

Cabinet AGENDA

Monday, 13th March 2017 at 7:15 PM

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

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

(Please note this meeting will be webcast and audio recorded)

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Members of the Cabinet are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.

Membership:-

Portfolio

Leader of the Council	Councillor G Butland (Chairman)
Environment and Place	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt (Deputy Leader of the Council)
	Councillor R Mitchell
Planning and Housing	Councillor Lady Newton
	Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint
Economic Development	Councillor T Cunningham
	Councillor B Rose
Health and Communities	Councillor P Tattersley
Finance and Performance	Councillor D Bebb
Corporate Services and Asset Management	Councillor J McKee

Invitees

Representatives of the Labour Group, Halstead Residents Association Group and Green Party and Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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.

N BEACH
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest

Any member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest 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 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other Pecuniary Interest 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.

Question Time

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes when members of the public can speak. Members of the public wishing to speak are requested to register by contacting the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk no later than 2 working days prior to the meeting. The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register to speak if they are received after this time. Members of the public can remain to observe the public session of the meeting.

Please note that there is public Wi-Fi in the Council Chamber, users are required to register in order to access this. There is limited availability of printed agendas.

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Documents

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We welcome comments from members of the public 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 via governance@braintree.gov.uk

AGENDA

No	Title and Purpose of Report	Pages
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 Cabinet held on 6th February 2017 (copy previously circulated).	
4	Public Question Time (See paragraph above)	
5	OVERALL CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DIRECTION	
5a	Leader's Update Leader of the Council to give a brief update on key issues and activities.	
5b	Annual Plan 2017 - 18	5 - 18
6	FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE	
6a	Third Quarter Performance Management Report 2016-17	19 - 45
6b	Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme for Charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs and Not-for-Profit Organisations	46 - 61

7 PLANNING AND HOUSING

7a Consultations on the proposed improvements to the A120 and A12 Widening Project

Report to follow.

8 REPORTS/ DELEGATED DECISIONS/MINUTES TO BE NOTED

8a Cabinet Member Decisions made under Delegated Powers 62 - 64

8b [Local Plan Sub-Committee - 15th February 2017](#)

9 URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

10 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS TO CONSIDER REPORTS IN PRIVATE SESSION

for reasons set out in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

AGENDA – PRIVATE SESSION

There is no business for Private Session.

Annual Plan 2017 - 18		Agenda No: 5b
Portfolio	Overall Strategy and Direction	
Corporate Outcome:	Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers	
Report presented by:	Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Report prepared by:	Nicola Beach, Chief Executive	
Background Papers:	Public Report	
Annual Plan 2017-18	Key Decision: Yes	
Executive Summary:		
<p>The Annual Plan sets out our actions and performance targets for 2017/18. These actions and targets will support the Corporate Strategy 2016 – 2020, which was agreed in February 2016. The actions and performance targets are aligned to each of our corporate strategy themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment and Place• Strategic Growth and Infrastructure• Economic Development• Health and Communities• Finance and Performance• Overall Strategy and Direction <p>Progress made against these actions and targets will be reported to Cabinet quarterly.</p>		
Recommended Decision:		
To approve the Annual Plan 2017/18.		
Purpose of Decision:		
To agree the Council’s key priorities and actions for 2017/18		

Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail	
Financial:	The projects in the Annual Plan have been considered as part of the annual budget setting process and budgets were approved in February 2017. Each project will have its own budget which will be monitored as part of the project management process. Budget issues will also be reviewed as part of the quarterly reporting process.
Legal:	As part of the project management process for each project, there will be an assessment of the legal implications.
Safeguarding	Any safeguarding concerns will be assessed in the planning for each project.
Equalities/Diversity	An equalities impact assessment will be completed for each relevant project.
Customer Impact:	Customer Impact will be considered in the planning for each project.
Environment and Climate Change:	The Environment and Place priorities have a number of actions which seek to protect our environment. Further information on this is available in our Corporate Strategy.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Consultation has been carried out as part of the budget setting process and will be carried out as part of the planning for individual projects where required.
Risks:	If the annual plan priorities are not endorsed, then there will be no basis for a work programme to deliver the corporate priorities. Risk assessments are carried out as part of the project planning and business planning process. These are considered at a service level and at a management board level. Portfolio holders will also consider strategic risks, which may arise from or affect the delivery of the annual plan priorities and performance targets.
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Our plans for the District in 2017/18

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Welcome to Braintree District Council's Plan for 2017/18

Local government finance is facing its most significant change for decades with the ending of the main grant we receive from Central Government. Alongside this, Braintree District is set to grow significantly over the coming decades so we all need to prepare by ensuring infrastructure improvements and facilities are not only delivered for existing residents, but also for future growth. The new Local Plan is key to this. You can read more about it within the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure part of this document or by visiting www.braintree.gov.uk/newlp.

As a result of our prudent financial planning, we feel we are in a stronger position than most and we are keen to invest in the District, reduce our costs, increase income, maintain our good services and minimise impact on our customers.

We've used the challenges councils face as the catalyst to do things differently, to invest in our communities. Investing in much-needed health care facilities, for example, solves a crucial local problem while creating a healthy return on investment for reinvestment in the community. Clearly our ambition doesn't end with health; we're also looking for opportunities to invest in town centres, businesses, roads and other infrastructure. Sensible investment, based on local need and enabling a host of agencies to improve outcomes for our residents, helps us to create a District where people are happy to live, work and be healthy.

Within this document you will be able to take a look at what we have achieved in 2016/2017 but also what our plans are for 2017/18.

Councillor Graham Butland
Leader of Braintree District Council

Nicola Beach
Chief Executive



Vision/Outcome

A sustainable
environment and a great
place to live, work and
play

To support this in 2016/17 we have:

- Introduced a recycling service to 2,700 flats and food waste collections to 29 schools across the District
- Completed 7.8 million (99.9%) waste collections on their scheduled collection day
- Reduced litter across Essex by 43% by working in partnership with Essex Local Authorities and business partners to deliver a 'Love Essex' anti-litter campaign
- Expanded the commercial waste service to include recycling, helping businesses to manage and dispose of their waste more responsibly
- Delivered the Braintree Energy Switch Scheme to provide potentially cheaper energy tariffs for over 1900 residents in the District
- Refurbished two Braintree play areas at Goldingham Drive and Milton Avenue improving the play experience for local children
- Created a new allotment site at Bocking providing a further 32 plots
- Expanded Bocking cemetery to meet anticipated demand over the next 25 years
- Maintained high standards across Braintree District Council owned play areas leading to 21 awards from Essex Playing Field Association including four gold awards, eight silver awards and a further five certificates of merit
- Won 'Gold' and 'Best Medium Sized Park' awards for Halstead Public Gardens in the Anglia in Bloom competition
- Dedicated and protected four open spaces as part of the fields in trust centenary programme including a 'Showcase Centenary Field' at Marshalls Park in Braintree
- Improved the energy efficiency at Braintree Town Hall by installing secondary double glazing and low energy lighting

In 2017/18 we will:

Minimising Waste

- Continue to support the Essex Waste Management Partnership to reduce waste, increase recycling and participate in countywide campaigns
- Upgrade and improve recycling bring bank sites in the Braintree District to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet customer demand
- Increase recycling by working with businesses to review their waste disposal requirements and provide a high quality commercial waste and recycling service

Green Spaces

- Protect larger public open spaces in the District from unauthorised access, including illegal encampments, to maintain the quality of the local area and prevent disruption and inconvenience to local residents

Reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions

- Organise energy switching schemes throughout the year for both residents and businesses in the District to lower the cost of their energy bills, to address fuel poverty

Keeping District Clean and Tidy

- Work with other Essex Councils and the Environment Agency to tackle fly tipping in the District and across the County to keep the area clear of rubbish
- Maintain a focus on investigating and enforcing littering and dog fouling incidents to help keep the District looking clean and tidy
- Deliver a dog fouling campaign to change the behaviour of irresponsible dog owners

**Vision/Outcome**

A well connected and
growing district with high
quality homes and
infrastructure

To support this in 2016/17 we have:

- Consulted on the preferred options and completed the evidence base to support the Local Plan
- Granted planning permission for over 1200 dwellings supporting the delivery of much needed housing across the District
- Enabled the delivery of 48 affordable homes across the District
- Produced a Housing Allocations Policy to assist in allocating properties for rent through the Gateway to Homechoice scheme
- Continued to lobby Network Rail to improve the rail services for Braintree
- Worked in partnership with Essex County Council and Highways England to support the construction on the Millennium Way slip roads

In 2017/18 we will:**Local Plan**

- Produce a draft Local Plan to submit to Government for examination

Increasing the number of homes

- Continue to explore the development of Garden Communities alongside the decisions in the Local Plan to provide housing, employment and supporting infrastructure to address our long term housing and community needs
- Explore the viability of setting up a Housing Development Company to deliver new mixed-tenure homes across the District

Affordable Housing

- Provide 130 affordable homes across the District
- Develop a new Homelessness Strategy for 2018 to 2023 to prevent and alleviate homelessness

Sustainable transport infrastructure links

- Work with partner agencies to continue to drive forward strategic improvements to the Braintree and Witham rail link
- Continue to work with Essex County Council and Highways England to identify and deliver improvements to the A120 and A12
- Work with Essex County Council to tackle congestion at Springwood Drive and Panfield Lane



Vision/Outcome

A prosperous district that attracts business growth and provides high quality employment opportunities

To support this in 2016/17 we have:

- Built an additional 12 incubator units providing start-up businesses with integrated business support and work space options
- Achieved 71% superfast broadband coverage across the District in conjunction with Superfast Essex
- Supported over 300 jobseekers, together with Department of Work and Pensions, by providing face to face access to employers by hosting two job fairs
- Delivered four business engagement events providing advice and support to businesses across the District
- Provided a £200,000 business loan to the Colne Valley Railway Preservation Society for their redevelopment plans, which helped them secure a Heritage Lottery Grant of £1.7 million and remain a visitor attraction within the District
- Secured detailed planning permission to build four grow-on units at the Braintree Enterprise Centre

In 2017/18 we will:

Employment Sites and premises

- Improve existing industrial estates and business parks to retain businesses within the District and support business growth
- Attract investment to the District by delivering the Braintree Enterprise Centre grow-on space and securing at least one pre-let tenant from within one of the District's key sectors
- Secure the required funding package to deliver the Witham Enterprise Centre.

Providing support to help businesses start and grow

- Support 84 Business start-ups in conjunction with IGNITE
- Strengthen business engagement by delivering a programme of business events and monthly visits to ensure two way communications with businesses
- Support the Haven Gateway Partnership in establishing a Sectoral Business Network that has strong engagement from Braintree businesses

Developing educational attainment and skills

- Launch an employment and skills partnership board to address educational attainment and employment skills needs within the District
- Ensure businesses understand the Apprenticeship Levy and utilise it for the best outcome for young people
- Engage with schools to encourage students to realise the benefits of apprenticeships and vocational further education in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects

Support our Economy

- Agree a vision and strategy for Braintree Town Centre to complement the regeneration of Manor Street and to enhance the appeal of the town centre to visitors.

- In partnership with Essex County Council, deliver the regeneration schemes in Witham and Halstead
- Deliver the business hub on the Premdor site in Sible Hedingham

Broadband links

- Continue to work with Essex County Council on implementation of phase III of the Superfast Essex programme to increase superfast broadband coverage across the District

**Vision/Outcome**

Residents live well in healthy and resilient communities where residents feel supported

To support this in 2016/17 we have:

- Increased participation in sport through the 'Get outdoors' campaign with Fusion which encouraged residents to participate in new sporting opportunities and activities
- Engaged with 16 fast food takeaways to encourage them to take positive steps to reduce fat, salt and sugar levels in the food they offer
- Published a healthy eating recipe booklet and associated website to encourage residents to cook from scratch and live well
- Invested in local health facilities across the District to support the delivery of improved health care provision including the opening of the new St Lawrence GP surgery in Braintree
- Introduced Community Priced weddings at the Town Hall following the closure of the Registry Office in Braintree
- Increased the number of Dementia Action Alliance members providing support across the District to help improve the lives of people living with Dementia
- Launched the Councillors' Community Grant Scheme to offer funding which supports community projects and local initiatives
- Improved the housing conditions of over 50 vulnerable residents by launching a pilot handyman service
- Awarded five organisations grant funding of £94,000 for life enhancing projects' through the Braintree District and Greenfields Community Fund

In 2017/18 we will:**Support residents to be healthy and live well**

- Introduce the 'Livewell Child' project in selected schools across the District to support children and families to make healthy lifestyle choices, with the ambition of halting the accelerated growth in childhood obesity
- Install state of the art disability access hoists at Halstead & Braintree swimming pools
- Install a drainage system at the sports pitches in Deanery Gardens and King George V playing field to ensure the pitches can be used throughout the year
- Improve the playing experience at Witham Sports Ground by replacing the artificial surface and installing a new 2G surface
- Replace the safety surfacing, where needed, at various plays areas across the District to provide a better and safer environment for visitors

- Recognise the contribution volunteers make to our District by holding a Community Awards event to celebrate success in this field
- Continue to invest in local health facilities across the District by providing doctors surgeries that can meet current and future needs as the District grows including town and rural areas, e.g. Witham and Sible Hedingham

Protecting the Vulnerable

- Develop and deliver better ways of providing support for disabled and frail residents by improving the allocation of the better care fund
- Deliver an awareness campaign and initiatives to support isolated and lonely residents

Improving services to meet the needs of the older people in the district

- Develop the Braintree District Community Transport Scheme Action Plan 2017 – 2019 to ensure we have a scheme to support our residents with their travel needs
- Deliver a range of 'age well' activities across the District to encourage inactive over 60's to become active again

Encouraging Independent and resilient communities

- Support community groups to deliver local projects and activities through the Councillors' Community Grant Scheme
- Work with the Braintree District Dementia Action Alliance to develop a dementia friendly community to raise awareness and transform the lives of people living with dementia



Finance and Performance

Vision/Outcome

A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services

To support this in 2016/17 we have:

- Achieved the Customer Service Excellence Standard, in recognition of the high standard of customer service provided
- Improved the content and accessibility of our website which now enables customers to view their Council Tax bills securely on line and access the website from their mobile phones and tablets
- Introduced a more user friendly on-line application form for commercial waste customers and a dedicated email address for enquiries
- Increased the number of people visiting our website and transacting with us on-line
- Reviewed a number of our services to ensure efficiency and provide value for money for our residents
- Improved the rate of return on investments achieved through an additional £2 million invested in pooled funds
- Acquired commercial units at Springwood Drive and Century Drive providing employment opportunities and an income stream for the Council
- Improved satisfaction rates with the way the Council is run from 81% to 86%, the district as a good place to live from 87% to 92% and offering value for money from 59% to 62%

In 2017/18 we will:

Need projects around:

Review of services and processes to ensure they continue to provide value for money

- Increase the amount of Council Tax collected by participating in an Essex wide initiative to compare data to help detect and address errors or possible fraud
- Implement a new discretionary business rate relief scheme for charities and not-for-profit organisations which is clear and transparent to all applicants supporting the organisation's activities which directly benefit Braintree District residents

Strengthening the councils financial independence

- Take a commercial approach how we operate to protect front line services by maximising the potential to generate income
- Support local business by offering sponsorship and advertising opportunities
- Use our assets (e.g. land, buildings, money) to deliver value for money for taxpayers whilst seeking to generate a reasonable revenue return for reinvestment

Improving performance in services that are a priority for customers

- Improve customer focused services by delivering a programme of continuous improvement to maintain the Customer Service Excellence accreditation

Improving access to services through the use of technology

- Raise awareness of the services available on-line and support customers to be able to use them
- Improve our website and associated technologies to ensure they are convenient and easy for customers to use



**Overall strategy
and direction**

Vision/Outcome

Delivering better
outcomes for residents
and businesses and
reducing costs to taxpayers

To support this in 2016/17 we have:

- Approved a District Investment Strategy to invest £28 million in the District to improve health facilities, town centres and infrastructure as well as investing in opportunities that support growth and provide a return for the Council
- Worked in partnership with Essex County Council and Highways England to develop an appropriate scheme to improve the A120 connectivity and unlock development land required to fulfil housing and employment growth
- Contributed to the work of the Essex Waste Management Partnership by taking part in a series of successful recycling and re-use campaigns

In 2017/18 we will:

Work with Councils, other public bodies and the private sector across Essex, to achieve greater local control of decisions to enable us to deliver better outcomes for residents, businesses and customers

Continue to develop our strategic partnerships with public, private and voluntary organisations to provide excellent and cost effective services

- Deliver projects under the **District Investment Strategy** to achieve better outcomes for the District and a return for the taxpayers' purse by:
 - Working in partnership to improve health provision across the District
 - Carrying out improvements to our three Town Centres
 - Providing increased opportunity for new businesses and employment
 - Identifying and delivering improvements to our most congested roads
 - Delivering investment opportunities that support growth and provide a return for the District Council
- Work effectively with Highways England, Essex County Council and other key partners to support:
 - the planned **A12 widening scheme** from Chelmsford to A120;
 - the campaign for **Improvements to the A120** (Braintree Town to A12) with the recommendation of a preferred option to be considered by Government for inclusion in the next Road Investment Strategy (runs from 2020 to 2025)
- To continue to work collaboratively with partner authorities (Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council) and other public and private sector organisations **to plan for and enable sustainable growth in homes and jobs in the north Essex area**
- Create the conditions for economic growth by refreshing the Economic Growth Prospectus which sets out how we intend to grow existing businesses and attract new businesses in key sectors.

- Undertake a review in conjunction with Essex County Council to identify opportunities to enhance the visitor experience at **Great Notley Country Park**, making full use of the leisure, recreational and natural facilities the park has to offer and to improve and sustain the Park financially for future generations to use and enjoy

MEASURING SUCCESS

In addition to the projects and actions described in this annual plan we also measure these indicators which focus on some of our broader priorities

Description	Target	Estimated Outturn	Target
	2016/ 2017	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018
Environment and Place			
The percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	6%	6%	6%
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	60%	56%	60%
Tonnage of household waste not recycled	395kgs	430kgs	430kgs
The percentage of accessible non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100%	100%	100%
Number of fuel poverty and domestic energy reduction installations carried out	275	270	300
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure			
Number of affordable homes delivered**	69	48	130
Number of homes granted planning permission	845	1200	845
Economic Development			
Number of new business start-ups in the District created in partnership with Ignite Business	77	TBC	84
Number of jobs created through business advice and support	113	TBC	124

Description	Target	Estimated	Target
	2016/ 2017	Outturn 2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018
Health and Communities			
Percentage of substantial and critical Disabled Facilities Grants approved within timescales	New Indicator	New Indicator	80%
Total number of visits to our leisure facilities	1,116,759	992,597	2% increase
Number of passenger journeys on the Community Transport Scheme ***	52,000	50,000	52,000
Participation of over 60's in sport and health activities across the District	49,620	58,000	60,000
Participation of under 16's in sport and health activities across the District	202,440	230,000	240,000
Finance and Performance			
Average call answer time in the Customer Service Centre	15 seconds	13 seconds	15 seconds
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	18 days	17.5 days	18 days
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	6 days	5.66 days	6 days
Percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to within target	90%	92%	90%
Collection rate for			
• Council Tax	98%	98.2%	98.3%
• Business Rates	98.5%	98.6%	98.5%
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	99%	99%	99%

** The number of affordable homes delivered is targeted at providing 400 affordable homes over a four year period.

*** The Target for the number of passenger journeys on the Community Transport scheme is subject to a review of the service provided and changes in funding from Essex County Council

COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

We always welcome comments, suggestions and feedback (critical or otherwise) on our plans and improvements and in the way that we write our documents and communicate them.

- You can e-mail our Customer Service Centre at csc@braintree.gov.uk.
- You can drop written comments off at one of our main offices:
Braintree – Causeway House, Halstead Library or Witham Library
- You can telephone our Customer Service Centre on 01376 552525.
- You can speak to your local Councillor who will be able to pass your comments back if you wish. Contact details for your Councillor can be found on our website: www.braintree.gov.uk

Third Quarter Performance Management Report 2016/17		Agenda No: 6a
Portfolio	Finance and Performance	
Corporate Outcome:	A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services	
Report presented by:	Councillor David Bebb, Cabinet member for Finance and Performance	
Report prepared by:	Tracey Headford – Performance and Improvement Manager	
Background Papers:	Public Report	
Third Quarter Performance Management Report 2016/17	Key Decision: No	
Executive Summary:		
<p>The purpose of the attached report is to summarise the performance of the Council at the end of the third quarter (October 2016 to December 2016).</p> <p>In the third quarter, a total of nine projects are now complete and a further 36 projects are progressing well. One project has an amber status as the service is not performing as expected.</p> <p>Twelve performance indicators have achieved or exceed target, one has missed target by less than 5% and five have missed target by more than 5%.</p> <p>The performance indicator that has missed target by less than 5% relates to the percentage of council tax collected which has marginally missed target and is expected to meet target at the end of the year.</p> <p>The performance indicators that have missed target by more than 5% are in relation to tonnage of residual waste, business start-ups and jobs created through business advice and support, number of visitors to our leisure centres and passenger journeys through our community transport scheme.</p> <p>The tonnage of residual waste is continuing to see a reduction each quarter but has yet to achieve target. The outturn in the third quarter is 105kgs against a target of 99kgs. We continue to door step customers to encourage participation in recycling and increase the recycling rate which will also positively impact on the tonnage of waste.</p> <p>Business start-ups and jobs created through business advice and support are two performance indicators delivered by Ignite. They have not met target in the third quarter and further work is being carried out to understand the reasons behind this. Resource is being increased at Ignite to carry out additional targeted promotion around the service they provide.</p>		

The number of visitors to our leisure centres has fallen short of the target of 260,439 visitors for various reasons. A number of junior activities introduced in November 2015 saw an initial spike in uptake but this has since reduced. Weather conditions have also impacted on participation levels for outdoor sporting activities. Fusion are focussing their efforts on increasing numbers for junior clubs and are improving outdoor pitches to provide all year round sporting opportunities.

Passenger journeys on the Community Transport scheme have reduced in the third quarter with 11,667 passenger journeys undertaken against a target of 12,906. There has been a decline in the number of passenger journeys for a number of reasons which are being explored to gain a greater understanding.

Financial Performance

The financial information in the performance management report details the financial position as at the end of December 2016 providing an updated review of the financial position for the year. It examines the latest forecast for spending on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; projected movements on the General Fund balance; and a summary of spending to date on capital investment projects.

Summary:

- An overall positive variance for the year is forecast of £487,000 (-3.7%) against the budget of £13.107million. This represents a positive change of £184,000 from the position reported on at the end of the second quarter.
- Income is forecast to be overachieved by £273,000; and there is a projected net underspend of £214,000 on staffing and other expenditure.
- The 2017/18 proposed Budget already makes provision for £407,000 of the current year variance where this has been assessed as having an on-going effect.

For a detailed explanation of the financial performance, please refer to page 16 onwards of the full report.

Recommended Decision:

To note and endorse the report.

Purpose of Decision:

To inform the Cabinet of the performance of the Council.

Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail	
Financial:	An assessment of the Council's financial position against the agreed budget for the year is provided and is based on income and expenditure during the year.
Legal:	There are no legal issues raised by this report.
Safeguarding	There are no safeguarding issues raised by this report.
Equalities/Diversity	Equalities and diversity issues are considered fully in the Council's key projects, where appropriate.
Customer Impact:	Performance of front line services, including Customer Services, Housing Benefits and Planning, for the quarter is provided. A summary of complaints received each quarter is analysed by outcome (justified, partially justified or not justified) is provided.
Environment and Climate Change:	The report provides details of progress in the delivery of the Council's key projects. This will include supporting residents and businesses in lowering the cost of their energy bills and energy consumption , anti-litter campaigns, expansion of our recycling service and campaigns encouraging recycling.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Consultation is considered fully in the Council's key projects, as appropriate.
Risks:	Risks regarding the assumptions used in determining the predicted financial outturn for the year are identified.
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Designation:	Performance and Improvement Manager
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THIRD QUARTER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT



1ST OCTOBER TO 31ST DECEMBER 2016

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Section 1: Introduction and Summary






Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the third quarter in relation to the publication of the 'Annual Plan 2016/17'. This sets out the key activities and measures used to check our performance for the year and along with the Corporate Strategy 2016-20 sets out the priorities we are working towards. Further detail is given in relation to a set of business performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, our people and health and safety.






This report does not contain details of the numerous activities ongoing in each service area that also contribute to delivering what is important and will make a difference to all in the District. Full details of all projects and local and national indicators used to measure the outcomes are available upon request.

Summary of the Corporate Projects current position for the end of the third quarter

The following table provides updates for the end of the third quarter in relation to the key activities in the 'Annual Plan 2016/17'




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Environment and Place	2	6	-	-	-
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure	1	7	-	-	-
Economic Development	1	8	1	-	-
Health and Communities	4	6	-	-	1
Finance and Performance	1	4	-	-	-
Overall Strategy and Direction	-	5	-	-	2
TOTAL	9	36	1	-	3

KEY:




-  Project completed
-  Project on target
-  Project scope/target date requires attention
-  Project requires amendment
-  Project aborted/closed

Summary of the Performance Indicators position for the end of the third quarter

The following table shows the performance for the end of the third quarter in relation to the quarterly and annually reported Performance Indicators that have targets set as defined in the 'Annual Plan 2016/17'.

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Environment and Place	3	-	1	-
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure	2	-	-	-
Economic Development	-	-	2	1
Health and Communities	1	-	2	-
Finance and Performance	6	1	-	-
TOTAL	12	1	5	1

KEY:

-  Performance Indicator has achieved target
-  Performance Indicator is up to 5% below target
-  Performance Indicator is 5% or more off target

Summary Position

In the third quarter, a total of nine projects are now completed and a further 36 projects are progressing well. One project has an amber status as the service is not performing as expected.

Twelve performance indicators have achieved or exceed target, one has missed target by less than 5% and five have missed target by more than 5%. There are varying reasons for not meeting target in the third quarter and reasons are detailed in the report together with any action being taken to improve performance. Under performance is being monitored closely.



Environment and Place

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Expand the recycling waste service to all flats where suitable and introduce food waste recycling at participating primary schools within the District		
The recycling waste service has been expanded to all suitable flats and 26 schools across the District. A recycling rewards scheme funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government was launched in December to encouraging recycling in flats.	March 2017	✓
Expand our trade waste collection service to businesses across the District		
Work is continuing on the trade waste operational plan to market and develop the trade waste service. Software improvements to the current database has been scoped to include trade waste which will improve the service provided to customers	March 2017	▶
Work with other Essex Councils on waste minimisation campaigns to reduce residual waste		
The Essex Waste Management Partnership has established a work stream around waste prevention and is running a number of campaigns to encourage residents to reduce, reuse, repair or recycle their waste. In October, all Essex Authorities launched a scheme to reuse and recycle old clothes and textiles.	March 2017	▶
Refurbish two play areas at Goldingham Drive, Braintree and Milton Avenue, Braintree to improve local play provision		
Consultation events have taken place where designs of the play areas have been shared with residents. Once the consultation results have been evaluated, work can commence on the preferred designs.	February 2017	▶
Repair and resurface the path network to our open spaces, sports grounds and cemeteries in Braintree and Witham providing a better and safer environment for visitors		
Due to poor ground conditions during the winter months, the project end date has been extended until the end of March 2017. Works have now been completed at Fairview and are underway at Bramble Road and Witham Cemetery.	March 2017	▶
Help residents and businesses lower the costs of their energy bills and reduce energy consumption through our energy switching schemes		
The latest energy switching scheme ended in October. 1159 residents registered and 422 households have signed up to the alternative deal offered to them. A further switching scheme will take place in February 2017.	March 2017	▶
Encourage residents to take pride in the District by reporting litter hotspots and litterbugs under the 'see-it, report-it' initiative		
In the third quarter of the year, residents have reported 770 incidents under the 'see-it, report-it' initiative.	March 2017	▶
Run a change in behaviour campaign to reduce litter and keep the District clean and tidy		
The anti-litter campaign which spans across Essex, Kent and Suffolk has resulted in a reduction in litter for the third year in a row. In the areas monitored, and independently verified by Keep Britain tidy figures show an average drop in litter by 43%.	March 2017	✓




Strategic Growth and Infrastructure

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Produce a draft Local Plan to ensure new homes, sustainable growth and economic development for the District		
The background evidence base studies that feed into the Local Plan have been completed for the preferred options draft. Draft reports in respect of the infrastructure delivery plan, viability and water cycle study have been received and the report for critical drainage is expected in January 2017.	February 2017	▶
The consultation on the draft Local Plan finished on the 19 th August with 3100 comments received. The evidence base needs to be considered thoroughly before submission and any amendments to the Local Plan in response to the consultation are being taken through the committee process.	February 2017	▶
Support the development of planning applications relating to the delivery of major sites in the District		
A total of 108 homes have been granted planning permission through the determination of major planning applications in the third quarter. In total for the year, 1,309 homes have been granted permission exceeding the annual target of 845.	March 2017	▶
Help make sure housing needs of the District are met over the next 5 years		
The new Housing Allocations Policy which sets out the requirements for allocating affordable housing has been agreed by Cabinet and is now published on the Gateway to Homechoice website.	August 2016	✓
The new Housing Strategy was approved at Cabinet in November and will be published on our website in the new year.	March 2017	▶
Work with partner agencies to continue to drive forward strategic improvements to the A12/A120 and the Braintree to Witham rail link		
A working group has been set up with Highways England, Essex County Council and Braintree District Council to progress delivery of the Millennium Way slip roads. A plan detailing the extent of land required for the slip roads has been received and costs for options investigated. An executive summary has been provided to James Cleverly MP to lobby for funding. Briefings are being arranged for local Members and Group leaders at Braintree District Council. Conversations have taken place regarding proposals to widen the A12 and the options for the A120 which are out for consultation in the new year.	December 2019	▶
The GRIP (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) study has now commenced and Braintree District Council has provided comments on the Network Rail's customer requirements document to ensure all options will be considered.	March 2017	▶
Work with Essex County Council to reduce congestion at Springwood Drive roundabout		
ECC are working on an Integrated Transport package for Braintree looking at options and costs for improvements to the Springwood Drive roundabout. Minor improvements suggested by the local businesses on Springwood Drive submitted to the Local Highways Panel are being reconsidered and dialogue is ongoing with local businesses.	March 2017	▶









Economic Development

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Complete a programme of improvements to key industrial estates and business parks to support business growth and attract investment to the District		
Braintree – the contract for signage improvement works has been commissioned and site surveys are being undertaken. Businesses will be consulted on in January.	March 2017	▶
Witham – signage improvements have been completed. Officers are now looking at funding projects put forward by Witham Industrial Watch.	March 2017	▶
Halstead - costings for road improvements along third and fifth avenues are significantly higher than the funding available and the scheme is not considered to be viable at this time. Funding provisionally allocated to Halstead has no deadline for expenditure however; no other significant improvements have been identified.	March 2017	✓
To strengthen business engagement by delivering a programme of events in collaboration with Essex Chambers of Commerce		
A business engagement breakfast around the Apprenticeship Levy held in December was well attended providing local businesses with access to the latest information on the changes to government funding for apprenticeships. A further event is planned in March 2017 around rural businesses and broadband.	March 2017	▶
Support 77 business start-ups in conjunction with IGNITE		
Since April 2016, a total of 57 business start-ups have been supported and a total of 73 jobs created through business advice and support provided. The performance figures are currently not meeting target as expected and Ignite are increasing resource to allow additional promotion of the service	March 2017	▲
Support the establishment of a District education and skills board to address educational attainment and employment skills needs within the District		
The shape of Braintree Employment and Skills Board has been mapped out. Work has now begun to shortlist a number of growth sector employers who can be approached in the District to become board members. Colchester Institute have confirmed their full support of the board and are keen to join	March 2017	▶
Work with a range of partners and stakeholders to improve the three town centres in the District		
Braintree Town Centre – A workshop has been held between officers from Braintree District Council and Essex County Council in December to define the vision for Braintree. Further workshops will be held in the new year. Once plans are drafted, a member workshop and local engagement will follow.	March 2017	▶
Halstead Town Centre –Meetings held with Essex Highways Network Management who have evaluated the Masterplan regeneration proposals. Currently progressing agreement with the Highways Authority as to the works required on the highway. Timescales have been amended to allow time for achieving local consensus.	March 2017	▶
Witham Town Centre – A series of studies and reports are in progress to review the aims and objectives of the Masterplan regeneration proposals which will be presented to the project board for them to determine the future course of this project. Timescales have been amended to allow further time for the proposals to be considered.	March 2017	▶

Maximise superfast broadband coverage across the District by working with Superfast Essex		
Discussions are ongoing with Superfast Essex in relation to the phase III options for additional coverage across the District.	March 2018	



Health and Communities

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Work with Active Braintree Network to increase access to new sporting opportunities and activities		
The 'Get Outdoors' campaign was launched by Fusion in the summer to encourage residents to participate in outdoor activities including instructor lead sessions at outdoor gyms.	September 2017	
Encourage residents to be more active by developing a 'Be-Well' strategy		
Draft strategy is in discussion with Active Essex and Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group. Consultation with key stakeholders and partners will take place in the fourth quarter.	March 2017	
Ensure the football pitches on the Deanery Gardens sports ground and the rugby pitch on King George V playing field are in year-round condition through the installation of a piped drainage system		
This project has been transferred into next year's delivery plan as the installation of a piped drainage system needs to take place outside the football season to minimise the impact on residents using the facilities.	September 2016	
Address the priorities for the District in a co-ordinated way through the Braintree District Health and Wellbeing Panel		
A healthy eating recipe book has been published and promoted through the Livewell website to encourage residents to eat a healthy, balanced diet.	September 2016	
Livewell Child will be launched in January with twelve schools taking part. Focus groups are being planned throughout the year to receive constant feedback on the campaigns and materials produced for the campaigns.	March 2017	
Invest in local health facilities to help provide primary care services that can meet current and future needs as the District grows		
Members have approved proposals to invest in local health facilities across the District. Meetings have been held to discuss the opportunity to develop a doctors' surgery in Witham and are currently exploring site options. The Council have purchased the site at the College in Braintree and work is progressing on converting the premises into a Doctors' surgery. Discussions are taking place with GP surgeries and the Clinical Commissioning Group to provide improved facilities in Sible Hedingham.	March 2017	
Improve the living conditions, access to services and the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people on low incomes		
A booklet is being produced to help park home owners improve their living standards. A competition will be held in the new year to externally clad park homes with the winning home acting as a show home for other owners to follow suit.	February 2017	
Run a winter warmth campaign to provide advice to residents on improving energy efficiency to help keep warm during the winter months		
A leaflet providing advice on keeping warm during the winter months and offering advice and support has been distributed to 4,000 individuals and 40 outlets including doctors' surgeries, pharmacies and community centres.	February 2017	

Work towards making the District dementia friendly through the work of our Braintree District Dementia Action Alliance		
The Dementia Action Alliance now has 19 member organisations including the three main libraries across the District. Following the success of the Alzheimer's Society Roadshow which visited Braintree in August, we have submitted a request for the tour to visit Witham in the spring.	March 2017	▶
Support community groups to deliver local projects and activities through the introduction of a Councillor Community Grant Scheme		
The new Councillor Community Grant scheme was launched in September to provide Councillors with £1,500 each per year which they can allocate to community projects and initiatives in their local area.	September 2016	✔
Engage with young people by developing a young person's on-line forum helping them to have a voice on topics and concerns that affect them		
Discussions are taking place with students from Braintree College as to whether they wish to be involved in a project to develop a young person's on-line forum.	March 2017	▶



Finance and Performance

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue to review how we deliver our services ensuring we provide value for money and focus our resources on what is important to those living and working in our District		
A schedule of planned service reviews continues to be updated to inform future reviews with the aim of minimising the budget gap	March 2017	▶
Develop commercial opportunities to generate income and identify further opportunities for income growth		
A sponsorship officer has been appointed to look at ways in which we can generate further income through advertising and a staff suggestion scheme is being developed allowing staff to contribute ideas that may generate income	March 2017	▶
Use our Investment Strategy to maximise income and strengthen the Councils financial independence, supporting our ability to invest in the District		
Cabinet agreed in May a District Investment Strategy with resources of £28million identified for investment projects. The purchase of a property from Braintree College was completed on 13th October and leased on to Virgin Healthcare. Two further property purchases were agreed by Council in December which will generate a good revenue return to support the Council's revenue account.	March 2017	▶
Improve customer focused services by delivering a programme of continuous improvement and achieve the Customer Service Excellence Standard for the third year		
Customer Service Excellence accreditation has been achieved for a further year with just one area of partial compliance and six areas achieving compliance plus. A further assessment is planned to take place in June 2017.	June 2016	✔
Improve our services through the use of technology to make sure they are easy and convenient to use		
A module enabling customers to view their council tax bills securely on line was launched in October with over 1000 residents now signed up to this service. Promotional activities are underway to encourage customers to transact with us on line and the requirements for an online booking system are currently being scoped.	March 2017	▶





















Overall Strategy and Direction

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue to work in partnership with other Essex Authorities and other public and private sector organisations to develop devolution proposals for Essex to achieve greater local control of decisions and funds to deliver better outcomes for residents and businesses across the County and District		
The Government policy remains the same and in order to secure a devolution deal, combined authority areas must have a directly elected mayor. This means that the Greater Essex devolution programme is not viable for the foreseeable future. However, this does not mean that the 15 Local Authorities cannot work together to be in a prominent position to take on Devolution should the opportunity arise	March 2017	
Contribute to the work of the Essex Waste Management Partnership to lower collection and disposal costs across Essex		
A series of campaigns to recycle electrical items and textiles commenced in October 2016 and due to the success of the campaign, this service will continue to be provided. Changes have been implemented at the recycling centres from the 31st October to reduce the volume of commercial waste being taken into the centres and consideration is being given to setting up a Countywide group to tackle fly tipping with partner agencies.	March 2017	
Work with other local authorities in Essex to establish a building control shared service across the county which will deliver higher standards of customer service, retain and attract staff to reduce costs		
A decision has been made not to continue with the joint working initiative following the withdrawal of a number of authorities from the project. A meeting will be held in October to review the lessons learnt.	March 2017	
Drive forward economic growth and infrastructure improvements in the District and surrounding areas by continuing to work with the Haven Gateway Partnership		
A short list of route options for the A120 will be published in January to coincide with the Haven Gateway Partnership's Parliamentary reception and a number of events are taking place to consult with stakeholders on the route options	March 2017	
Work with Essex County Council, Highways Agency and other Essex District councils on the options for the new A120 route		
Braintree District Council is actively participating in a number of different forums and events to consult on the proposal for the route options of the A120	March 2017	
Continue to work with key partners including neighbouring councils on the strategic planning for the housing and economic growth required in the District to support the work in the new Local Plan		
Cabinet agreed a budget to develop a business case for a Housing Development Company. We are continuing to work with three other local authorities on proposals for North Essex Garden Community projects to deliver over 30,000 homes and 10,000 jobs and discussions have been held regarding the responses to our draft Local Plan	March 2017	
Develop and deliver a District Investment Strategy that invests in improved and new infrastructure, economic growth and regeneration projects and new health facilities to meet the needs of the District now and in the future		
In May, the Council approved its £28 million District Investment Strategy to help improve the district and support current and future growth. Work to convert premises at the College in Braintree to a doctors' surgery has commenced and is due to be completed in March 2017.	March 2017	

Section 3: Managing the Business

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	2016/17						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
Environment and Place							
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	5%	5%		6%		Recorded 3 times a year – July, November and March
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	53.32%	54.19%	52.32%		52.06%		
Tonnage of residual household per household waste not recycled	130kgs	107kgs	105kgs		99kgs		Tonnage of waste continues to reduce but has still not achieved target. We continue to door step customers and a number of campaigns are underway to encourage recycling reducing waste to landfill
Percentage of fly tips cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100%	100%	100%		100%		Represents 188 fly-tips dealt with in the quarter
Number of fuel poverty and domestic energy reduction installations carried out							Annually reported
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure							
Number of affordable homes delivered	8	27	0		0		We were not expecting delivery of any affordable homes in the third quarter of the year
Number of homes granted planning permission	571	630	108		105		
Economic Development							
Number of new business start-ups in the District created in partnership with Ignite Business	22	19	16		18		The performance of the service has not been as expected for the third quarter of the year and target has not been met. Ignite are increasing resource to allow additional promotion of the service.
Number of jobs created through business advice and support	29	26	18		27		
Percentage of District on high speed broadband connection	71%	71%	71%		Data Only	N/A	Project is being delivered by Superfast Essex. End of phase one is where it is expected to be.
Health and Communities							
Number of Disabled Facilities Grants processed throughout the year	39	68	47		36		

Performance Indicator	2016/17						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
Total number of visits to our Leisure facilities	262,357	247,152	239,832		260,439		There has been a reduction in the number of visitors to our Leisure facilities in the third quarter of the year for various reasons. A number of junior activities introduced in November 2015 saw an initial spike in uptake but has since reduced. Weather conditions have also impacted on outdoor sports. Fusion are focussing their efforts on increasing numbers for junior clubs and are improving outdoor pitches to provide all year round sporting opportunities
Number of passenger journeys on the Community Transport Scheme	14,168	12,797	11,667		12,906		There has been a decline in the number of passenger journeys for a number of reasons which are being explored to gain a greater understanding
Finance and Performance							
Average call answer time in the Customer Service Centre	13 seconds	17 seconds	9 seconds		15 seconds		
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	17.75 days	17.58 days	15.11 days		18 days		
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	6.41 days	5.87 days	4.72 days		6 days		
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within target	98.59%	92.90%	92.09%		90%		
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.81%	59.25%	87.08%		87.19%		Has marginally missed target. Expected to achieve target at the end of the year
Collection rate for Business Rates	31.25%	58.43%	84.99%		84.49%		
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	99.40%	99.04%	99.51%		98.50%		

Complaints

The quarterly complaints analysis for the third quarter of 2016/17 is detailed below. This is compared with 2015/16 figures shown in brackets. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

Complaint Category	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	TOTAL
Justified	112 (83)	52 (90)	46 (108)	(125)	(406)
Not Justified	72 (45)	104 (65)	73 (70)	(101)	(281)
Partially Justified	31 (17)	24 (30)	23 (21)	(24)	(95)
Not known	0 (0)	3 (1)	0 (1)	(0)	(2)
Total	215 (145)	183 (186)	142 (200)	(250)	(784)

Comments

The number of complaints received in the third quarter of the year continues to reduce due the Operations service area receiving fewer complaints. The majority of complaints received are regarding missed waste collections or the suspension of the garden waste service. We continue to ensure customers are kept informed of any access issues regarding waste collections and where collections are missed, the majority are collected within 24 hours. The service continues to monitor issues with missed waste collections to help reduce the number of complaints received further. The rationale behind the suspension of the garden waste service over the winter months has been explained to customers.

In the third quarter of 2016/17, of the 142 complaints received:

- 139 are stage one complaints
- 3 are stage two complaints
- There are no stage three complaints

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman cases:

In the third quarter of 2016/17 the LGO has received three new complaints all of which are currently being investigated.

The LGO also issued two final decisions on complaints received in previous quarters. One complaint was outside the timescales and not investigated and the second complaint the LGO declined to investigate as there is no evidence of injustice and part of the complaint related to the Local Plan which is still ongoing with a separate consultation process.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 16/17	Q2 16/17	Q3 16/17	Q4 16/17	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	467	466	468		+ 2	-
Total number of posts	476	477	480		+ 3	-
Number of temporary staff	44	42	42		-	-
Total staff FTE	421.99	421.30	425.57		+ 4.27	-
Level of employee turnover	2.78%	3.43%	1.93%		- 1.5%	-
Number of leavers	13	16	9		- 7	-
Number of starters	9	15	11		- 4	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	2.1 days	1.99 days	2.35 days		+ 0.36 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	74%	59%	45.3%		- 13.7%	-
Number of learning hours	9140.50	8276.50	8415.50		+ 139	-
Number of delegates	192	266	290		+ 24	-
Number of apprentices **	19	16	15		- 1	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	503	485	466	478	472	470

** BDC's apprenticeship programme runs from September each year. The figures reflect level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships.

Health & Safety

The following is a selection of our health and safety performance measures. The data is for information purposes only.

Health and safety is a crucial responsibility of everyone within the organisation. This information is used to improve the management of health and safety of staff, our customers, residents and other non-employees we come into contact with. Monitoring is undertaken by the corporate health and safety committee and action plans will be put in place where necessary.

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	(2015/16 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	11 (6)	12 (12)	6 (5)	(11)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	8 (4)	9 (9)	6 (5)	(9)	Slips and trips are the main cause of accidents in the third quarter.
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	1 (2)	1 (1)	0 (0)	(2)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	2 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)	(0)	
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	105 (3)	16 (76)	40 (42)	(5)	The figures represent two members of staff in Horticultural Services and Street Scene.
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	1 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	(2)	
Number of near miss incidents	0 (1)	0 (0)	1 (1)	(0)	A light fitting at the Town Hall fell narrowly missed a member of staff.
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	(0)	
Number of claims settled	0 (0)	0 (2)	0 (0)	(0)	

Financial Performance

This part of the report provides an updated review of the financial position for the year. It examines the latest forecast for spending on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; projected movements on the General Fund balance; and a summary of spending to date on capital investment projects.

Summary:

- An overall positive variance for the year is forecast of £487,000 (-3.7%) against the budget of £13.107million. This represents a positive change of £184,000 from the position reported at the second quarter.
- Income is forecast to be overachieved by £273,000; and there is a projected net underspend of £214,000 on staffing and other expenditure.
- The 2017/18 proposed Budget already makes provision for £407,000 of the current year variance where this has been assessed as having an on-going effect.

Revenue Spending by Services

Business Plan Service	Budget £'000	Projected Spend £'000	Adverse (Positive) variance against budget				RAG Status
			Staffing £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Total £'000	
Asset Management	(1,805)	(1,836)	1	20	(52)	(31)	G
Business Solutions	1,850	1,842	(8)	-	-	(8)	G
Community Services	555	538	(1)	(22)	6	(17)	G
Corporate Management Plan	1,362	1,329	(2)	(31)	-	(33)	G
Cultural Services	240	240	-	-	-	-	G
Environment	633	572	(82)	(2)	23	(61)	G
Finance	1,347	837	(94)	(77)	(339)	(510)	G
Governance	991	999	(1)	11	(2)	8	A
Housing Services	761	771	47	(38)	1	10	A
Human Resources	342	353	3	8	-	11	A
Leisure Services	(54)	(54)	-	-	-	-	G
Marketing and Communications	424	395	-	(7)	(22)	(29)	G
Operations	4,295	4,491	(75)	59	212	196	A
Sustainable Development	759	726	(45)	17	(5)	(33)	G
Service Total	11,700	11,203	(257)	(62)	(178)	(497)	G
Corporate Financing	1,557	1,430	-	(32)	(95)	(127)	G
Efficiency target	(150)	(13)	137	-	-	137	
Total	13,107	12,620	(120)	(94)	(273)	(487)	G

RAG Status: G = favourable or nil variance, A = up to 5% adverse variance or <£50k, R = > 5%

Staffing

Further analysis of the staffing budget variances is provided in the following table:

Business Plan – Staffing Budgets	Budget £'000	Projected Spend £'000	Adverse/ (Positive) variance £'000	RAG Status
Asset Management	273	274	1	A
Business Solutions	844	836	(8)	G
Community Services	336	335	(1)	G
Corporate Management Plan	1,166	1,164	(2)	G
Cultural Services	189	189	-	G
Environment	1,314	1,232	(82)	G
Finance	2,384	2,290	(94)	G
Governance	453	452	(1)	G
Housing Services	716	763	47	A
Human Resources	347	350	3	A
Leisure Services	124	124	-	G
Marketing and Communications	284	284	-	G
Operations	4,843	4,768	(75)	G

Business Plan – Staffing Budgets	Budget	Projected Spend	Adverse/ (Positive) variance	RAG Status
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Sustainable Development	1,873	1,828	(45)	G
Service Total	15,146	14,889	(257)	G
Efficiency target	(150)	(13)	137	
Net Total	14,996	14,876	(120)	G

RAG Status: G = favourable or nil variance, A = up to 5% adverse variance or <£50k, R = > 5%

Commentary on staffing variations:

Savings on staffing budgets are expected to be achieved through a combination of vacant posts, reductions in hours worked, appointments being made at lower grade/ scale points, and through other service restructures and efficiency reviews. Based on the information known at the end of the Quarter it is projected that across all services there will be a net underspend of £257,000 for the year against staffing budgets. The approved budget provided for a corporate efficiency target of £150,000 to be achieved from in-year staffing variances. Taking into account the projected net underspend across services and a corporate saving of £13,000 from the implementation of an annual leave purchase scheme for staff, it is currently anticipated that the target will be exceeded for the year by £120,000, an improvement of £86,000 against the previous quarter.

Whilst **Operations** is showing a net projected underspend of £75,000 this is comprised of a projected overspend on the **Waste Management** service of £106,000 where additional agency support is being required to provide cover due to a combination of factors: abnormally high sickness levels, holiday cover, and vacancies. The service continues to closely monitor the position, taking action where possible to contain costs. Mitigating this position the service has a projected underspend of £131,000 within **Management & Administration** where external funding is being applied to meet the costs of certain posts, and vacancies held over. Further savings totalling £50,000 are projected in areas such as **Horticultural Services, Street Scene Protection, and Cemeteries** from current vacancies.

Other Service Expenditure

Services are currently forecast to underspend against their non-staffing expenditure budgets by a net £94,000. Contained within this net position are the following items:

Main positive variances:

- **Housing Benefits:** Whilst the majority of housing benefit costs incurred by the Council is met from subsidy received from the Department for Works and Pensions, the Council allowed for a net cost in its budget for 2016/17 of £352,000 – actual costs in 2015/16 were £343,000. In-year monitoring of net expenditure indicates a lower cost this year compared with last year for the period to the end of December, therefore, a full-year underspend of £60,000 is currently being forecast.
- **Corporate Costs:** External audit fees are expected to be lower than budget by £25,000 coupled with a further reduction in bank charges (£5,000).

Previous Quarterly projections included forecast underspends on Corporate Systems; however, these may now be utilised to meet expenditure relating to the transitional changes to the provision of future ICT support to the Council.

External Income

A significant proportion of the Council's budget is reliant on external income. Grants and subsidies from government, alongside income from business rates are major elements, totalling over £52 million. These income streams are either fairly predictable as they are determined at the start of the year as part of the annual Local Government Finance Settlement; or variations can be largely offset by commensurate changes in expenditure, e.g. subsidy received on housing benefits is related to the level of payments made.

The amount of business rates ultimately retained depends on the actual amounts collectable (taking into account changes in the Valuation List, exemptions and reliefs granted, and provisions for non-collection and rating appeals). Variances are accounted for via the Collection Fund and taken into account when determining future budgets and council tax setting. Fluctuations from those elements which have a direct impact on the General Fund revenue account, e.g. the levy payable on growth or grants received from Government to fund certain discretionary reliefs, are managed via the business rate retention reserve.

As a participant in the Essex Business Rates Pool the Council is entitled to a share of the extra business rates retained "locally" which will be rebated against the 2016/17 levy. The determination and receipt of the actual amount of the Council's share will be made after year-end returns have been collated from each of the participating authorities and as such no estimate of the amount was included in the original budget.

Other external income for which the Council has budgeted £13.763million comes from a variety of sources that are subject to external demands and other influences, meaning these are more susceptible to variations against budget. It is currently forecast that services will over achieve against their income budgets by a net £273,000, as shown in the table below:

Business Plan	Updated Budget £000	Joint Financing & Other Reimburs.	Sales, Fees & Charges	Rents	Other Income	Total	RAG status
		5,117	5,248	2,543	855	13,763	
		<i>Adverse (Positive) Variance £000 against Budget :</i>					
Asset Management	2,584	-	15	(63)	(4)	(52)	G
Business Solutions	15	-	-	-	-	-	G
Community Services	210	-	8	-	(2)	6	A
Corporate Management Plan	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
Cultural Services	108	-	-	-	-	-	G
Environment	804	(4)	(7)	-	34	23	A
Finance	2,166	(166)	-	-	(173)	(339)	G
Governance	36	-	(2)	-	-	(2)	G
Housing	58	-	(3)	4	-	1	A
Human Resources	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
Leisure Services	724	-	-	-	-	-	G
Marketing & Communications	27	-	(12)	-	(10)	(22)	G
Operations	5,387	24	186	3	(1)	212	A
Sustainable Development	1,218	-	9	-	(15)	(6)	G
Service Total	13,337	(146)	194	(56)	(171)	(179)	G
Corporate Financing	426	(86)	-	-	(8)	(94)	G
Total	13,763	(232)	194	(56)	(179)	(273)	G

RAG Status: G = positive or nil variance, A = up to 5% adverse variance or <£50k, R = adverse variance greater than 5% and >£50k at Individual Business Plan level

Joint Financing & Other Reimbursements

The total budget for income from joint financing and other reimbursements is £5.117million, against which it is currently predicted to be over-achieved by £232,000. The main sources of income and forecast outturn are:

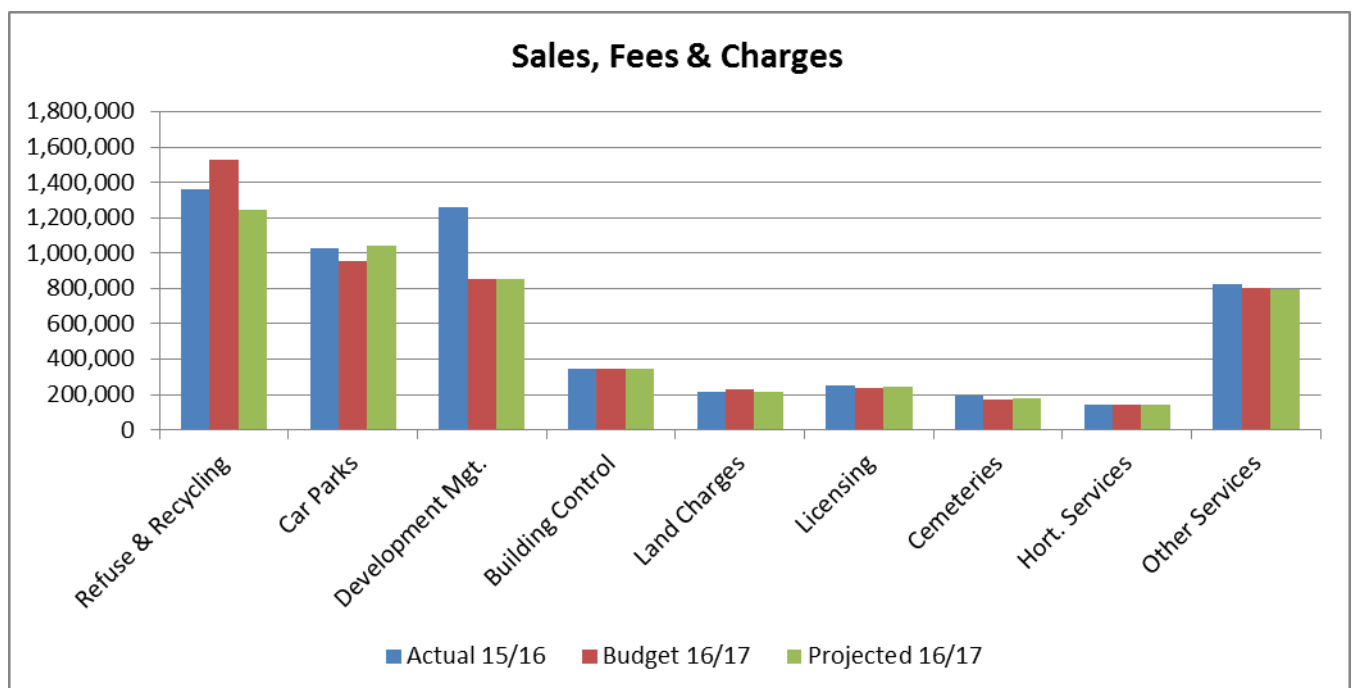
- **Essex County Council:** a £2.240million budget for contributions towards services such as community transport, horticultural services, food waste service, and recycling. An

adverse variance of £17,000 is currently forecast mainly due to a recalculation by Essex County Council of income due under the Waste Management Inter-Authority Agreement, partially offset by additional income in other areas.

- **Procurement Hub:** subscriptions from participating authorities along with commission's receivable from the use by other organisations of the procurement frameworks set-up by the Hub give a total budget of £543,000. Arrangements with the participating authorities provide for rebates (shown as expenditure) against their subscriptions based on the overall financial performance of the Hub in the year.
- **Council Tax sharing and other collection investment arrangements:** £426,000 was provided in the budget as Braintree's share from the major precepting bodies of the additional council tax being collected. Based on the third quarter performance it is expected that income growth will continue into 2016/17 giving a projected over-achievement of £86,000. In addition, the Council has budgeted for arrangements with the major precepting bodies to provide £112,000 towards improving council tax collection arrangements, including prevention and detection of fraud, and partial funding towards the exceptional hardship fund.
- **Benefit overpayment recoveries and administrative penalties:** based on last year's outturn and actual income received in-year, it is anticipated that recoveries will be higher than the original budget allowance of £284,000 by £187,000, which is an improvement over Quarter 2 of £40,000.

Sales, Fees & Charges

The budget for income from sales, fees & charges is £5.248million. The current projection is for an overall under achievement of £194,000. The following chart shows the main income streams:



Commentary on Fees and Charges:

- **Refuse & Recycling - Sale of Recycling Materials:** The budget for income from sales is £624,000. As previously reported the Council has entered into a new 5-year extension to the contract for mixed dry materials which results in the income receivable for the current year being reduced by 50%. This will then be recovered over the following two years by a reduction in the gate fee to be charged by the contractor. The impact in the current year is a reduction in income of £270,000 with the on-going consequences now reflected in the

proposed Budget for 2017/18. In addition, the Council is receiving a lower price for glass materials than was provided in the original budget following on from the reductions experienced over the 2015/16 financial year giving a predicted shortfall of £57,000. Partially offsetting these two issues in the current year is projected additional income of £35,000 from the collection of commercial waste.

- **Car Parks:** The Council continues to experience an upward trend in pay and display income giving an overall forecast positive variance of £90,000 against the budget, taking the total income expected to £1.044million (£1.028million in 2015/16).
- **Development Management:** In 2015/16 the Council experienced a significant spike in planning application fee income. The approved budget for 2016/17 reflected an element of this growth with an addition to base budget of £125,000. Based on the amount of income received to the end of the Quarter and using past experience, service management expect income will achieve the higher budgeted amount – an improvement from the position reported at the previous Quarter where a shortfall against budget of £50,000 was predicted. Progress towards the adoption of the Local Plan should bring about the associated application fee income; however, predicting the timing of this income is inherently difficult.

Rental Income

The budget for rental income from land & property is £2.543million – comprising the investment & commercial property portfolio, markets, housing properties, and other let properties. The forecast for the year is currently an over achievement of £56,000.

Commentary on Rental Income:

Asset Management: additional rental income of £69,000 has been allowed following completion of the acquisition of Block B at the College in Braintree, which is now leased to a third party to re-provision health facilities in the Braintree area. A number of rent reviews remain outstanding which once settled may provide for some one-off back-dated additional income as well as on-going increases.

Other Service & Corporate Income

Total budgeted Other Income is £855,000 which comprises mainly the following streams:

- **Investment & Other Interest Income:** The budgeted amount is £621,000, but is now expected to be higher by £104,000 as additional amounts have been added to the Council's long-term pooled funds which were not reflected in the original budget.
- **Solar Panel Feed-in-Tariffs:** the budget provides for an expected £124,000 of income from investment in solar panels at various Council facilities. However, due to changes by the Government in the tariff arrangements the Council halted its investment in panels at the George Yard car park and its extension of the installation at Witham Leisure Centre. Consequently, it is predicted that, after taking account of slightly better returns on existing schemes, there will be a net shortfall against the budget of £40,000.
- **Government grant:** included in the overall variance is an additional £66,000 of government grant towards the administration costs of the Local Council Tax Support scheme, for which details of entitlement were not announced until after the Council had agreed the budget for 2016/17.

Treasury Management

The Council's treasury management activity for the year is summarised in the table below:

Amount Invested at the Start of the Year	Activity for the year		Amount Invested at 31 Dec
	New Investments	Investments Sold or Matured	
£36.27m	£78.50m	£62.67m	£52.10m
Average amount invested to end of quarter			£52.80m
Highest amount invested			£60.23m

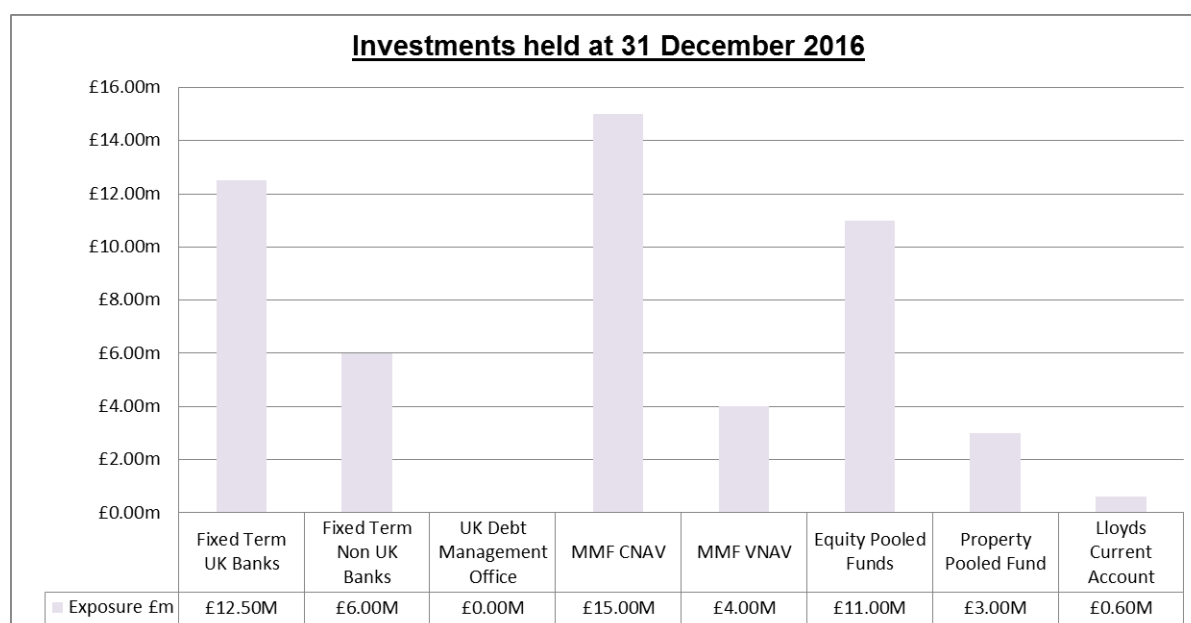
During the last quarter the Council increased the amount invested for the long-term by a further £2million taking the total to £14million spread across a mixture of property and equity funds. Remaining investments have been in short-term instruments including call accounts and term deposits with UK and Non-UK banks, deposits with the UK Government Debt Management Office (DMO), and Money Market Funds (MMF).

Interest and dividends earned to the end of the quarter total £607,000, which is equivalent to an annualised rate of return of 1.53%:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£12.40m	£457,000	4.89%
Short-Term	£40.40m	£150,000	0.49%
Total	£52.80m	£607,000	1.53%

Investment returns have been increased by the dividend income from the long-term investments; however, as the funds are exposed to market conditions their value can fluctuate. At the end of the Quarter the market valuation for all funds was £15.033million, representing an unrealised gain of £1.033million against the amount invested which is an improvement over the previous quarter of £533,000. Following a recovery after initial sharp falls in Quarter 2, equity markets have since rallied. The FTSE-100 and FTSE All Share indices closed at 7142.83 and 3873.22 respectively on 30th December, up 3.5% and 3.1% over the quarter.

At the end of the Quarter the Council's investment portfolio comprised the following:



CNAV = Constant Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value is expected to remain constant

VNAV = Variable Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value and therefore amounts invested can fluctuate

General Fund Balances

General Fund balances are held for the following reasons:

- As a contingency against unforeseen events that may require funding above that originally provided for in the approved budget
- To meet short-term or non-recurrent one-off costs that are not provided in the base budget and/ or are incurred to achieve future savings and efficiencies.

Based on the projected outturn set out above, the estimated movement on the General Fund balance is as follows:

	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2016	8,421
Add:	
Budgeted addition	526
Projected variance at Q3	487
Less:	
Allocated to Investment Strategy	5,000
Est. Balance at 31 March 2017	4,434

Movements shown on the General Fund balance are in respect of:

- The budget approved by Council for 2016/17 included an anticipated addition to balances of £526,234.
- The projected outturn variance for the year currently results in an estimated addition of £487,000.
- Cabinet approved a district investment strategy at its meeting on 23 May 2016, which included an allocation of £5million from the General Fund unallocated balances.

Risks and Assumptions

The forecasts reflect service managers' "best estimate" of the predicted outturn for the year. The previous year outturn and trends in-year have been considered; however, as always, these are subject to changing circumstances and unforeseen events. Directors and service managers continue to scrutinise all expenditure commitments in light of the planned savings set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

External income is inherently difficult to predict as it is substantially demand led and impacted by external factors.

Capital Investment

In February 2016 the Council approved new capital projects for 2016/17 totalling £1.993million. Taking into account projects in progress carried forward from earlier years, the in-year approval of new projects, and the estimated timing of delivery of all projects, the overall amount expected to be spent on capital in the current year is £7.426million.

The capital investment programme is reported over two themes:

- General Fund Services – Spending on Council owned/ used assets and services.
- Housing investment – mainly spent on partnership schemes with social landlords, and providing disabled facilities grants and home improvements grants.

The current spend against the programme for the year is shown below:

	Programme 2016/17	Actual spend	Grants approved not yet paid	Budget remaining	Spend & grants approved at end of Quarter
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
General Fund Services	5,858	2,444	-	3,414	42%
Housing Investment	1,280	848	154	278	78%
Capital Salaries	288	216	-	72	75%
Total	7,426	3,508	154	3,764	49%

The General Fund Services programme for the year includes:

- A programme of planned maintenance and other refurbishment works to Council owned buildings and community facilities, including parks and open spaces, play areas, and car parks.
- Purchase of replacement vehicles for operational services
- Purchase and conversion of a building at Braintree College to be leased to a third party for providing replacement health facilities for the St Lawrence General Practitioner surgery
- Partial completion of works to develop new grow-on units at the rear of the Braintree Enterprise Centre and additional car parking facilities
- Acquisition of commercial properties
- Investment in new technology
- New cycleways and footpaths

The housing investment programme includes spending on provision of disabled facility grants, and financial support to social landlords to develop affordable home schemes.

At its meeting held on 23 May 2016, the Cabinet approved a District Investment Strategy which would utilise a combination of new borrowing, New Homes Bonus, and currently unallocated reserves giving a total of £28million to support the District's strategic growth ambitions. To date the Council has approved projects totalling £15.6million of which £3.3million is expected to be spent in the current year and included in the programme reported above. As further projects are developed and approved, these will be added into the overall capital programme.

In addition to the above capital programme, the Council has recently acquired replacement refuse freighters at a cost of £1.187million. The original budget for 2016/17 assumed these would be acquired under a lease arrangement and charged to the General Fund revenue account. However, following a financial appraisal the Corporate Director (Finance) has determined these will now be financed from the Council's own cash balances (internal borrowing), which after repayment of the sums used, will provide a saving on interest costs of around £50,000 per annum over seven years.

Capital resources

The main sources of new capital resources anticipated for the year are the sale of assets (£3.515million), preserved right-to-buy (RTB) receipts (£500,000) and the Council's share of the VAT shelter operating in conjunction with Greenfields Community Housing (£589,000).

Greenfields has reported that 28 RTB sales were completed by the end of the Quarter generating £2.913million for the Council, which exceeds the amount anticipated by £2.413million. This compares to 23 sales and £1.713million received for the whole of 2015/16.

VAT shelter monies due to the Council up to the end of the Quarter were £218,000, suggesting that the level of works being undertaken by Greenfields and falling within the arrangement is lower than previously anticipated and may result in a shortfall against the amount budgeted for the year.

Under the housing transfer agreement with Greenfields the Council has received £134,000 under clawback arrangements where land transferred from the Council has now been sold. A further £125,000 has also been received from repayment of housing renovation grants and for the release of restrictive covenants.

Grants received include £730,000 from the Better Care Fund via Essex County Council to fund the majority of the Council's disabled facility grant programme. This is an increase of £312,000 against the budgeted sum of £418,000.

During the Quarter the Council received £2,718,447 being its share of the growth element of the GCH Community Housing and Investment Partnership Fund following agreement by the Council and GCH to complete a deed of variation to the original housing stock transfer agreement. The deed of variation provides that each party should use reasonable endeavours to apply its share on the development of new affordable housing.

Discretionary Business Rate Relief scheme for Charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs and Not-for-Profit Organisations		Agenda No: 6b
Portfolio	Finance and Performance	
Corporate Outcome:	Residents live well in healthy and resilient communities where residents feel supported Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers	
Report presented by:	Councillor David Bebb, Cabinet member for Finance and Performance	
Report prepared by:	Trevor Wilson, Head of Finance	
Background Papers:		Public Report
<u>Discretionary Business Rate Relief scheme agreed by Council 16th February 2009</u>		Key Decision: Yes
Executive Summary:		
1. Background		
1.1 Local Authorities have discretionary powers to grant discretionary business rate relief up to a maximum of 20% to either registered Charities or CASC's.		
1.2 In addition, local authorities have discretionary powers to grant business rate relief up to a maximum of 100% where all or part of the property is occupied by an institution or organisation which is not established or conducted for profit and whose main objectives are charitable or otherwise philanthropic or religious, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts or it is wholly or mainly used for the purposes of recreation.		
1.3 The local authority may make a decision to grant relief only if is satisfied that it would be reasonable to do so, having regard to the interests of the council tax payers.		
1.4 The Council's current scheme has been in operation since 1st April 2009. The criteria for award in particular for not-for-profit organisations are ambiguous in places and have led to awards which are unfortunately inconsistent between some applicants. Also the awards are open ended with the scheme having no requirement for review or re-application.		
1.5 A review of the current scheme has been undertaken. Schemes operated by a number of other local authorities have been researched with a variety of approaches identified.		

- 1.6 Twelve months' notice of change(s) to the scheme is required to be given to the current recipients of the relief. Accordingly, all recipients of this discretionary relief, as at March 2016, were advised that they would be required to re-apply for rate relief, mandatory and/or discretionary, for 2017/18.

2. Proposed New Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme

- 2.1 It is proposed that applications are assessed against a set of specified criteria which are divided into three areas: Equalities; Activities and Facilities; and Financial Management. Each area is supported with a number of questions:

- **Equalities.** Questions designed to determine access and availability of the facilities or activities is open to all including if there are membership fees that these are not prohibitive to individuals.
- **Activities and Facilities.** Questions to help determine the extent to which the organisation's activities and facilities: are provided to the residents in the Braintree District; contribute to or support the Council's Corporate Strategy; and meet a need that the Council has powers to provide but does not provide in an area. It is also considered beneficial where there is liaison between the organisation and the Council to avoid duplication of effort and/or resources.
- **Financial Management.** Questions regarding the finances of the organisation: the level of unrestricted reserves that the organisation has available to support its running costs; the source of the organisation's funding; and whether the organisation has a bar facility.

- 2.2 Based on the responses a score will be determined using a matrix of scores developed for each of the questions. The amount of discretionary relief awarded will be dependent on the total score achieved.

- 2.3 Organisations entitled to 80% mandatory relief will need to achieve the appropriate scores to receive a top-up award of 10% or 20%.

- 2.4 A maximum limit on the amount of discretionary relief awarded will be set at £20,000 and that an award will run for a period of 3 years. A new application form will be required to be completed for consideration of an award for a further period.

3. Impact of proposed new scheme

- 3.1 When the current recipients of discretionary relief were informed of the review and the introduction of a revised scheme during 2017/18 a request was made for a new application form to be completed and returned by 30th June 2016.

- 3.2 For those organisations that completed the new application form an assessment has been made against the proposed criteria.

- 3.3 The impact on those current recipients which completed and returned a new application form by November 2016 was:

- 44 receive the same level of award
- 9 receive an increased award
- 23 receive a reduced award

- 3.4 The net change in the value of awards for these 76 organisations would be a reduction of £8,753. Resulting in additional business rates to be collected and shared between the Government and precepting authorities.
- 3.5 A letter containing detail of the proposed new scheme was sent, on 29th December 2016, to all current recipients of discretionary rate relief and to the following stakeholders: Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency, Active Braintree, Braintree Association of Local Councils and the Rural Community Council for Essex. The consultation period was open for six weeks: 30th December 2016 to 12th February 2017. Comments received from five organisations are included in the report.
- 3.6 Following consideration of the comments received on the initial proposed scheme, amendments have been made including: clarification and a broadening of the scope of two questions, the needs not met by and meeting the corporate strategy of the Council, to cover both Braintree District Council and Essex County Council; the deletion of the question regarding liaison with the Council; and a change to the score for having a bar facility from -24 to -18. As a consequence of these changes the scoring matrix has been amended.
- 3.7 The impact on all of those current recipients which have now completed a new application form, at the time of writing this report, is:
- 77 receive the same level of award
 - 12 receive an increased award
 - 7 receive a reduced award
- 3.8 The net change in the value of awards for these 96 organisations is an increase of £322 in a full year, of which £129 (40%) would be the cost to this Council.
- 3.9 It is proposed that the new scheme is implemented from 1st October 2017 with updated bills issued in the first half of September 2017.
- 3.10 Organisations which have not submitted a completed new application form will be given until 31st August 2017 in order to receive their entitlement under the new scheme from 1st October 2017. Organisations which do not return a completed new form will have their current discretionary relief award removed from 1st October 2017.
- 3.11 Completed new application forms received after 31st August 2017 will be assessed and the award will be applied from the date of receipt of the form. Backdating of an application will be allowed in extenuating circumstances but this will be limited to a maximum period of one month.
- 3.12 All current recipients of discretionary relief will be written to with details of the new scheme and the process.

Recommended Decision:

It is Recommended that the proposed new discretionary rate relief scheme, as detailed in Appendix B, be agreed and implemented from 1st October 2017.

Purpose of Decision:

To agree a new discretionary rate relief scheme following a review of the existing scheme which has been in operation since April 2009.

Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail.

Financial:	<p>The cost of mandatory charitable rate relief awards is met from the public purse at a national level.</p> <p>The cost of awarding discretionary rate relief is apportioned as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% funded by Central Government• 40% funded by the District Council• 9% funded by Essex County Council• 1% funded by Essex Fire Authority <p>The financial impact on the Council of the proposed new scheme will not be known until all current recipients of the relief apply and have been assessed under the new scheme criteria.</p> <p>However of those assessed at this time a net change in the value of awards is an increase of £322, of which the Council's portion of this reduced level of business rates collectable would be £129.</p>
Legal:	<p>Billing authorities have discretionary powers to grant business rate relief under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. An amendment under section 69 of the Localism Act 2011 removed the previous restriction of discretionary relief to only apply to charities and other organisations of prescribed types.</p>
Safeguarding:	<p>None</p>
Equalities/Diversity:	<p>It is considered that none of the people with protected characteristics, under the Equalities Act, will be disproportionately impacted by the proposed new discretionary rate relief scheme.</p>
Customer Impact:	<p>A number of organisations may receive a change in the level of relief due to the new scheme. Those organisations which have already completed the new application form and have a reduction in relief awarded will, however, receive six months' notice of the change.</p> <p>The introduction of a time limit to the award will require organisations to apply on a three-yearly basis to renew their</p>

	award. Failure to complete a new application form will result in no discretionary relief being awarded. Backdating of an award will be limited to one month.
Environment and Climate Change:	None
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Consultation on proposed scheme undertaken with current recipients of discretionary business rate relief and with stakeholder organisations between 30 th December 2016 and 12 th February 2017.
Risks:	None
Officer Contact:	Trevor Wilson
Designation:	Head of Finance
Ext. No:	2801
E-mail:	Trevor.wilson@braintree.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 Charities registered with the Charity Commission are entitled to mandatory business rate relief at 80% providing the property is wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes.
- 1.2 Charity Shops – In order to qualify for relief, goods that are sold must be, wholly or mainly, donated and the proceeds of the sale (after deductions for expenses) must be used for the purposes of the charity.
- 1.3 Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC) registered with HMRC are entitled to mandatory business rate relief at 80%.
- 1.4 Local Authorities have discretionary powers to grant discretionary business rate relief up to a maximum of 20% to either registered Charities or CASC's.
- 1.5 In addition, local authorities have discretionary powers to grant business rate relief up to a maximum of 100% where all or part of the property is occupied by an institution or organisation which is not established or conducted for profit and whose main objectives are charitable or otherwise philanthropic or religious, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts or it is wholly or mainly used for the purposes of recreation.

2. Funding of Discretionary Relief

- 2.1 Currently, 325 organisations receive mandatory and/or discretionary relief with total anticipated award values of £2.97million (mandatory) and £0.284million (discretionary) in 2016/17.
- 2.2 Whilst the cost of the mandatory charitable relief awards is met from the public purse at a national level the cost of awarding discretionary business rate relief is apportioned as follows:
 - 50% funded by Central Government
 - 40% funded by the District Council
 - 9% funded by Essex County Council
 - 1% funded by Essex Fire Authority

3. Issues

- 3.1 The current scheme has been in operation since 1st April 2009. The criteria for award in particular for not-for-profit organisations are ambiguous in places and have led to awards which are unfortunately inconsistent between some applicants. Also the awards are open ended with the scheme having no requirement for review or re-application. A copy of the existing scheme criteria is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 Twelve months' notice of change(s) to the scheme is required to be given to the current recipients of the relief. Accordingly, all recipients of this discretionary relief, as at March 2016, were advised that they would be required to re-apply for rate relief, mandatory and/or discretionary, for 2017/18.

4. Options

4.1 A review of schemes adopted by local authorities indicates a range of approaches, examples include:

- Chelmsford CC – discretionary top-up of 20% is awarded to scouts, guides and the sea cadets; discretionary relief where no mandatory entitlement is awarded to sports organisations.
- Epping Forest DC – discretionary top-up of 20% is awarded to scouts and guides, village halls which provide a post office facility and hospices; 80% discretionary relief on properties up to £9,000 rateable value for some not-for-profit organisations.
- Colchester BC – Discretionary top-up relief is granted to local charities with cultural or recreational purpose (10%); local charities with health or welfare purposes (20%); local scout and guide troops and village halls (10%); CASC organisations (20%). Not-for-Profit organisations need to meet specified criteria – no level of award set with each application judged on its merits.
- Luton BC – All requests for discretionary rate relief are judged against a set of criteria, with the scores received determining the amount of relief awarded: 20%, 40%, 60% 80%, 90% and 100%. Charities and CASC organisations receiving 80% mandatory relief have to achieve the relevant score to get a 10% or 20% top-up.

5. Proposed Scheme

5.1 It is considered that key principles for a new scheme should include:

- The organisation's activities must directly benefit Braintree District residents, as 50% of any discretionary rate relief award is funded by our local taxpayers.
- The organisation has a demonstrable or measureable impact of a beneficial nature on the local community which it serves. Consideration will be given to how many residents of the District benefit from the charitable work of the organisation, how accessible the organisation is to members of the community throughout the District, and the extent to which the service is used by the community.
- Open to all organisations: charitable, CASC and Not-for-Profit.

5.2 It is proposed that a set of specified criteria is determined against which all organisations will be assessed.

5.3 The proposed criteria are divided into three areas: Equalities; Activities and Facilities; and Financial Management. Each area is supported with a number of questions.

5.4 Equalities. Four questions designed to determine access and availability of the facilities or activities is open to all including if there are membership fees that these are not prohibitive to individuals.

5.5 **Activities and Facilities.** Five questions to help determine the extent to which the organisation's activities and facilities: are provided to the residents in the Braintree District; contribute to or support the Council's Corporate Strategy; and meet a need that the Council has powers to provide but does not provide in an area. It is also considered beneficial where there is liaison between the organisation and the Council to avoid duplication of effort and/or resources. Finally a technical question, to ensure compliance with statutory requirements that when a vacant property, owned by a charity, is next in use it will be wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes.

5.6 **Financial Management.** Four questions regarding the finances of the organisation and whether the organisation has automatic entitlement to 80% mandatory rate relief. The questions include: the level of unrestricted reserves that the organisation has available to support its running costs; the sources of the organisation's funding (with proposed negative scoring where significant grant aid is received or trading is a source); and whether the organisation has a bar (with a proposed negative score for a bar as this is regarded as a key facility to raise income). Finally a negative score is proposed for those organisations which have entitlement to 80% mandatory rate relief to ensure that their ultimate entitlement to a discretionary award is dependent on positive scores on the equalities and activities and facilities sections.

5.7 Based on the responses a score will be determined using a matrix of scores developed for each of the questions. The amount of discretionary relief awarded will be dependent on the total score achieved and will be based on a number of bandings, as detailed below:

Score Bandings	Percentage Award
100 – 150	100%
80 – 99	90%
60 – 79	80%
50 – 59	60%
40 – 49	40%
0 – 35	no relief

5.8 Organisations entitled to 80% mandatory relief will need to achieve the appropriate scores to receive a top-up award of 10% or 20%.

5.9 Detail of this initial proposed criteria and scoring matrices is provided at Appendix B; ignoring the wording and figures in italics (these are explained at paragraph 8.1 below).

5.10 In addition to the proposed criteria to determine the level of award to the organisations it is recommended that a maximum limit on the amount of discretionary award be set at £20,000 and that an award will run for a period of 3 years. A new application form will be required to be completed for consideration of an award for a further period.

6. Impact of Proposed Scheme

- 6.1 In addition to informing the recipients of discretionary relief of the review and the introduction of a revised scheme during 2017/18 a request was made for a new application form to be completed and returned by 30th June 2016.
- 6.2 From the application forms received an assessment has been made against the proposed criteria.
- 6.3 The impact on those current recipients which have completed a new application form by November 2016 would be:
44 receive the same level of award
9 receive an increased award
23 receive a reduced award
- 6.4 The net change in the value of awards for these 76 organisations is a reduction of £8,753 in a full year. The actual variation is expected to change as there are over 100 organisations which had not returned a new application form by the end of November.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance in proposing this revised scheme requested that it be subject to consultation in advance of consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on 13th March 2017.
- 7.2 A letter containing detail of the proposed new scheme was sent, on 29th December 2016, to all current recipients of discretionary rate relief and to the following stakeholders: Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency, Active Braintree, Braintree Association of Local Councils and the Rural Community Council for Essex.
- 7.3 The consultation period was for six weeks: 30th December 2016 to 12th February 2017.
- 7.4 Five organisations provided a response. Whilst most of the comments related to the scoring and the relief that they would receive under the proposed scheme the following comments were made about the questions in the scheme:

‘We do not run a bar but are surprised that those that do are penalised by 24 points. We suspect that running bars is not as profitable as was especially for sports clubs as drink drive laws have resulted in far less socialising with oppositions these days.’

‘Similarly you ask how closely we liaise with the council to avoid duplication of effort. This seems to contradict the question above it which asks if we provide a service not offered by the council. If what we do isn't provided by the council, why is there a need for close liaison to avoid duplication?’

‘The type of facility we run would be expected to offer bar facilities, in fact to attract customers for weddings, wakes and similar events this is pretty well essential. The money we make from the bar helps us meet your aim of providing

the service at 'no or reasonable cost' yet once again we are penalised. If we take the bar away, to gain more points, our charity would end up making a loss on current revenues. We would therefore have to increase our hire charges and deter some of the very people you want us to accommodate.'

'Overall I get the feeling this attempt at a 'one size fits all' approach to assessing organisations fails to allow for any flexibility in the differing needs and modus operandi of the multitude of organisations across the district.'

'We are non-profit making and all income is spent on the needs of the Club. The reason we run a bar is to create income such that we can keep members fees to a minimum, not to make a profit.'

'We use the premises for four hours a day Mondays to Saturdays as a coffee shop, staffed almost entirely by volunteers, offering reasonably priced drinks and snacks where the community is able to spend time relaxing in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Our aims are not financial, though we are happy to break even if we can and the operation is subsidised by the church. We seek to offer a welcome to the lonely, the elderly and those with needs of many kinds to whom we can show friendship, sympathy and support.'

8. Recommendation

8.1 Having considered the comments received the following changes have been made to the proposed new scheme:

8.1.1 Question 5 – The scope is broadened such that the organisation's activities contribute to the Corporate Strategies of Braintree District Council and/or Essex County Council.

8.1.2 Question 6 – The scope is broadened such that the organisation meets a need not currently provided by Braintree District Council or Essex County Council in the District.

8.1.3 Question 7 – Does the organisation liaise with the Council to ensure 'joined up working' and to avoid duplication of effort and resources?
Question deleted.

8.1.4 Question 12 – scoring for having a bar is reduced from -24 to -18.

8.2 As a consequence of the above changes the scoring bands are amended to:

Score Bandings	Percentage Award
96 – 138	100%
76 – 95	90%
56 – 75	80%
46 – 55	60%
36 – 45	40%
0 – 35	no relief

8.3 The impact on all of those current recipients which have now completed a new application form, at the time of writing this report, is:

77 receive the same level of award
12 receive an increased award
7 receive a reduced award

- 8.4 The net change in the value of awards for these 96 organisations is an increase of £322 in a full year, of which £129 would be the cost to this Council. The actual variation will change as there are over 80 organisations which have not returned a new application form at this time.
- 8.5 Business rate bills will have been issued in mid-March 2017 and the discretionary awards will be determined and applied under the current scheme arrangements.
- 8.6 It is proposed that the revised scheme is implemented from 1st October 2017 with updated bills issued in the first half of September 2017.
- 8.7 Organisations which have not submitted a completed new application form will be given until 31st August 2017 in order to receive their entitlement under the new scheme from 1st October 2017. Organisations which do not return a completed new form will have their current discretionary relief award removed from 1st October 2017.
- 8.8 Completed new application forms received after 31st August 2017 will be assessed and the award will be applied from the date of receipt of the form. Backdating of an application will be allowed in extenuating circumstances but this will be limited to a maximum period of one month.
- 8.9 The final proposed scheme criteria and scoring matrices is provided at Appendix B; with the wording and figures in italics included.

1. Discretionary Business Rate Relief for Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (C.A.S.C.) and Exempt Charitable Organisations

<p>ORGANISATION</p>	<p>Each application will be considered on its own merits, however the following criteria will be applied to calculate the amount of Discretionary Relief (if any) to be granted after the Mandatory Relief has been applied. All facilities supporting the aims and objectives of the council will receive favourable consideration.</p> <p>MANDATORY RELIEF currently granted at 80% of the payable Non Domestic Rates</p> <p>Mandatory Relief will be awarded on occupied properties from the original date of application, or from the date of a new application for registration with the Charity Commission, or date from which membership of C.A.S.C. is granted by the Inland Revenue.</p>
<p>HALLS, VILLAGE HALLS, CLUBS COMMUNITY GROUPS i.e. SCOUTS/GUIDES SPORTS CLUBS</p> <p>EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS/ PRE- SCHOOLS /NURSERY SCHOOLS</p> <p>MUSEUMS/VISITORS CENTRES/RESEARCH CENTRES/PRESERVATION GROUPS</p> <p>CHARITY SHOPS</p> <p>CHARITY/ SUPPORT OFFICES/CENTRES FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION</p> <p>STORAGE/WORKSHOPS/ ANIMAL SHELTERS/ DROP- IN CENTRES/WORSHIP/ SURGERIES AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS</p> <p>MISCELLANEOUS</p>	<p>Discretionary Relief can be granted up to 20% as a top up to Mandatory Relief with a total of 100% relief.</p> <p>10% If membership and use is not restricted by application through interview or selection 10% When the annual adult membership fees are less than £50.00 Automatic 20% for youth associations such as scouts, or cadets</p> <p>No top up</p> <p>10% if open access with entrance fee no more than £5.00 for adults 10% if self-funding by donation and fund raising</p> <p>10% if selling only used good 10% if no cost has been incurred for refurbishment or for fixtures and fittings</p> <p>No top up</p> <p>10% If premises are used for charitable purposed only and /or 10% if all activities carried out are not for any personal profit</p> <p>Up to 50%</p>

	Discretionary relief (where there is no eligibility for mandatory)		
Property, all or part of which is occupied for the purpose of non-profit making: Institution or other organisation whose main objectives and interests are philanthropic, religious, science, preservation, conservation, literature or fine arts or is occupied by educational (excluding schools) or cultural organisations	Open membership to all sections of the community	up to	40%
	Low membership fees under £100.00 pa		20%
	Maintenance of historic evidence		20%
	the organization has policies that promotes equal opportunities		20%
Sports Club, society or other organisation that is used for the purpose of recreation and sport	Aims and objectives support the Council's 2009-2012 aims		20%
	Open access with no membership required	up to	40%
	Membership fees over £500.00 pa + RPI		-100%
	Have an active youth policy with subsidised fees		20 %
	Subsidised rates for persons in receipt of a state retirement pension or unemployed persons		20%
	Have an active disabled persons policy with subsidised fees		20%
	Complements the Council's 2009-2012 aims		20%
	Bar sales and/ or gaming machine income greater than 10% of total turnover	up to	-50%
	Affiliated to national charitable body		40%
	No restriction on membership other than through age or need	up to	40%
Community groups i.e. scouts and those concerned with social welfare	Low fees if any less than £100.00 pa		20%
Village hall not registered as a charity	Hall managed by a committee for the use of the community		50%
	Demonstrates an open access policy		50%
TOTAL MAXIMUM RELIEF = 100%			
Policies need to have been in force for a minimum of 12 months and evidenced by minutes from the appropriate management meetings			

Discretionary Business Rates Relief to Charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs and Not-for-Profit Organisations

Information required supporting an application

All applications:

- copy of latest annual report
- copy of latest accounts
 - these should be audited/independently examined where this is part of the usual organisational procedures
 - where accounts are not routinely audited/examined, the accounts should be submitted along with bank certificates for each of the bank accounts certifying the current account balances
 - national organisations should submit accounts that are relevant to the immediate local area
 - budget forecast for the current financial year
- price lists (if appropriate) for
 - membership fees
 - service use/facility hire charges
 - bar prices
- details of all grants received in the last three years and their sources, as well as any pending applications
- copy of equalities policy
- confirmation that the organisation has a separate bank account with joint signatures
- confirmation that the organisation's premises are fully utilised and suitable for its purpose having regard to size and location

First applications:

- evidence of registration with charity commissioners (charities only)
- copy of rules/constitution

How much rate relief will be awarded?

The Council can grant up to 100 per cent rate relief. The amount of relief awarded will depend on the assessed score and may be limited by the amount of funding available. The following maximum percentage will apply to the respective scoring bands:

<i>Score Bandings</i>	<i>Percentage Award</i>
96 – 138	100%
76 – 95	90%
56 – 75	80%
46 – 55	60%
36 – 45	40%
0 – 35	no relief

Where an organisation already receives 80 per cent mandatory rate relief (charities and registered community amateur sports clubs), they will need to receive a score of 80+ to benefit from discretionary rate relief. This is designed to ensure consistency between ratepayers. The percentages therefore indicate the maximum total rate relief.

Discretionary Rate Relief assessment criteria

Equalities

1	Are the facilities/activities of the organisation open to all sections of the community? The organisation should actively promote equality of opportunity and access, as it relates to gender, race, disability, sexuality, religion/fait/belief and age. It should comply with all non-discrimination and equality of opportunity legislation, codes of practice and the Council's equalities policy.	Yes No – acceptable reason No – unacceptable reason	18 9 0
2	Are the organisation's facilities made available to people other than members at no (or reasonable) cost? e.g. casual public use etc.	Yes/Not applicable No	12 0
3	Is there a pro-active approach towards encouraging the use of the service/facilities by the disadvantaged, under-represented groups or groups with special needs: e.g. young people, women, older age groups, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities etc.	Yes No	18 0
4	Are membership fees likely to exclude some individuals? Rates may vary for different classes of membership, but must be consistent with the principle of open access.	No or No membership fees Yes	12 0

Activities and Facilities

5	Do the organisation's activities contribute to the Council's Corporate Strategy? <i>Corporate Strategies of Braintree District Council and/or Essex County Council?</i>	Significant contribution Lesser contribution No	12 6 0
6	Does the organisation meet a need not currently provided by the Council? <i>Braintree District Council or Essex County Council in the District?</i>	Yes No	12 0
7	Does the organisation liaise with the Council to ensure 'joined up working' and to avoid duplication of effort and resources <i>DELETED</i>	Close and regular liaison Some liaison No apparent liaison	12 -6 -0
8 7	Are the benefits or the organisation provided mainly to Braintree District residents?	Over 80% 61% to 80% 51% to 60%	12 8 4

		Up to 50%	0
		Unable to verify	0
9 8	If the property is empty, is there evidence to suggest that it can be brought into use within the period for which discretionary rate relief can be granted?	Yes or Not applicable No	12 0

Financial Management

40 9	What percentage of annual turnover do the net current assets (excluding designated funds) represent? Calculation: Net current assets (excluding designated fund balance) divided by Annual Turnover	0% Over 0% and up to 25% Over 25% and up to 75% Over 75% and up to 100% Over 100%	12 9 6 3 0
41 10	What proportion of the organisation's annual income is generated from: self-help/donations service users trading grant aid	Self- Help/ Donations > 40% Service users >40% Trading > 20% Grant aid > 70%	18 12 -12 -6
42 11	Does the organisation run a bar?	No Yes	0 -24 -18
43 12	Does the organisation already receive 80% mandatory rate relief? Charities or registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs	No Yes	0 -12

The amount of relief awarded will be limited to a maximum of £20,000, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The period of the award will be up to a maximum of 3 years.

Assessment of applications

The system of scoring detailed above is designed to ensure that all applications are treated fairly and equitably. Each application is scored on the same criteria. Incomplete applications will be returned to the ratepayer with a request for the specific information required. If this isn't supplied the application will not be considered any further.

Backdating of an application will be allowed in extenuating circumstances but this will be limited to a maximum period of one month.

Cabinet Member Decisions made under delegated powers		Agenda No: 8a
Portfolio		See body of report
Corporate Outcome:		
Report presented by:		Not applicable – report for noting
Report prepared by:		Chloe Glock, Governance Business Officer
Background Papers:		Public Report
Cabinet Decisions made by individual Cabinet Members under delegated powers.		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:		
<p>All delegated decisions taken by individual Cabinet Members are required to be published and listed for information on next Cabinet Agenda following the decision.</p> <p>Since the last Cabinet meeting the following delegated decisions have been taken and it has been necessary to republish decisions taken from October 2016 due to errors within earlier reports. The republication does no effect the decision that have been taken by Cabinet Members (details as at time of decision):</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Environment and Place Decision taken on 8th October 2016</p> <p>That Braintree District Council will not proceed to join the SEAX building controlled shared services. Officers are authorized to commence investigating and alternative business's case for shared service for building control and to bring a report to Cabinet.</p> <p>Councillor Peter Tattersley – Cabinet Member for Health and Communities Decision taken on 29th November 2016</p> <p>To agree that there will be no change to the leisure centre core price structure from January 2017 across the Leisure Contract as per clause 10.1 in the specification.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Environment and Place Decision taken on 9th January 2017</p> <p>That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Place approves that decision to extent the Councils current agreement with the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) for On-Street Parking Enforcement by a further four years up to and including 31st March 2022.</p>		

Councillor Graham Butland – Leader of the Council.
Decision taken on 6th February 2017

That the Neighbourhood Area Application covering the extent of Great Saling Parish Council and Bardfield Saling Parish Meeting is approved.

Councillor J McKee - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Asset Management
Decision taken on 16th February 2017

To approve the amendments to the Data Quality Policy following review of the policy.

Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Environment and Place
Decision taken on 28th February 2017

To approve the allocation of up to an additional £10,000 discretionary funding to allow disabled facility grant works to be undertaken.

Cabinet Decisions made by individual Cabinet Members under delegated decisions can be viewed on the Access to Information page on the Council's website.
www.braintree.gov.uk

Recommended Decision:

For Cabinet to note the delegated decisions.

Purpose of Decision:

The reasons for decision can be found in the individual delegated decision.

Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail.

Financial:	None arising out of this report.
Legal:	None arising out of this report.
Safeguarding:	None arising out of this report.
Equalities/Diversity:	None arising out of this report.
Customer Impact:	None arising out of this report.
Environment and Climate Change:	None arising out of this report.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None arising out of this report.
Risks:	None arising out of this report.
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