructure decisions)
- Community safety, public services, communities and finance (supporting local businesses; investment spending; keeping the public safe and healthy)

The outcomes from the Groups will be fed back to the main meeting in May.

3. **Councillor John McKee – Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation**

3.1 **Finance Service**

3.2.1 **Budget and MTFS**

The major activity of Finance team between New Year and last week of February was the Budget and setting Council Tax for 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 – with details being finalised for the Cabinet Report on 7th February and scrutinised by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee on 2nd February, before being finally approved by Full Council on 21st February.

3.2.2. **Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates as at 31st January 2022**

Council Tax collection – The collection rate was 93.6% at the end of January compared to 93.3% for 2020 and 95.2% for 2019 (pre-pandemic). Target for the year is 98.3%. Total Amount collected £96m.

Business Rates collection – The collection rate was 90.4% at the end of January compared to 89.9% for 2020 and 93.6% for 2019. Target for the year is 98.6%. Total Amount collected £34.5m.

Council Tax collection rate is still improving and collection rates continue to benchmark favourably against other Essex authorities. Business rates whilst improved, still cause for some concern. Recovery on business rates is being made more difficult with the Grant schemes running and with the recent Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) being implemented, which will have an effect on the charges businesses are due to pay for the 2021/22 year.

COVID 19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) – despite using all usual media and news channels, initial response to requests for applications for this new scheme have been very low (6 after the first week) as of writing current applications received is 40. This may be due to the need for businesses to submit an application/ criteria being applied. We continue to promote the scheme as widely as possible and keep uptake under review and other local authorities in Essex are experiencing similar level of applications.

Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant launched. Applications are coming in steadily and payments generally being made within 2 working days of receiving application form, a total sum of £800,000 (out of £1.188m received from Government.) paid out so far in Jan/ Feb. As of 4th March, 250 grants totalling £832,000 have been paid, the Scheme closed on 18th March 2022.

3.2.3 Housing Benefit Claims

Housing benefit performance data for January showed that 219 new benefit claims were being processed on average in 17.6 days compared to a target of 22 days; and change events were taking an average of 5.47 days against a target of 6 days.

3.3 NHS Track and Trace payments

Track and Trace support claims remained high with 746 claims received since the last report, taking total number of claims to 4310. Number approved for payment 1924 (831 mandatory/ 1093 discretionary), with a total amount paid of £962k. The proportion of claims approved for payment is around 51% of the total of claims assessed. Number of claims pending further information/ assessment 535.

3.4 Customer Services

The average call answering time for February was 20 seconds, with 85% of calls answered within 30 seconds. In February, the Customer Service Centre dealt with 8,274 calls, 1,360 emails and 2,619 online enquiries. The percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the Customer Service Centre is currently 72%.

3.5 Human Resources

People Indicators of Performance

	20/21 Year End	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22	Q4 21/22	21/22 Cumulative
Total headcount	499	495	492	494		
Total staff FTE	449.84	446.07	441.97	443.2		
Level of employee turnover	5.01%	3.03%	2.24%	2.63%		7.9%
Number of leavers	25	15	11	13		39
Number of starters	32	11	8	15		34
Working days lost to sickness per employee	5.52 days	1.4 days	1.72 days	1.94 days		5.06 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	57.1%	84.8%	71.95%	60.53%		
Number of learning hours	6114.5	1365.5	1556	2594		5515.5
Number of delegates	280	189	169	152		510

Number of apprentices	16	16	14	19		
-----------------------	----	----	----	----	--	--

3.6 ICT

Cyber Security remains a major focus for the Council, and the Authority needs to remain vigilant to cyber threats from wherever they may originate. The ICT management are ensuring that all advice is reviewed and prioritised for implementation.

Members received an e-mail from Corporate Director (Operational) with advice and tips to remind all Members of their responsibilities and key actions to protect the safety of Members, the Council, our customers and services. As a further reminder:

- Please be vigilant with emails, texts and other messages.
- Please make sure that you have a secure password that complies with our password policy for the Council's systems.
- Protect yourself if you need to use wi-fi hotspots.
- Report anything that you think is suspicious or any data breach immediately.

4 **Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Environment**

4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

4.1.1 Public Health & Housing Team

The Team continue to deal with issues as they arise within the District, including issuing a Notice for clearance of nuisance waste from a rear garden has been served on an occupier of a property in Bocking.

A drainage notice under the Building Act 1984 has begun against a property that has failed to respond to requests to resolve a defective drain which is resulting in an overflow leachate flowing down toward the local school.

4.1.2 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

DFG Grant Officer Greg Scott has been praised by one “ecstatic” family. Greg co-ordinated the DFG project between the private contractor, architect, ECC Social Services and the Client to make a life-changing improvement to the care and home life of a family within the District. The family commented “Life altering. Thank you so much.”

4.1.3 Handyman Scheme

The Council's Handyman scheme is going well with 86 handyman visits made from October – December 25 in January/February 2022.

Key Safe installation to allow for Hospital Discharge increased during Covid and remains very busy – we have carried out installations in other districts (Brentwood, Maldon and Chelmsford) the costs of these installations are reclaimed through the Authorities Covid Funding. This scheme has been received exceptionally well and

discussions are ongoing with others Authorities possibly paying installation via DFG funding in the future.

4.2 CLIMATE CHANGE

4.2.1 Climate Change

The Council will soon be embarking on its procurement process as part of the Air Quality Monitoring Methodology Review.

A Letter of Concern has been sent to Rt Hon Grant Shapps and Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng in relation to the cessation of the EV Homecharge scheme as requested by the Climate Member Working Group.

The Carbon Trust have been contacted for assistance with the Climate Strategy with their carbon benchmarking and their complex carbon cycle calculation software. The Council have asked the Trust to supply a support proposal.

A Climate Action Pack is being developed to help support SMEs on the steps they can take to become more sustainable. As an output of the Essex Climate Action Commission, this pack aims to bring together the most relevant information available into a 'go to' resource. It will include case studies, sustainability ideas, signposting to resources and links to potential funding pots where available.

4.2.2 Electric Vehicle Charging

Two 22Kw fast EV chargers have been installed at Victoria Square and are due to be commissioned imminently.

Two 22Kw fast EV chargers cables are being laid for Enterprise Centre, Horizon site.

Two 22kW fast EV chargers at I-Construct have now been installed and commissioned

4.2.3 Energy Efficiency

Those registered for the October Auction have been rolled over into February Energy Switching Auction. 700 registered through the Council's link. The February Auction has been launched and the Council is waiting to see what the Energy Suppliers offers are ready to go back to residents. It is expected that the offer will be similar to that in October where the offer was above the price cap and therefore no uptake.

ECO Flex has 221 households signed up this year – double the application received this year. Each application is very specific dependent on the resident's need and can highlight further services the residents are eligible for.

Delivery of LAD 2 funding (Green Homes Grant) of £449 now underway for Braintree District – Warmworks still rolling out the promotion and a number of residents have signed up. Applications close on 31st March 2022.

The Solar Together Scheme was launched on 7th February 2022.

4.3 OPERATIONS AND STREET SCENE

4.3.1 Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Arrangements are being made for the planting of a tree at Weaver's Park, Witham Town Park and Halstead Public Gardens on 11th March 2022 to commemorate the Jubilee.

Officers are looking at the option of procuring hanging baskets for Braintree Town Centre and Causeway House planted up in silver and purple. Consideration is also being given to planting red, white and blue flowers in selective beds in and around the District.

The Council is looking at the option of installing three commemorative benches - one in each town – to be sited in public parks/gardens.

4.3.2 Bininfrastructure

New yellow litter bins have been installed on the strategic network (A12, A120 and A131) funded from a Government grant. In accordance with WRAP guidelines, the Council opted for a brighter colour as the more visible the bins are, the more people are likely to see them and use them.

4.3.3 Litter Signs Trial

Following the successful conclusion of the Litter Signs Trial, Essex County Council and National Highways have agreed to the signs becoming a permanent feature along the strategic and link roads throughout the District and Officers are currently preparing a programme of site locations for the coming year. District and County Councillors, along with Parish and Town Councils have been invited to identify suitable locations for inclusion in the programme and it is proposed to re-launch the initiative as part of the Great British Spring Clean (25 March – 10 April 2022).

4.3.4 Cemeteries

Improvement works to the cremated remains section of Braintree Cemetery are in progress. This includes topping up the chipped bark on pathways to increase under foot safety and control weeds in an environmentally friendly way. Bark chipped pathways are being installed to create a natural and colourful area for visitors off the main path and roadways.

4.4 Street Scene Enforcement

The information below shows the routine work undertaken by the Enforcement Team throughout January 2022.

- 11 Dog barking complaints
- 3 Dog fouling complaints
- 9 Stray dogs detained (7 for Braintree District Council and 2 for Uttlesford District Council)
- 26 Reports of anti-social behaviour

Number of fly-tips reported

Month	2021/2 2	2020/2 1
April	78	94
May	60	65
June	60	104
July	67	69
August	66	67
September	72	66
October	57	62
November	64	73
December	51	49
January	61	67
TOTAL	636	716

4.5 Improvements to Open Space

S106 monies are being used to make improvements to land adjacent to Notley Green Primary School that is within the District Council's ownership. This includes reforming the ditch line to enable the free flow of water; coppicing and facing back the hedge line to prevent encroachment onto the public open space; and similar work along the footpath to provide clear pedestrian access.

5 Councillor Tom Cunningham – Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

5.1 ARG update

The final round of Additional Restrictions Grant funding has now been fully allocated and awarded to 243 businesses. Business who were not eligible for support in other grant schemes and who worked in or the supply chain for the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors were eligible to a one off grant of £1,500. Taxi drivers, those working in events and entertainment and mobile personal care businesses were the most successful in this tranche of funding.

5.2 Town Centre Events/Markets

The monthly street market dates for Braintree Town Centre have been announced and are due to restart monthly from March. A variety of events and entertainers were out and about in February to encourage people to the town centres of Witham and Braintree, although some proposed events were impacted by the weather, and further food and drink stalls were added to the regular Saturday market in Braintree town centre. Officers are working with Halstead and Witham Town Councils on event planning and we hope to announce further events soon across all 3 towns.

5.3 Shared prosperity funding, opportunities.

The Government made a preannouncement of UK shared prosperity funding in February. Whilst the detail including the amount allocated to each authority has not yet been announced, what has been confirmed is that this is not a competitive process, and each Local Authority such as ours will receive an allocation from government which we will need to complete and have approved an Investment Plan.

The 3 areas for spend have also been announced which are community and place, supporting local businesses and skills. We are expecting more detailed announcements and our allocation in the Spring I will update members further at that point.

6 Councillor Kevin Bowers – Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Skills

6.1 Affordable Housing

There were 14 affordable housing completions in February 2021, on sites in Cressing, Earls Colne, Halstead and Braintree. This now gives a total of 375 completions year to date, from April 2021 to February 2022.

The affordable housing delivery programme will comfortably exceed the annual plan target of 250 and the number of completions for the year will be the highest annual delivery of affordable housing ever achieved in the District.

6.2 Victoria Square

As at the time of writing, the following elements had achieved practical completion:

- Bus Interchange
- Travelodge
- Livewell Hub
- Lower ground floor car park

The apartments are all programmed for completion before the end of March and the last element, the Town Hall plaza, is programmed for 6th April.

The Travelodge is now fully operational, and we celebrated the opening of the new hotel at an official opening on the 9th March 2022.

6.3 Digigo

The new electric minibus service due to begin its service across Braintree town and surrounding areas, including Horizon 120, is on target to start on 28th March 2022. A launch event is being arranged for April.

6.4 Horizon 120 Business & Innovation Park

Six buildings are now under construction with the start of works on Plots 1, 2 & 3. The CareCo building is due to complete and open for business at the end of May this year. This will bring the first 200 employees onto the Park.

6.5 The Horizon 120 Plaza Innovation and Enterprise centre

Construction works are progressing well with completion due in June 2022. The final SELEP claim has now been submitted, committing the £7 million grant well in advance of the 31st March deadline.

Work is progressing at pace to finalise the fit out of the building, including the ICT equipment, furniture, and the marketing of the office lets and other spaces.

6.6 Skills

Through our partnership work with the North Essex Economic Board, a programme of skills courses for businesses has been launched being delivered by COLBEA. Topics include digital skills, finance and import/export and are available free to businesses in the NEEB project area.

A programme of digital skills for individuals through the NEEB area has also been developed and subject to the agreement of procurement at the Cabinet meeting in March, this will be launched shortly thereafter. The programme includes a range of programmes, from basic digital skills development and the provision of digital equipment, to offering certified courses in digital subjects to working with those who are currently employed to gain skills and work placements across of a range of in demand sectors.

7 Councillor Mrs Gabrielle Spray – Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure

7.1 Integrated Waste Management Facility (IWMF) – Rivenhall Airfield

Essex County Council as the Waste and Minerals Planning Authority considered an application for the discharge of condition 66 in relation to the Integrated Waste Management Facility (IWMF) at Rivenhall Airfield at a meeting of its Development and Regulation Committee on 25th February 2022.

The Committee agreed to approve to discharge condition 66 based on the applicant's Option 1 only, i.e. that the IWMF as currently approved comes forward in its entirety in order that it delivers sustainable development. Other options which involved only parts of the approved facilities coming forward into operational use were rejected.

Separately the Developer, Indavor, have advised the Planning Inspectorate that it is looking to go through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Process (NSIP) to approve the energy generation on the site as it now exceeds the 50MW limit that Local Planning Authorities can consider. Officers are working with Essex County Council to consider the implication of this and the expected timescale, and I will keep Members updated.

7.2 Longfield Solar Farm - Member briefing, any update

Members will be aware that a private developer is working through the National Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) process with the Planning Inspectorate for a large solar farm on the border between Chelmsford and Braintree. The solar farm if approved would cover just under 460ha of land and could generate 350MW of power, which could supply 70,000 homes with electricity. The scheme is progressing towards a Development Consent Order and Members were invited to an update meeting with the Developer on the 18th March 2022.

7.3 Bradford Street and Braintree Town Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plan.

Consultation has been completed on these plans and around 25 comments have been received. These will be considered by officers and the heritage consultants before a final decision is made.

7.4 Neighbourhood Plans

Kelvedon Neighbourhood Plan was subject to referendum on 3rd March 2022. The results were 707 in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan and 42 being against, with a turnout of almost 28%.

Feering Neighbourhood Plan has reached Regulation 16 stage which is the final public consultation prior to it being considered by an Independent examiner. The consultation runs between the 3rd March and the 14th April 2022 and I would encourage residents, businesses and local stakeholders to consider the draft plan and provide comments.

8 Councillor Peter Tattersley – Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

8.1 Members Development Evening

The Member Development Evening held on 24th February provided an insight and membership proposals for the newly formed Integrated Care Boards and plans for how the Integrated Care System (ICS) will operate. It is proposed that the ICS's be put onto a statutory footing with a new emphasis on strong, local and inclusive partnerships with the District, County Council and voluntary and community sector partners, including a desire to reduce bureaucracy and streamline governance both within the NHS and between the NHS and its partners.

The County Council representative at the meeting highlighted how subjects for the Council, working with partners across the Health and Wellbeing network, were identified and promoted as part of the Livewell Strategy.

Members raised several issues and clear views were expressed on how the NHS and Primary Care Networks should develop.

8.2 Covid Response

Whilst the Covid pandemic has not gone away we are starting to find ways of living with the virus and I thought it would be useful to outline some of the involvement made by or partners and staff.

- 53 Town & Parish Councils in the District. 49 were co-ordinating volunteers or were able to give a contact for a mutual aid group.
- The Council's Community Transport Team made 157 shopping, prescription collecting or Foodbank Trips.
- Staff from Community Services, Braintree Town Hall, Community Transport and Print Room manned the Hub receiving calls for assistance and 464 referrals were recorded.

- 3,269 contacts were made with people considered to be Clinically Extremely Vulnerable mostly by telephone but also email, letter and door step checks.
- Help requested for food shopping, prescription collection, befriending/welfare calls.

8.3 My Weight Matters

One of the key subject areas highlighted in our Livewell strategy relates to the issue of obesity. A free weight management programme for adults based on NHS guidance has been developed. The aim of the programme is to support individuals to lose weight in a safe, steady and controlled way and help change unhealthy habits for healthier ones. Partners involved included Provide, Essex Wellbeing Service, Braintree District Council, Fusion Lifestyle and Sport for Confidence. In the one year period prior to the pandemic 105 people were referred to the programme, 80 people signed up, 49% completed the programme and 4.4kg was the average weight loss.

8.4 Winter Resilience

Fuel poverty is an increasing problem and with significant price increases expected this year it was clear there is a need to focus on bringing together partners to better join up work to support individuals through winter pressures. A district wide group including statutory services, community and voluntary sector groups, Local Councils and faith groups was created.

These are examples of the activities undertaken by the partnership:-

- 8600 Here to Help brochures were distributed
- 200 winter warmth bags distributed to those most in need
- 650 Christmas presents given to children across the district
- 45 people attended the United Reform Church in Witham where the British Legion organised Christmas dinner
- 40 individuals attended the Salvation Army in Braintree with 12 volunteers providing dinner & further refreshments
- 72 oven ready meals were also delivered by 20 volunteers to residents
- Elim Church supported 31 families with bags of Christmas dinner ingredients
- Community Fridges, First Stop and Witham Community hub provided an increased amount of food to those families most in need
- Slow cookers were distributed
- Community 360 have allocated £45,000 to support essential items for people across the district and £35,000 for food vouchers, essential items and bills including ring-fencing £2,500 for food vouchers over the Christmas period
- The Council has allocated £2020 to 19 households with children & 12 households without children

8.5 Leisure Contract update

The Council approved the extension of the Leisure Contract with Fusion Lifestyle for 5 years from September 2022 with a 3 year break clause, taking the operation with Fusion through until August 2027 who will be investing £1million into new fitness equipment and improvements to the Districts facilities over the next 6 months. The Council will continue to receive a management fee from Fusion Lifestyle for the period of the extension.

9 **Councillor Frankie Ricci – Cabinet Member for Communities**

9.1 **Community Safety Partnership Workshop**

The Braintree District Community Safety Partnership held a workshop with 12 Partners to discuss and agree the strategic assessment and priorities for 2022/23. The strategic assessment is an annual requirement of CSP's and will inform the work of the CSP moving into the new financial year.

9.2 **Citizens Advice**

We are working closely with the Braintree, Halstead and Witham (BHW) Citizens Advice Service to agree a new partnership agreement for 2022/23 and focusing on three key areas:-

- Increasing the numbers of residents receiving support
- Volunteer Resilience
- Sustainable Funding

The BHW Citizens Advice will provide regular monitoring and we will provide updates to members through these reports.

9.3 **Cycle Strategy and RideLondon**

Braintree District Council recognised the importance of promoting Cycling through its' Cycling Strategy approved in 2021.

The high-profile RideLondon event in May 2022 has been selected to take place in Essex this year, taking advantage of the District's good road network, scenic lanes, rolling countryside and showcases the beauty of the area.

Riders are able to follow in the tyre tracks of previous riders in the well-known and tested route of the Stage 3 of the 2014 Tour de France, through Finchingfield.

A key commitment of the Cycling Strategy is to promote cycling for all ages and abilities and supporting active lifestyles. The RideLondon event creates enormous synergy opportunities to increase cycling with family friendly ride options as well as being a spring event date to inspire and maintain the momentum to cycle all year round.

It brings people of all backgrounds and abilities together to be part of a truly unique, fun and inspirational event to Braintree District.

9.4 **Jubilee Celebrations**

- **Venues Team Jubilee Celebrations** - The Town Hall is holding a Dementia Friendly Jubilee Lunch on Monday 30th May. Singer Steph Felton will be singing classic hits along with sandwiches, savouries, cakes with tea and coffee will be served. Booking for the event will be available at the beginning of April.
- **Tree planting** - We are planting a tree as part of the [Queen's Green Canopy](#) at Weavers Park Braintree and Witham Town Park on Friday 11th March, planting a

tree with Halstead Town Council in the public gardens and promoting schools, individuals and community groups who are planting trees and bulbs as part of our community bulb and tree initiative. We encourage groups and organisations to log their trees onto the Queen Canopy website.

- **Bedding and hanging baskets** - We will be planting some of this year's summer bedding in red, white and blue at Braintree and Bocking Public Gardens, Halstead Public Gardens, Witham Memorial Gardens and the bed outside the front of Causeway House.
- **Community Events** - We are talking to Halstead and Witham Town Councils and Parish Councils about any events that they are planning to hold and whether they need support. We are pulling together details of events run by Parish and Town Councils and Community Groups to promote them.
- **Beacons** - some towns and villages will be holding beacon lighting events on 2nd June and we will promote these. Gosfield Parish Council are hosting a beacon event and have invited the Chairman and other guests.
- **Window dressing competition** - We are planning to hold a window dressing competition for businesses across all three town centres during Jubilee weekend as a way of celebrating our local high streets.
- **Public appeal for residents celebrating 70th anniversary** - We are appealing to residents to share their stories with us if they are marking a 70th milestone this year that we can share as part of the Queens Jubilee celebrations.
- **Street Party guide** - We are preparing a street guide that will focus on advice for residents on how to organise a street party and guidance on road closures and licensing. It will also include hints and tips on planning, and recipes they can use for street parties for The Big Jubilee Lunch. This will be available on our website.
- **Comms** - We are in the early stages of planning events and activities and will issue communications on plans as they progress, including press releases, social media, e-newsletters and on our website.

10 **Councillor Richard van Dulken – Cabinet Member for Operations and Commercialisation**

10.1 **Waste & Recycling**

By the end of January, there were 2,955 members in Braintree's Freecycle Group, up from 1,621 in December. This is a massive increase and it is gratifying to see more people reusing other people's unwanted items.

10.2 **Licensing**

The team continue to process a higher than average number of new vehicle and driver applications mainly driven by several large companies choosing to license their vehicles/drivers with the Council. On average since the start of the year the team are conducting 14/15 knowledge tests a week in addition to the revision training provided prior to the tests.

A complete Policy and Procedures review is underway for taxis. This is being conducted by a Member Working Group of the Licensing Committee supported by Officers. The work of the Member Working Group will be presented to the Licensing Committee.

10.3 Highways

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Applications for temporary road closures are beginning to arrive for street parties throughout the District to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Comms & Marketing are creating a 'How To Apply' guide to encourage more people to apply.

10.4 Parking

The Victoria Square car park is now operational, with 48 spaces available to the public.

Along with about a quarter of all UK car park operators, The Council's car parks have been awarded the Park Mark accreditation for yet another year – this confirms that our car parks continue to maintain standards for low crime and for measures being in place to ensure the safety of people and of vehicles.

Negotiations are underway for a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) for the Off-street Parking Service. The current SLA finishes on 31 March 2022 and the Council are looking to negotiate a new one that runs concurrent with the On-street Parking Contract between Essex County Council and the NEPP.

10.5 Commercialisation

At the beginning of March the Investment and Development Programme pipeline had increased to £1,646,920 – the non-budgeted pipeline was £1,489,720.

The Library SLA project with Essex County Council has now completed (annual saving of £27,000).

The Hybrid Mail and Digital (billboard) projects are moving ahead with no major impediments to their schedules.