

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Wednesday, 23rd November 2022 at 7.15pm

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

Members of the public will be able to view and listen to this meeting via YouTube.
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Members of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.

Councillor Mrs J Beavis
Councillor J Coleridge
Councillor G Courtauld
Councillor Mrs C Dervish
Councillor T Everard

Councillor M Radley (Chairman)
Councillor S Rehman
Councillor B Rose
Councillor P Schwier (Vice-Chairman)

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.

D GASCOYNE
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Pecuniary Interests (OPI) or Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI).

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

Public Question Time – Registration and Speaking:

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time.

Members of the public wishing to participate are requested to register by contacting the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk by midday on the second working day before the day of the Committee meeting. For example, if the Committee meeting is due to be held on a Tuesday, the registration deadline is midday on Friday, (where there is a bank holiday Monday you will need to register by midday on the previous Thursday). Public Question Time speakers may participate in person or virtually. Speaker preference must be indicated upon registration.

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

The public may ask questions on any matter listed on the Agenda for this meeting. All questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be read within the 3 minutes allotted for each question/statement.

The Chairman of the Committee has discretion to extend the time allocated for public question time and to amend the order in which questions/statements are presented to the Committee.

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Comments and Suggestions:

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

PUBLIC SESSION

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declaration of Interests - Scrutiny Committee

1. To declare the existence and nature of any interests 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.
2. To declare the existence and nature of any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any Councillor who is a member of that group as to how that Councillor shall speak or vote on any matter before the Committee or the application or threat to apply any sanction by the group in respect of that Councillor should he/she speak or vote on any particular matter.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee held on 21st September 2022 (copy previously circulated).

4 Public Question Time

(See paragraph above)

5 Scrutiny of the Budget Options and Proposals for 2023-2024

pages 5 to 38

To receive a presentation from the Cabinet on the financial challenges and options and proposals for 2023-24 and to consider the latest Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27.

Note:

1. The report for this item has been prepared for the meeting of Cabinet on 28th November 2022.
2. The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee are invited to note the report.
3. All Members of the Council are invited to attend this meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee as part of the Member Development Programme to enable them understand the Council's financial challenges and options and proposals for 2023-24.

6 Scrutiny Review into Section 106

The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee will consider its draft scrutiny report.

Note: This report is to follow.

7 Decision Planner - 1st December 2022 to 28th February 2023

pages 38 to 47

The Committee is asked to note the Decision Planner for the period of 1st December 2022 to 28th February 2023.

Report Title: Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27	
Report to: Cabinet	
Date: 28 th November 2022	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP2022/24
Report Presented by: Councillor John McKee, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation	
Enquiries to: Phil Myers, Head of Finance, phimy@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides detail of the progress updating of the Financial Profile and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/24 to 2026/27; unavoidable cost pressures and budget growth; and options for revenue cost reductions/additional income to contribute towards the anticipated budget gap in 2023/24; and the strategy for achieving a balanced budget and addressing the longer-term financial gap across the MTFS period.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on the Capital Programme and proposed financing, including details of the proposed additions to the programme from the capital bids received for 2023/24.
- 1.3 The report has been written ahead of the Autumn Statement that is due to be announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 17th November 2022. Following the announcement, it may be necessary to revise the assumptions made in the report and the updated MTFS Financial Profile.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet to agree that:

- 2.1 No discretionary changes are proposed to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 and consequently there is no requirement for consultation to be undertaken; and
- 2.2 The Revenue and Capital Programme position, as presented in this report, constitute the initial proposals and options for determining the 2023/24 Budget and that views are sought as appropriate.
- 2.3 Funding available for Discretionary Housing Payments in 2022/23 is increased by £77,000 through an allocation from the Covid-19 reserve.
- 2.4 To increase the minimum level of the General Fund unallocated balance for the Budget Strategy from £1.5million to £3million.

3. Budget Context and Strategy

- 3.1 The Council's Budget Strategy (the Strategy) has been established for several years, which is to:
- Be a low council tax authority
 - Have plans to deliver a balanced budget over the medium-term; and
 - Maintain a minimum level of unallocated balances (currently determined as £1.5m, but recommended to raise to £3m)
- 3.2 The approach to achieving this Strategy has been to deliver cost reductions and additional income without impacting on customers and service delivery.
- 3.3 Braintree District Council (the Council) has also progressed its ambition to invest in the district, most visible through the capital investment strategy and strategic projects. Funding for this investment has been through a combination of using the Council's own capital resources, including New Homes Bonus, external funding wherever possible, and by increasing prudential borrowing.
- 3.4 The economic backdrop now means that delivering the Strategy has become significantly more challenging with high inflation, increased interest rates, greater scrutiny and more regulatory change. Residents and businesses face a cost-of-living crisis that has already seen increased needs and support from the Council. Forecasting is more difficult with increased macro-economic volatility, exacerbated by external events such as the war in Ukraine and other geopolitical developments.
- 3.5 Whilst the Spending Review announced in October 2021 (SR21), set out a spending envelope comprising real term growth in resources for local government, the subsequent rapid rise in inflation, Government's commitment to ensuring the UK's economic stability and a need to provide confidence in fiscal discipline, has led to much greater uncertainty over how this will now impact on council finances particularly as all Government departments have been tasked with finding more efficiency savings to stay within the SR21 targets. Further information will become known once the Autumn Statement is published on 17th November, which it has been confirmed will address both taxes and spending, but the Government is unlikely to provide clarity on the specific impact on local government until the provisional local government finance settlement later in December.
- 3.6 The scale of the overall financial challenge facing the Council and the emerging strategy to ensure a sustainable MTFs position is set out in Section 8.

4. Updates on the Financial Assumptions in the MTFS

- 4.1 In February 2022, the MTFS identified a budget gap across the four-year period of £1.243m. Since then, the assumptions and estimates underpinning the MTFS have been reviewed considering the latest information and best estimates in what is a very volatile and uncertain fiscal context. The Table below shows the latest extract from the MTFS Financial Profile:

	23/24 £000	24/25 £000	25/26 £000	26/27 £000	MTFS £'000
MTFS ongoing gap Feb 22	925	119	199	-	1,243
Pay, inflation, cost pressures, and reduced income	2,024	34	(8)	113	2,163
Govt. funding and NI	(523)	240	-	-	(283)
Business rates and collection fund	(361)	157	(4)	(4)	(212)
Proposed growth	302	65	136	-	503
Budget gap before savings	2,367	615	323	109	3,414

- 4.2 Further details of the changes made to the Financial Profile are set out below.

4.3 Pay Costs

- 4.3.1 The annual staff pay award, with effect from April 2022, covering the majority of staff has been confirmed with the unions accepting the National Employers' offer of £1,925 on all pay points. This increases the Council's pay bill by around 6% (compared to 2% originally assumed in the MTFS). For financial planning, a 3% increase has been allowed in 2023/24, and 2% in subsequent years.
- 4.3.2 Annual incremental progression is allowed for all staff that are not at the top of their grade, although advancement is subject to satisfactory performance. The estimated cost of incremental progression will be revised based on an updated staffing profile prior to budget estimates being finalised.
- 4.3.3 The provisional results from the latest Triennial Review of the Essex Pension Fund conducted as at 31st March 2022, are currently being assessed and clarifications sought with the Essex Pension Fund Service to confirm the position for the Council in terms of its pension contributions for the period April 2023 to March 2026. Based on an initial assessment, a previous cost pressure item has been removed from the Financial Profile, and further adjustments are to be confirmed.
- 4.3.4 The net effect of changes to pay costs is an additional £790k from that which had been assumed in the MTFS in February 2022.

4.4 Gas & Electricity

- 4.4.1 The Council contracts its energy through Crown Commercial Services (CCS). The current contract basis is that energy costs are purchased 6-months in advance of the charging period, which is either October-September, or April-March, depending on the property account concerned. Whilst this approach

provided protection from the rapid increase in wholesale market prices, particularly after the start of the Ukraine war, the Council is now exposed to market prices. An initial estimate of the additional cost in 2023/24 has been made and factored into the updated Financial Profile (+£240k). Mitigation against increased costs is being provided in the current year through a new government Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which will provide a discount for all non-domestic customers (including the public sector); however, this relief is currently only available until April 2023. The government has indicated the position will be reviewed on any further extended support including which businesses might be targeted. Given the high degree of volatility in the wholesale market, budget assumptions will continue to be refined ahead of the final budget report.

- 4.4.2 It is uncertain if, and when, energy prices may reverse, therefore a working assumption has been that increased costs will remain for 2-years, and then will reduce in the following two subsequent years of the MTFs.

4.5 Fuel and Other Inflationary Costs

- 4.5.1 Allowance has been made in the Financial Profile for increased costs above those assumed in February because of higher fuel and other inflationary pressures (+£309k in 2023/24 and +£34k in 2024/25). These estimates are also subject to a high degree of uncertainty and fluctuation. A significant positive impact that is partially offsetting increased costs has been the rapid rise in the market prices of mixed dry recycling material and glass for which the Council receives credit/ income through contracts with external material processors. The uplift in income is subject to a risk that prices fall significantly and therefore the assumption made is that income is based on the average price achieved in 21/22 resulting in an additional £299k of income. Again, these assumptions will be kept under review, and in particular the next quarter review of recycling prices which the Council has been advised is expected to see a fall in prices from the peak that was agreed for Q3 of the current year.

4.6 Cost Pressures

- 4.6.1 The Council faces other cost pressures and reduced income in its activities that have been reflected in the updated Financial Profile:
- **Causeway House Lettable Space** - Reduced rent income (£134k) and service charge recovery (£157k) from the lettable areas of Causeway House as all tenants have now vacated whilst efforts continue to be made to secure alternative occupiers of the space. This is being partly offset by a proposal to relocate staff from Unit 4 at Lakes Road, which will result in future savings on the rental of this unit.
 - **Car Parking Income** - Since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic the Council has suffered a drop in income from car parks, particularly from pay & display. Whilst there has been some recovery since the worst effects of the pandemic, income nevertheless is forecast to be lower than provided for in the base budget by £210k.

- **Cordons Farm Disposal Costs** – Essex County Council (Waste Disposal Authority) has informed us of increased costs of tipping residual waste at the Waste Transfer Station, Cordons Farm from 1 April 2023 (est. £145k). We are in discussions and working with officers at ECC to consider options to mitigate and reduce the costs, where practically possible.
- **Housing Benefit** – the net cost of providing housing benefit support is higher than the budget allows (£100k), after taking account of government subsidy. The main reasons for this are the need to utilise a higher level of bed & breakfast type accommodation and costs associated with benefits paid to supported housing providers, both instances where subsidy recovery is capped. In the current year this additional cost is being met from reserves; however, this position is expected to continue under current circumstances.
- **Corporate Costs** (£148k) – there are several costs which are expected to increase: external audit fees where the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) has recently advised authorities to plan for a 150% increase in fees from 2023/24; insurance premiums where the Council has increased risk exposure through its property and commercial activities; and bank and card transaction fees where increases are being levied on transactional charges related to income collection.
- **Council Tax Sharing Agreement (CTSA)** – A review of the current CTSA scheme which operates between the major precepting authorities and billing authorities has recently been completed. A revised scheme is being proposed from April 2023, the estimated impact of which would be to reduce the income the Council receives (£50k).
- **Operations** (£38k) - increased operational costs including the running costs of a new street washer that will be able to be used across all three main towns.

4.7 Government Funding

- 4.7.1 The Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) for 2022/23 provided for a single-year financial settlement for councils, reflecting a roll-forward of the previous year's settlement, but with a new one-off Services grant. The settlement also included a Lower Tier Services Grant for the second year. At the time, the Government stated its commitment to ensuring that future funding allocations for councils would be based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources, and that it would work closely with the sector and other stakeholders before consulting on any potential changes. So far there has been no consultation issued and therefore it is currently assumed that 2023/24 may similarly be a single-year roll over settlement.
- 4.7.2 For the purposes of updating the Financial Profile the Lower Tier Services Grant (currently £159k) has been assumed to be ongoing, and the Services grant (£240k) paid for a second year only.

4.7.3 From 6th November 2022, the temporary 1.25% increase in National Insurance rates was reversed for the rest of the financial year. The introduction of a separate Health and Social Care Levy tax in April 2023 has been cancelled. The annual saving to the Council from this change is estimated to be £123k. There is a risk that government clawback funding provided via the SR21 in relation to what was seen as an additional cost burden on councils.

4.8 Business Rates and Collection Fund

4.8.1 The Business Rates Baseline, the amount of business rates the Council is entitled to retain before levy is payable, is assumed to increase by 2% per annum. In previous years, the government has either uprated baselines in line with inflation or, if the rating multiplier to be paid by businesses has been capped or frozen, compensated councils for the reduction in income through additional grant. The high rate of annual inflation in September 2022, would normally be expected to be applied; however, no allowance has been made at this time pending further clarification from Government.

4.8.2 The additional amount of retained business rate income has similarly been increased across the MTFs period by 2% per annum; however, an additional increase of £200k (ongoing) has been assumed from 2023/24 based on the current level of business rate income being collected. Whilst having a positive impact, this does increase the level of risk from £1.5m to £1.7m in terms of any potential reset of the Business Rate Retention Scheme.

4.8.3 No allowance has been made of the potential impact of introducing a new valuation list from April 2023. A draft valuation list is still awaited from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), which would be expected to be implemented across England based on not raising the overall amount of income generated from business rates, this being achieved by adjusting the National Rating Multiplier, either upwards/ downwards depending on the overall effect of the revaluation on rateable values. At a local level, councils can be gainers/ losers from the changes. For individual business ratepayers it is expected that a transitional protection scheme will be introduced that phases in large increases/ decreases over a set period.

4.8.4 The budget setting process includes estimating the amount of council tax likely to be collected. Variation from the estimate results in either a surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund which must either be returned to or requested from council taxpayers in the following year. The surplus or deficit is allocated between the four major preceptors: Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, and Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (EPFCC) for Policing and Community safety and for the Fire and Rescue Authority.

4.8.5 It is estimated that the balance on the Collection Fund available for distribution is a surplus of £1,807,134. The surplus will be allocated to:

- Essex County Council £1,309,953
- Braintree District Council £221,760
- EPFCC Policing & Community Safety £205,427
- EPFCC Fire & Rescue Authority £69,994

4.8.6 During the 2022/23 Budget process it was proposed that the cost of providing a **Councillor Community Grants Scheme**, which is not in the base budget, would be met from any share of a Collection Fund surplus. The current scheme provides for £1,250 per Member, a total annual cost of £61,250.

4.8.7 After allowing funding for a Councillor Community Grant Scheme this will leave a residual amount of the Council's share of the estimated Collection Fund surplus of £160,510, which has been taken into account within the updated Financial Profile as a one-off benefit in 2023/24 only.

4.8.8 The assumption at present is that any share of a balance on the Collection Fund that relates to business rates will be matched by an equivalent addition/reduction from the Business Rate Retention Reserve. Balances in respect of business rates continue to be impacted by timing differences related to the accounting treatment of Covid business rate reliefs and the related government compensation grants. Further detail on the balance relating the business rates will be provided in the final budget report.

4.9 **Council Taxbase**

4.9.1 The Council Taxbase for 2023/24 is required to be calculated as at 30th November 2022, and will be agreed under delegated authority by the Section 151 Officer. However, prior to this determination and for financial planning purposes the council taxbase for 2023/24 is estimated to be 55,507 (an increase of 1% over the 2022/23 taxbase).

4.9.2 The Council Taxbase includes estimated allowances for discounts and exemptions including the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, single persons discount and losses on collection. For 2023/24 the allowance for collection losses has been increased by 0.5% giving a revised collection rate assumption of 98.5%. It is considered that this is prudent given the considerable financial pressures that households will be facing over the coming months and the risk this poses to future collection performance.

4.9.3 The Council has previously exercised its discretionary powers to set discounts where it is permissible for empty properties (both properties undergoing extensive repairs and properties unfurnished) and second homes. Currently no discount is provided, and it is proposed to keep this policy in place for 2023/24.

4.9.4 The Council has also previously exercised its discretionary powers to set a premium on long-term empty properties (unoccupied and substantially unfurnished) in addition to a full charge. The premiums are based on the length of time a property has been empty:

- 100% for a period of less than 5 years
- 200% for at least 5 years but less than 10 years
- 300% for at least 10 years.

As an incentive, when a property is brought back into use and occupied a refund of the premium charged (i.e., the amount above the previous level set by government of 50%) for the previous 12 months will be made.

It is not proposed to vary any of these premium levels for 2023/24.

- 4.9.5 On 3rd October 2022, 196 properties were subject to a premium: 91 charged 100%, 43 charged 200%, and 62 charged 300%. It is noted that 91 of the 196 properties are owned by the Ministry of Defence at the former Wethersfield Air Base.
- 4.9.6 The Council has discretionary power, under section 13A 1c of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to enable it to reduce council tax liability where statutory discounts, exemptions and reductions do not apply. Current policy is to consider each application on its merit. The cost of an award under the policy must be met from the General Fund. No changes or amendments to this policy are proposed.
- 4.9.7 A council tax exemption for care leavers, aged 24 and under, also applies. Essex County Council and this Council fund this exemption, in proportion to precepts.
- 4.9.8 The Financial Profile includes allowance for future growth in the council taxbase at 1% per annum from 2024/25 onwards (and assumes the collection rate reverts to 99%).

4.10 Local Council Tax Support Scheme

- 4.10.1 The Council is committed to assisting residents through the current cost of living crisis. The Council's Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme applies to working age claimants and retains a significant proportion of the principles and elements of the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme. The level of council tax liability on which LCTS awards are based is 76%.
- 4.10.2 There are no proposed changes to the existing scheme other than to reflect statutory changes that Government have/ will introduce including disregarding certain cost of living payments and compensation for victims of infected blood. Therefore, it is considered there is no requirement for consultation on the scheme to be operated from April 2023. Details of the current scheme can be found at [The Local Council Tax Support scheme – Braintree District Council](#)
- 4.10.3 Support given to claimants of pensionable age is calculated using the rules as existed under the former Council Tax Benefit scheme, uprated by government in line with wider benefit system changes.
- 4.10.4 The LCTS scheme is accounted for as a discount with the Council's taxbase being reduced by an estimate of the amount of support that will be awarded each year. The variation between the actual and estimated amount awarded is reflected in the balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund at the year-end.
- 4.10.5 The Equalities Impact Assessment produced for the current scheme continues to be relevant. This identified that the scheme provides a positive impact for older people but potential negative impact for people with disabilities. The

potential impact is minimised as Disability Benefits are disregarded thereby providing additional support to those with specific long-term conditions. Support for people with mental health issues may be available by means of an exemption from Council Tax liability under SMI (Severely Mentally Impaired) legislation.

4.10.6 As further support to households an Exceptional Hardship Fund is to be retained which will provide for short-term assistance to households facing exceptional financial difficulties. The Fund is financed by the Council and from contributions from the major precepting authorities, in proportion to individual council tax precept levels.

4.10.7 The Council's current process for dealing with requests for assistance from the Fund involves a referral to the Citizens Advice (CA) for an assessment of the claimant's finances. Detail of the process is contained in the 'Council Tax – Discretionary Reduction in Liability Policy.' No changes are being proposed to the arrangement with the CA or the funding for this element of the service.

4.10.8 In addition to the money advice service provided by the CA, the Council employs an officer to work specifically with claimants who are experiencing difficulty in paying their council tax with the objective of offering support and advice and to ultimately agree a payment plan. The Council's procedures for collection enforcement also aims to work constructively and sympathetically with taxpayers who are genuinely struggling to pay.

4.11 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

4.11.1 DHP are payments to recipients of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit that provide extra financial assistance for housing related costs for the following reasons:

- prevent homelessness
- ease poverty
- safeguard residents in their home
- keep families together
- help claimants through personal crises and difficult events
- provide tenants with time to reassess their situation and find a long-time solution.

4.11.2 Government allocate DHP funding annually to be disbursed by local authorities. The amount provided in the current year is £174,853 which is £76,964 less than the amount provided in 2021/22 of £251,817. Local authorities can use their own funds to top up the government contribution up to a maximum of two and a half times the DWP allocation.

4.11.3 The Combined Scrutiny Committee into the Cost-of-Living Crisis 2022 recently reported its response to Full Council at its meeting held on 10th October 2022. In the response the Committee included the following recommendation:

'It is recommended that the Council add to the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to assist those who are most vulnerable and to avoid homelessness.'

4.11.4 In making the recommendation, the Committee drew on the fact that the Council still retained a £1million reserve that was set aside for Covid, although recognising that there were still some unknowns regarding the related costs and the Council was facing its own financial challenges.

4.11.5 At the end October the amount of DHP awarded was £115k or 66% of the available funding. Without any additional funding, there will be just £60k available to provide support over the remainder of the financial year. It is therefore proposed to top-up the Government funding by £77k which will provide the same level of funding for the scheme that was available in 21/22, and to meet this from a re-allocation from the Covid reserve.

4.12 Council Tax Levels and Referendums

4.12.1 The Localism Act 2011 gives local communities the power to decide whether to accept an excessive council tax increase. The Secretary of State determines the level of increase above which a proposed increase in council tax must be subject to a referendum. For shire district councils the threshold for 2022/23 was set at the higher of less than 2% or up to £5. The Government will announce its proposed limit in the provisional Financial Settlement for 2023/24.

4.12.2 In line with the Budget Strategy, the Financial Profile is currently based on council tax rate increasing by less than 2% per annum, giving the following Band D tax rates:

- 2023/24 – 1.99% providing a Band D level of £193.41
- 2024/25 – 1.95% providing a Band D level of £197.19
- 2025/26 – 1.96% providing a Band D level of £201.06
- 2026/27 – 1.97% providing a Band D level of £205.02

4.12.3 The following table sets out a range of scenarios for the 2023/24 council tax rate and impact this would have on the Council's budget and the available resources over the MTFS period compared to what is already assumed:

Change in Band D Rate	Band D Rate £. p	Increase per week pence	Impact on current 2023/24 budget gap +Adverse/ - Positive	Spending Power impact over current MTFS -Reduction/ +Increase
Freeze	£189.63	-	+£210k	-£827k
0.5%	£190.53	2p	+£160k	-£630k
1.0%	£191.52	4p	+£105k	-£414k
1.5%	£192.42	5p	+£55k	-£217k
2.0% (MTFS)	£193.41	7p	-	-
Max 2.6% (£4.95)	£194.58	10p	-£65k	+£256k

4.12.4 The MTFs in February 2022 already assumed a 2% increase in the Council's share of the overall Council Tax rate and, therefore, £210k of additional income.

5. Budget Growth

5.1 Proposed Budget Growth for 2023/24

5.1.1 Bids for budget growth in 2023/24 total £302k. The bids proposed, that would be added to the budget if confirmed after considering views sought through the budget consultation, would include the following items:

Climate Change and the Environment.

- **Litter and Dog Bin Route Review** – To commission an external resource to undertake a review of the litter and dog bin routes with a view to increasing operational efficiency. This item is seen as a potential 'invest to save' item. A request for one-off funding in 2023/24 of £15k.
- **A12 Street Cleansing Partnership** - This is for a budget to clean and maintain the A12 as part of a new collaborative partnership with other Essex councils to provide a more consistent and safer service. Funding is requested to meet the Council's contribution towards contracting the required clean-up work and related traffic management. Subject to further clarification of requirements and level of take-up by other local authorities, a request is being made for £30k per annum.

Overall Strategy

- **Marketing & Communications** – The Council's ambitious strategic investment programme and continued investment in its corporate priorities has meant that demands on the communications team have remained high. Additional funding was agreed for a four-year period to provide additional staffing resources which will be fully utilised by the end of the current financial year. A bid for £25k has been made to maintain funding for this resource in base budget.

Finance & Corporate Transformation

- **Legal Services restructure** – to ensure that there is robust legal support in place to meet the Council's needs it has been necessary to restructure the legal services team increasing in-house resources. This is in part an 'invest to save' approach as the new structure should reduce reliance on the need for external legal services in areas such as strategic investment, asset management, and planning and enforcement. The additional capacity and expertise will also enable the Council to offer services and generate additional income through the local authority legal partnership. A request for £62k of additional base budget is being made which includes £45k that has previously been funded from reserve for the last four years.

- **Programme Management Office (PMO)** – The purpose of the PMO will be to provide support to the organisation in terms of project/ programme portfolio management, governance and assurance and performance management. The PMO would be independent to project delivery. A provisional funding request for an additional £170k to base budget for staffing has been made but the exact requirements are yet to be confirmed and may be partly addressed through redirecting existing resources.

5.2 Strategic Investment Team

- 5.2.1 At its meeting on 8th October 2018, Full Council agreed funding over a four-year period from New Homes Bonus (NHB) to provide the necessary resources to support a Strategic Investment Team. Over that period a significant package of investment has been delivered into the district supporting health, homes, journeys, and jobs, though major projects such as Victoria Square; the Horizon 120 business innovation and logistics park; the Plaza Enterprise and Innovation Centre; and I-Construct. Capitalisation of project costs and use of NHB has funded the cost of the Strategic Investment Team which has comprised both permanent and interim staff. The available funding will be fully utilised during the current financial year.
- 5.2.2 The longer-term resource requirement for the Strategic Investment Team will depend on both the expected delivery timescales for existing projects, and the extent to which pipeline projects are expected to proceed and what other new opportunities may be on the horizon. It is therefore proposed that any further revenue funding requirement (after capitalisation of appropriate costs) continues to be met from the balance of unallocated New Homes Bonus (NHB). The exact amount of NHB that will be required is yet to be confirmed as it will depend on both the final in-year position for funding of the team and decisions on the level of resource to be required moving forward. The proposed allocation of NHB will be set out in the final budget report to Cabinet on 6th February 2023.

5.3 Provisional Budget Growth – Economic Development Team

- 5.3.1 A new Economic Growth Strategy is in development to deliver the Corporate Plan priority of ‘a prosperous district that attracts business growth and provides high quality employment opportunities’ - through a 5-year action plan focusing on the core economic growth needs for the district.
- 5.3.2 The Financial Profile includes a provisional item of budget growth totalling £216k per annum, with an initial part-year requirement in 2024/25. The Economic Development Team is currently funded from a mixture of base budget, external funding, and reserves, the latter of which is estimated to be fully utilised during 2024/25. The provisional item is therefore to highlight a future funding bid that will ensure resources are in place to deliver a robust economic development activity. However, exact requirements will be influenced by the ‘Plan for Growth’ which is expected to be completed by February 2023, and which will determine priorities.

6. The Budget Gap and Proposed Management Savings and Additional Income

- 6.1 Based on the foregoing the updated Financial Profile shows a significant adverse movement in the budget position with a structural financial gap that will need more transformational changes to the way the Council operates over the medium-term. This level of change will need to be set in the context of what sort of Council does Braintree want to be which will be very much an early challenge for a new administration following the May 2023 elections.
- 6.2 The Service Review undertaken for the budget planning has identified some areas of savings and options that will partially mitigate the budget gap, mainly in 2023/24, but with some opportunities identified that will impact in later years.

6.3 Management Savings

- 6.3.1 Senior Managers have been reviewing their service budgets to identify savings and cost reductions and/or additional income generation. Management Board have agreed these as they do not have a direct impact on customers or service delivery.
- 6.3.2 The proposed Management savings are mainly achievable from 2023/24 with further adjustments in 2024/25, as summarised in the table below:

Management Savings	23/24 £000	24/25 £000	MTFS £'000
Increased income	131	-	131
Reduction in budgets due to local management review of requirements	83	34	117
Reduction in service costs due to adoption of technology, changes to processes.	84	-	84
Treasury Management	75	-30	45
Savings where agreements with external bodies have ended	20	-	20
Total Management Savings	393	4	397

7. Options and Opportunities for Savings and Additional Income

- 7.1 Where Senior Managers identified savings or opportunities for additional income which could have an impact on customers and service delivery these have been reviewed by the Cabinet at the Strategy Workshop held on 21st October. From this initial review options have been agreed and on which views are being sought through the budget consultation process.
- 7.2 Options have been categorised across several themes
- 7.2.1 **Funding Arrangements with Other Organisations**
- Extend the Service Level Agreement with the Citizens Advice for a further year with a grant of £107k, a reduction of £5.6k against the current year, but to continue with a separate payment of £25k for the Money Advice

Service recognising the likely demands on the CA during the current cost-of-living crisis. Arrangements for 2024/25 onwards to be subject to further review.

- Revise the Management Agreement with the Museum Trust and link to a 3% per annum reduction (£5k) in funding, commencing in 2023/24. To recognise the additional support the Trust is providing to residents during the cost-of-living crisis outside the current Management Agreement, a one-off payment is proposed in 2023/24 equivalent to the reduction in grant proposed for that year.
- Reduce the amount of funding provided to Parish Councils under the Street Cleaning Agreement by 33% (£29k). This excludes the grounds maintenance function undertaken by some Parish/Town Councils.

7.2.2 Community Facilities

There are several facilities where it is considered that the Council could work with the respective Town Councils over alternative arrangements for provision, management, and maintenance of facilities. This includes the public toilets at both Maldon Road and Newland Street in Witham, as well as certain operational aspects for the Halstead Public Gardens. If alternative arrangements cannot be established the option of withdrawing services would need to be considered to reduce revenue costs (£35k).

7.2.3 Horticultural Related Services

In line with the Council's commitment to biodiversity and re-wilding the District, options for reducing the current spend on horticultural related services include:

- Replace all Summer/Winter bedding planting with sustainable planting across the district or grass over all the beds (£6k). The budget saving in the first year would be used to implement the changes required to the beds. If the option is rejected, there is currently a shortfall on the budget for maintaining the current position (+£4k).
- Reduce cuts of urban amenity verges by 50% from 12 -14 down to 6-7 per annum (£30k). Most verges in urban areas are the responsibility of the County Council as they form part of the public maintainable highway. Under a historical arrangement, ECC pay the Council to undertake 2 safety cuts; however, the Council has chosen to increase the number of cuts per annum to maintain to an 'amenity standard'. During 2023/24 the Council will look to work with communities to pilot re-wilding projects in key locations where a reduction in cuts to the minimum level could be sustained.
- Cease the provision of hanging baskets in Braintree Town Centre and at Causeway House (£9k).

7.2.4 How We Communicate with Residents

There are several ways in which the Council could change the way it communicates with residents that make best use of technology, and which

allows for a more agile approach to service design and delivery and, importantly, reduces the Council's use of natural resources:

- Cease provision of hard copy waste collection calendars to all households by default and put on-line. Hard paper copies would be made available on request (£25k)
- Reduce the frequency of the Council Page in local newspapers to monthly (£2.8k)
- Increase advertising within the A5 Contact Magazine delivered with the Council Tax bill (£1k).
- Consider to what extent the Council could move towards a more paperless organisation, including all Committee agendas. This proposal would, if supported in principle, require further consideration before it was possible to quantify the savings that might be generated.

7.2.5 Other Options

There are a range of other options proposed that involve generating income or reducing costs that total £130k, these include:

- Remove the Commercial Manager position from the staffing establishment as this role is undertaken by various officers across the organisation and has been vacant for some time.
- Introduce new charges to recover costs from third parties, for example, for sealing contracts; and to cover administrative costs when making referrals to government energy schemes.
- Reviewing options on the parking provision at Causeway House.
- Withdraw membership of Keep Britain Tidy
- Cease the current approach to assessing Customer Service Excellence Standard accreditation and put in place alternative ways of measuring and improving performance
- Withdraw the specific budget for Member Development as the Council has other available funding set aside for this activity and access to resources both internal and external to support specific member development requirements.

7.3 Parking Charges

7.3.1 Car parking charges are normally reviewed every three years and were due to be reviewed ahead of the current year's budget. This review, however, was delayed given the continued uncertainties at that time over the impact of Covid, meaning that charges have not been reviewed since 2018 when only modest changes were made.

7.3.2 Options and recommendations are due to be brought to a future Cabinet meeting; however, for budget planning purposes provision has been made for an increase in income to close the forecast budget gap from this activity of £200k, with implementation expected from June 2023.

7.3.3 Whilst formal decisions have yet to be taken and which will also be subject to public consultation where parking tariffs are amended, options include the following:

- Conversion to cashless payment method only resulting in savings on income collection costs as well as reducing operational risks e.g., cash held in machines.
- Withdrawal of the 10p after 3pm concession.
- Changes to Pay & Display tariffs – options under consideration have been based on comparative data.
- Increases to charges for season tickets.
- Increases to overnight charges.

7.4 **Garden Waste Charging**

7.4.1 The collection of garden waste is currently a discretionary service and local authorities can make a reasonable charge if they wish to do so. In a consultation launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in May 2021, it was stated that 98% of local authorities operated a green waste collection service and that 65% levied a charge. The use of the current service is not universal in that not all households have gardens, but the cost (estimated at £583k in 2021/22) is met by all council taxpayers.

7.4.2 Introducing a charge for the service would aim to recover the full cost of the service, subject to other considerations around the level of charge considered acceptable and an equalities impact assessment. The income generated would be subject to take-up of the service and there would also be one-off set-up costs in year one, meaning that the full financial benefits would not be realised until 2025/26 if the charge is introduced from April 2024.

7.4.3 The financial challenges faced by the Council means that introducing a charge would be a significant step to addressing the structural budget gap. However, the lack of clarity over the Government's intentions makes the decision more difficult. The Government's has stated previously an aim of providing consistent collection of recycling for households in England which would include the provision of a minimum level of garden waste collection free of charge. DEFRA consulted on this in 2021 but to date there has been no further announcements as to what arrangements are going to required. The consultation recognised that whilst there were environmental benefits to such a service, this would be at a significant cost to local authorities, and primarily because of the loss of revenue. There was acknowledgement of potential new burdens funding being provided which would be subject to a new burdens assessment.

7.4.4 It is, therefore, proposed that charging for providing a garden waste service is introduced from April 2024, subject to there being no Government announcement in the intervening period that requires local authorities to provide a free minimum service.

7.5 Fees & Charges

- 7.5.1 The general principle of the Charging Policy for the Council's discretionary fees and charges is that service users should make a direct contribution to the cost of providing services at their point of use.
- 7.5.2 The majority of the discretionary fees and charges are reviewed annually, and this process is currently in progress.
- 7.5.3 As a baseline, services are being asked to consider increasing charges by at least the current rate of inflation (CPI c10%) which would potentially yield an additional £100k to £150k of income. However, there will be other factors that services will need to consider, including market competitiveness, contractual provisions, the need for concessionary rates, and any statutory cost recovery limitations.
- 7.5.4 A schedule detailing the proposed levels of discretionary fees and charges for 2023/24 will be presented in the Finance report to Cabinet on 6th February 2023.
- 7.5.5 Many of the Councils fees and charges are statutory and set by government, including fees for planning applications, some licensing arrangements, and fines and permits. The Government has previously indicated an intention to consult on proposals to increase the fees for major and minor planning applications with suggested increases of 35% and 25% respectively. If introduced, this would generate a significant amount of additional income; however, to date no firm proposals have been published and the timeline for implementation of any uplift in fees is unclear.

7.6 Summary of Options and Potential Impact on MTFS

- 7.6.1 Based on the options set out above, the estimated financial impact is summarised below:

Options	23/24 £000	24/25 £000	25/26 £000	MTFS £'000
Changes to funding external organisations	40	5	5	50
Changes to arrangements for community facilities	35	-	-	35
Changes to horticultural services	39	6	-	45
Changes to how we communicate with residents	29	-	-	29
Other options (various)	130	-	-	130
Car Parking costs and charges	170	30	-	200
Garden Waste charging	-	£ tbc	-	£ tbc
Discretionary fees & charges (est. tbc)	125	-	-	125
Planning application fees	?	?	-	?
Total	568	41	5	614

- 7.6.2 Where proposed savings have an impact on staffing, the Council's Change Management Process will be followed including where necessary applying the Employment Stability Scheme.

8. Financial Challenge

8.1 Taking account of the Management Savings and Options that have been quantified this results in a budget gap for 2023/24 and MTFS as set out below:

	23/24 £000	24/25 £000	25/26 £000	26/27 £000	MTFS £'000
Budget gap as per Table Para 4.1	2,367	615	323	109	3,414
Management Savings	(393)	(4)	-	-	(397)
Options (quantified)	(568)	(41)	(5)	-	(614)
Budget gap	1,406	570	318	109	2,403
Cumulative	1,406	1,976	2,294	2,403	

8.2 The updated Financial Profile is set out in **Appendix A**.

8.3 The position set out above is still subject to further changes as work progresses on the detailed service budgets, and assumptions are updated based on latest information, along with the implications of government announcements, including the Autumn Statement on 17th November, and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, expected in December.

8.4 Actions are already underway that will contribute towards addressing the structural deficit:

- **Investment & Development Programme (IDP)** – better tracking, understanding, challenge and oversight of the various projects and workstreams contributing to closing the budget gap.
- **Review of commercial activities** – benchmarking to peers, assessment of structures and processes, identification of opportunities.
- **Asset Management Review** – strategy for managing and optimising the use of assets we hold, or looking at options for rationalisation, disposal, and reinvestment.
- **Services/ Zero Based Budget reviews** – ensuring efficiencies across services, understanding cost base better, statutory/ discretionary costs, cost recovery through charges, and data to better inform choices.
- **Shared Services** – discussions across greater Essex councils to explore opportunities, economies of scale, and resilience.
- **Devolution** – maximising the opportunities that might be available.

8.5 Use of Balances

8.5.1 It is recognised that addressing the immediate budget gap will require the use of General Fund balances as a short-term measure to ensure a balanced budget can be set for 2023/24.

8.5.2 The General Fund unallocated balance on 1st April 2022 was £6.1m, which is £1.5m higher than had previously been projected. The latest in-year position forecasts that the level of balances will increase by £536k.

- 8.5.3 The minimum level of balances for the Budget Strategy has previously been set at £1.5m, an amount that has remained constant for many years. There is no recommended level of balances that councils should hold, and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recommends a risk-based approach considering a broad range of factors.
- 8.5.4 The Council's activities have fundamentally changed over the last few years in part because of the strategic investment programme but also the need to address the sharp reductions in Government funding introduced during the period of austerity, and which has meant the Council having to explore other ways to self-finance. The economic context is also significantly different with high inflation and increased volatility. On this basis it is recommended that the minimum level of balances retained should be increased to £3m.
- 8.5.5 Allowing for an increased minimum level of balances to be retained, there is scope to be able to apply a level of balances in 2023/24 to be able set a balanced budget as a short-term solution. However, this must be on the basis that plans continue to be developed to deal with the structural deficit and that delivery of savings assumed in the MTFS are closely monitored.

8.6 Earmarked Reserves

- 8.6.1 Earmarked reserves are General Fund balances that have been set aside for a specific purpose. Reserves are categorised across the following: Capital and Investment, Risk Management including Business Rate Retention (BRR), Covid-19 Pandemic (BDC and balance of government funding), and Service Reserves.
- 8.6.2 On 1st April 2022, the balance of earmarked reserves was £30m; however, significant elements of the balances are already committed to the capital programme funding and other service requirements, as well as being required to offset a Collection Fund deficit (timing difference) in terms of the BRR reserve.
- 8.6.3 The Council continues to retain £1m of funding set aside from general balances for Covid-19 in an earmarked reserve. Whilst there are still some unknown costs that may be incurred related to Covid, a proposal is being made to use some of this reserve to increase the Discretionary Housing Payments fund which was reduced by the Department for Works and Pensions in the current year by around 30%. This proposal is made in light of the recommendation from the Combined Scrutiny Committee into the Cost-of-Living Crisis 2022, which recently reported its response to the meeting of Full Council held on 10th October 2022.
- 8.6.4 Recognising the requirement to use balances for the 2023/24 budget, it is sensible that earmarked reserves are also subject to a review that considers whether reserves are still required, whether the balance held is appropriate to its purpose, and what opportunities exist to reprioritise or replenish the General Fund unallocated balance.
- 8.6.5 A reserves strategy is to be developed that strengthens the framework and corporate control over how reserves are managed and spent in future. Further

details of the strategy and outcomes from the review will be included in the budget report to Cabinet on 6th February 2023.

9. Capital

9.1 The Council's existing capital programme and available resources is summarised in the table below:

Resources allocated	£m	Planned Expenditure & Provisions	£m
B/Fwd. April 2022	15.5	Existing programme	18.3
Capital receipts (usable)	6.3	Provisions:	
Government grants	2.0	Witham	3.5
S106 contributions	2.0	Halstead	0.6
NHB and other reserves	2.9	Millennium Slips	2.5
Prudential borrowing	3.5	Manor Street 5%	1.5
		H120 Infrastructure	2.0
		Balance of resources	3.8
Total	32.2	Total	32.2

9.2 Whilst the table above shows that there are £3.8m of capital resources available, this assumes that there is a further increase in borrowing requirement of £3.5m, mainly in relation to the Plaza (£2.9m). This would mean the Council's total borrowing requirement would be £22m, with actual debt held of £6m, and the difference of £16m being met through 'internal borrowing' i.e., using cash held for other purposes. Maintaining this level of internal borrowing is dependent on future availability of cash balances (i.e., linked to the level of reserves and balances held). The Council is therefore exposed to a potential refinancing risk given the recent sharp increase in interest rates that currently exceed previous assumptions.

9.3 Details of the proposed service capital bids are provided in the schedule at **Appendix B**. The total value of the projects in 2023/24 is £0.8m (net of anticipated external funding).

9.4 The schedule also includes anticipated requirements of £1.1m (net) in 2024/25 and £0.6m per annum in 2025/26 and 2026/27 respectively.

9.5 During the 2022/23 budget process, the Leader of the Council committed to introduce a Councillor Capital Bid scheme for 2023/24 and wrote to all Members in May inviting any bids to be submitted by 2nd September. Two bids were received which are detailed in **Appendix C**.

9.6 In relation to the two councillor capital bids, the following is proposed:

- **Sustainable Parking at Silver End Bowls Club** (£40k net) – this project to be considered further in relation to the potential for developing a designated public car parking area.
- **Feering Community Centre & Hall Carbon Footprint Reduction** (£30.9k) - it is proposed that Council resources are not allocated to this project at this time but instead the Council will continue to work with the Parish Council/ Community Hub in helping to identify and obtain other external funding, where possible.

- 9.7 It is proposed that the Council continue to invest in a disabled facilities programme using any Better Care Funding, which is awarded to the Council annually via Essex County Council (the allocation for 2022/23 was £1.056m).
- 9.8 Opportunities for investment in the District continues to be reviewed as further extension to the strategic investment programme. However, with high inflation, increasing interest rates, and greater Government regulatory control over councils' borrowing activities, this does mean that business cases are becoming more challenging to be able to demonstrate financial viability.
- 9.9 Future funding of the capital programme will to a large extent be reliant on the achievement of future capital receipts. The Council has been able to use the steady stream of right-to-buy receipts generated through arrangements put in place as part of the housing stock transfer. However, these receipts are subject to demand and economic conditions and already there is some evidence of a slowdown in completions and pipeline sales. The Council also has other sites intended for residential development on which offers have been accepted but are subject to planning and similarly may be impacted by the current economic climate and its effect on the housing market.
- 9.10 Other potential sources of capital funding include the balance of New Homes Bonus (c £1m), and any future receipts (if any); the balance of the Business Rate Pool reserve (£2.1m) including estimated receipts from participation in an Essex pool in the current year and 2023/24; and Section 106 balances and future receipts, subject to meeting agreement conditions. Government funding may also become available through e.g., future Levelling-up bidding rounds and UK Shared Prosperity Funds.

10. Options

- 10.1 The report sets out the assumptions and options on which consultation is being sought to help inform the 2023/24 Budget and updated MTFS. Cabinet could propose variations to the options set out which would then be reflected in revised proposals that will form the basis of the Budget report on 6th February 2023.

11. Next Steps and Budget Consultation

- 11.1 The current budget process timetable is set out below:

2022		
17 th November	Autumn Statement	Announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer
23 rd November	Performance Management Scrutiny	Initial budget options (revenue and capital) - All Members invited to attend.
28 th November	Cabinet	Initial budget options (revenue and capital)
12 th December	Council	
Mid/ Late December	Government announcement	Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
21 st December	Additional Strategy Workshop	
2023		
January	Business Community	Consultation on budget proposals – article included in January edition of the Business Bulletin
1 st February	Performance Management Scrutiny	Consultation on final budget proposals and updated MTFS - All Members invited to attend
Early February	Government announcement	Final Local Government Finance Settlement
6 th February	Cabinet	Final budget proposals and updated MTFS
20 th February	Council	2023/24 Budget and Council Tax approved

- 11.2 The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee will examine and consider the budget options contained in this report on 23rd November 2022. The Chairman of the Committee extends an open invitation to all Members to attend this meeting.

12. Financial Implications

- 12.1 Based on the proposals and options set out in the report, there remains a budget gap for 2023/24 of £1.406m, which without further savings or additional income will have to be met from the General Fund unallocated balance to be able to set a balanced budget and Council Tax. However, the position is still subject to change with work continuing reviewing and updating budget assumptions, including taking account of the latest forecast position for the current year. Feedback from the budget consultation process will also be considered prior to finalising the budget proposals. The position reported is subject to any implications that may arise from Government announcements on the Autumn Statement and provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

- 12.2 Across the MTFFS period there is a forecast ongoing budget gap of £2.4m that will need to be addressed through a more transformational approach to the Council's spending and resources, for which some of the actions already been taken or planned are set out in Section 8 of the report.
- 12.3 Capital requirements (net of external funding) with a total value of £0.8m are proposed for 2023/24 with anticipated requirements of £1.1m in 2024/25 and £0.6m in both 2025/26 and 2026/27. These requirements exclude any further strategic investment projects, the programme for which is still under consideration and will be updated in the February budget report.
- 12.4 Councillor capital bids have been considered and responses have been set out in the report.
- 12.5 An assessment of available capital resources shows that there will be sufficient to fund the proposed additions to the capital programme, but this is subject to proceeding with increasing the Council's borrowing requirement in 2022/23.

13. Legal Implications

- 13.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report at this stage. However, legal implications will be considered, as necessary, for all budget saving proposals as they are prepared as part the final budget setting process, and as those specific projects are brought forward.

14. Other Implications

- 14.1 Assessment of customer impact, where appropriate, will be included in the savings proposals reported to Cabinet in the Budget report on 6th February 2023.
- 14.2 There are many risks inherent within the position set out in the report. The assumptions may prove to be incorrect resulting in savings not being achieved as planned, inflationary and other cost pressures rising by more/ less than projected, and income targets assumed not being achieved. Government funding remains uncertain until such time detail of the Local Government Finance Settlement is announced.
- 14.3 The proposed financing of the capital programme is dependent upon scheme costs being in line with estimates, and planned resources, including future capital receipts, being realised.

15. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 15.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act

- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 15.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 15.3 Equality Impact Assessments will be considered, as necessary, for all budget saving proposals as they are further developed as part of the budget setting process.

16. List of Appendices

Appendix A – General Fund Revenue Profile 2022/23 – 2026/27

Appendix B – Capital Requests 2023/24 and Indicative Requests 2024/25 to 2026/27

Appendix C – Councillor Capital Bids 2023/24

17. Background Papers

- 17.1 Council Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 report to [Cabinet 7th February 2022](#) and Full [Council 21st February 2022](#); and
- 17.2 Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 Update report to [Cabinet 5th October 2022](#).

General Fund Revenue Profile 2022/23 to 2026/27

APPENDIX A

	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>2025/26</u>	<u>2026/27</u>
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Base Budget brought forward from previous year	15,879	17,066	16,822	16,850	17,292
<u>Pay, Inflation, & Treasury Management:</u>					
Pay related costs	1,220	559	462	448	457
Energy, Fuel, and Other & Income Inflation	186	398	196	43	107
Increase in dividends & interest	-100	-120	-30	-	-
<u>New Demands:</u>					
Budget Demand & Growth - previously agreed	590	31	38	25	-
New Cost Pressures & Reduced Income	-	985	-	112	-
Options for New Growth	-	302	65	136	-
<u>Reductions:</u>					
Savings/Additional Income previously profiled	-709	-31	-88	-	-
New Management Savings/Additional Income	-	-393	-4	-	-
Options for Savings/Additional Income	-	-443	-41	-5	-
Discretionary Fees & Charges Review	-	-125	-	-	-
Green Waste Charging	-	-	tbc	tbc	-
Planning Govt. increase to statutory fee levels (tbc)	-	?	?	-	-
Ongoing Savings Required	-	-1,406	-570	-318	-109
Updated Base Budget	17,066	16,822	16,850	17,292	17,747
<u>One-Off or Short-Term Demands</u>					
One-off items previously identified met from GF balances/ reserves	682	196	-	-	-
Councillor Community Grant Scheme	61	61	-	-	-
Strategic Investment Resources	-	275	-	-	-
Net projected underspend (Q2) including in-year Recovery Plan	-850	-	-	-	-
Budget including one-off adjustments	16,959	17,355	16,850	17,292	17,747
Addition to/(Withdrawal) from Balances/ Reserves - Budget 22/23	-843	-196	-	-	-
Change in estimated use of Balances due to in-year variance (Q2)	126	-	-	-	-
Contributions from the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	-2,737	-	-	-	-
New Contributions from Earmarked Reserves/ Balances/NHB	-	-275	-	-	-
Budget Requirement	13,504	16,883	16,850	17,292	17,747
Revenue Support Grant	-1				
Retained Business Rates - Baseline	-3,487	-3,557	-3,628	-3,700	-3,774
- Growth above baseline and compensation	-1,712	-1,946	-1,985	-2,025	-2,065
Rural Services Grant	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23
Lower Tier Services Grant	-160	-160	-160	-160	-160
Services Grant (New)	-240	-240	-	-	-
Collection Fund Balance - Business Rates Deficit	2,737	-	-	-	-
Collection Fund Balance - Council Tax Surplus	-198	-222	-	-	-
BDC Requirement from Council Taxpayers	10,421	10,736	11,055	11,385	11,725
Tax base (Band D Equivalents) ('000)	55	56	56	57	57
Council Tax (Band D) £.p	£189.63	£193.41	£197.19	£201.06	£205.02
Council Tax increase per annum £.p	£4.95	£3.78	£3.78	£3.87	£3.96
Percentage Increase	2.68%	1.99%	1.95%	1.96%	1.97%
Increase per week £.p	£0.10	£0.07	£0.07	£0.07	£0.08

Note - figures and totals rounded

Requests for Capital Funding 2023/24

APPENDIX B

	Portfolio	Project Description	Project Drivers	Capital Requirement (gross external funding)				External Funding TBC
				2023/24 Bid	2024/25 (Indicative)	2025/26 (Indicative)	2026/27 (Indicative)	
				£	£	£	£	
1	Climate Change and the Environment	Building Control IT Upgrades - To upgrade the Building Control system to support paper free processing, electronic booking of visits, more simple electronic transfer of large files and electronic performance management reporting.	BDC Building Control is currently trying to increase its market share (currently 30%) by improving and promoting the Building Control services it provides.	17,000				No
2	Climate Change and the Environment	Play Area Refurbishment - Partial refurbishment/ equipment upgrades at 4 Play Areas: 1. Rickstones, Witham (installed 2009) 2. Spa Road, Witham (installed 2004) 3. Meadowside, Braintree (installed 2007) 4. Brook Meadow & Oxford Meadow, Sible Hedingham (installed 2005) to maintain a high standard for our play areas for our residents and visitors to enjoy, as well as meet the health and safety requirements for the equipment.	Monthly visual inspections by trained staff and an annual safety audit by an independent external assessor have identified those play areas that require some refurbishment.		200,000			s106 (tbc)
3	Climate Change and the Environment	Housing Renovation Grants	Providing financial support through a repayable grant scheme to ensure those under financial pressure can afford to adequately heat their homes and when it is impractical to carry out disabled adaptations to a property, offer the occupier a relocation grant to enable them to move to a more suitable (adapted) property. No requirement for 2023/24 as balance available from current year.	-	40,000	40,000	40,000	No

Requests for Capital Funding 2023/24

APPENDIX B

	Portfolio	Project Description	Project Drivers	Capital Requirement (gross external funding)				External Funding TBC
				2023/24 Bid	2024/25 (Indicative)	2025/26 (Indicative)	2026/27 (Indicative)	
				£	£	£	£	
4	Climate Change and the Environment	Refurbishment of Wildlife Garden in Halstead Public Gardens - The raised beds in the Wildlife Garden at Halstead Public Gardens have required increased levels of repair/ refurbishment over recent years; the materials are continuing to fail to support the raised beds. We intend to replace the supports with reclaimed materials, RSJ supports with reclaimed railway sleepers, to support soil and planting. These will fit in with the nature of the environment of the Wildlife Gardens.	BDC parks are visually inspected on a regular basis by trained staff during the course of their duties. Inspections carried out this year identified this site for partial refurbishment / upgrade. Failure to act would result in the possibility of not meeting the required safety standards and deterioration of the hard landscaping, leading to expensive repairs or removal of these areas.	20,000				No
5	Climate Change and the Environment	Rebound Goal (Spa Road) - Rebound goals enable recreational football to be played on open spaces whilst controlling the direction of the ball thus creating a safer environment for all open space users. This Bid is for the purchase and installation of one goal at one site. The recommended site is Spa Road, Witham	Following requests to look at recreational football facilities on our Open Spaces in the South of the District (Witham) we have identified the benefits of installing rebound goals at Spa Road Witham, Maldon Road Witham and Bramble Road, Witham.	20,000				No

Requests for Capital Funding 2023/24

APPENDIX B

	Portfolio	Project Description	Project Drivers	Capital Requirement (gross external funding)				External Funding TBC
				2023/24 Bid	2024/25 (Indicative)	2025/26 (Indicative)	2026/27 (Indicative)	
				£	£	£	£	
6	Climate Change and the Environment	Refurbishment of Public Toilets at Newlands Drive, Witham - BDC own and maintain the public toilets at Newlands Drive, Witham which need refurbishment to bring them up to a good standard of repair and decor.	Not refurbishing the public toilets would result in further deterioration of the facilities with greater and more frequent repairs.	50,000				No
7	Climate Change and the Environment	LED Installation at the Leisure Centres - Halstead, Witham, and Braintree Leisure Centres and Braintree Swim Centre are used by Fusion who have a fixed rate supply until November 23. Contractually Fusion have the ability to ask for funding should their energy costs go over an agreed level. There are energy savings to be made in completing these conversions that will reduce the total energy bills received by Fusion. Fusion have stated they will part fund the project by 50% - agreement to be put in place	There is an action in the Climate Strategy Action plan to convert BDC stock to LED lighting. BDC is not paying for the energy bills but this will potentially divert a request from Fusion for further revenue funding.	151,580				75,790
8	Communities	Community Transport Replacement Minibus - Purchase a replacement minibus for FP61 TFK (11 years old and 109k miles)	The community transport minibus fleet consists of 5 minibuses. We expected it to take time for the community transport service to recover from the impact of Covid-19 therefore it was considered manageable to operate with 4 minibuses in 21/22 and 22/23. The lead time from order to delivery of a minibus is normally in excess of 6 months.	40,000				No

Requests for Capital Funding 2023/24

APPENDIX B

	Portfolio	Project Description	Project Drivers	Capital Requirement (gross external funding)				External Funding TBC
				2023/24 Bid	2024/25 (Indicative)	2025/26 (Indicative)	2026/27 (Indicative)	
				£	£	£	£	
9	Finance and Corporate Transformation	<p>MYAccount Phase 2 - As a further enhancement to Phase 1 the following areas have been identified :-</p> <p>Online booking system An online booking system for residents and staff to book and pay for any asset owned by the council, such as sports pitches, meeting spaces, venue hire and individual workspaces</p> <p>Single Sign On (SSO) integration SSO integration from the BDC website to other council online portals such as, Council Tax and Planning.</p> <p>BDC Mobile application Develop a mobile application to promote and enhance council services.</p>	The approach is to make best use of previous investments by enhancing the current and future functionality provided by Jadu or integrated add-ons.	80,000				No
10	Finance and Corporate Transformation	<p>Council Chamber Audio Visual Replacement -The current solution comprising of projectors and screens is now 'old technology' and there are now more efficient and reliable technologies available. Examples of these have already been implemented at iConstruct and the Plaza to great effect. The webcasting solution is currently based upon an analogue sound configuration which has caused interference and quality issues for those joining the webcast. The migration to a digital sound solution would greatly improve the sound quality of the webcasts.</p>	There have been several issues with the projectors, screens and microphones used for presentations in the Council Chamber.	45,000				No
11	Finance and Corporate Transformation	<p>Technology Replacement Programme - Lifecycle replacement</p>	Our hardware and software estate needs to be kept up to date to ensure that it can continue to be supported by our ICT service provider and continues to be fit for purpose.	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	No
12	Finance and Corporate Transformation	<p>Arcserve Backup System Hardware Renewal - Renewal of associated hardware.</p>	Hardware will be under warranty until Dec 2024. At this point we would need to renew the device or risk running it without any support.	-	50,000			No

Requests for Capital Funding 2023/24

APPENDIX B

	Portfolio	Project Description	Project Drivers	Capital Requirement (gross external funding)				External Funding TBC
				2023/24 Bid	2024/25 (Indicative)	2025/26 (Indicative)	2026/27 (Indicative)	
				£	£	£	£	
13	Health and Wellbeing	Braintree Leisure Centre - Replacement of Studio and Sports Hall floors. The centre is operated under a joint-use arrangement and negotiations to be held with the Academy regarding a contribution of up to 25% towards the works. This to be confirmed prior to works commencing.	Substantial defects have been discovered though condition surveys by BDC Asset Management. Studio 1 and Sports Hall floors are coming to the end of their serviceable life. The floors are almost 30 years old. The defects could cause a potential Health & Safety hazard for school children and users of the sports centre and may jeopardise bookings from high profile users playing in national leagues.	90,000				22,500
14	Health and Wellbeing	Braintree Leisure Centre - Resurfacing of the athletics track	The track was built in 1992 so is 30 years old and met its life expectancy and now has a requirement for ongoing maintenance and repairs that are unbudgeted for Fusion but necessary for the track to meet the UK athletic track mark standard for the athletics club to hold its regional events.		400,000			200,000
15	Health and Wellbeing	Braintree Leisure Centre - Replace the halogen bulb floodlighting system with new LED floodlights	The current halogen bulb system is now outdated and energy inefficient, and prone to frequent breakdowns with the supply of ballast and switchgear becoming harder to source.	40,000				No
16	Health and Wellbeing	Halstead Leisure Centre - Replace/ upgrade external cladding (It is assumed that Fusion will contribute 50% towards this cost - tbc)	The current cladding is nearly 50 years old and is now ineffective in terms of its thermal property and needs to be upgraded - Per Keagan's facility condition survey report.		80,000			40,000
17	Housing, Assets and Skills	Causeway House Car Park - The car park was last patch repaired in 2018, and has since deteriorated in both surface and line marking. The Causeway House (CH) rear car park (immediately behind the building) and road leading to the staff entrance requires some work to be done to it. The car park and road is used by BDC staff and tenants visiting Causeway House.	To meet the council's legal obligations and in the interests of health & safety. The work to be done is twofold: 1) Parts of the tarmac have broken and potholes are starting to form. These form a health & safety hazard for pedestrians and can cause damage to car tyres leaving the council open to claims. 2) The re-surfacing will remove all road markings and will have to be re-painted.	33,000				No

Requests for Capital Funding 2023/24

APPENDIX B

	Portfolio	Project Description	Project Drivers	Capital Requirement (gross external funding)				External Funding TBC
				2023/24 Bid	2024/25 (Indicative)	2025/26 (Indicative)	2026/27 (Indicative)	
				£	£	£	£	
18	Housing, Assets and Skills	Causeway House Windows - There are approximately 50 windows at CH that are in need of maintenance or replacement. Some of these windows are very large and have not been able to be fixed by routine maintenance. These windows will need specialist equipment to remove and maintain / replace them.	Some windows have been locked shut as they are not safe to be opened and some windows are unable to be opened at all due to being faulty.	20,000				No
19	Housing, Assets and Skills	Planned Maintenance of Council Properties - The annual investment required to maintain those properties owned, leased and managed by the Council where the Council has a maintenance and repairing obligation.	Condition surveys - to be updated prior to 2024/25 budget process - provisional sum being allowed		530,000	530,000	530,000	No
20	Operations and Commercialisation	Wheelie Bins Provision and Replacements - Additional funding is required for the purchase of new bins, related to growth within the District. Recently the service has experienced additional budget pressures due to the increase bins required to supply new developments, along with increased cost of bins. From 25/26 different arrangements may apply for collecting waste as part of the Governments consistency in waste collections.	An increase in requests for replacement wheelie bins . The district continues to grow with new properties being built and new bins being required as a statutory service delivered by the council. The price of purchasing bins has increased by approx. 21% this year due to the economic demand in plastic and rise in national and international rates.	50,000	50,000			No

Requests for Capital Funding 2023/24

APPENDIX B

	Portfolio	Project Description	Project Drivers	Capital Requirement (gross external funding)				External Funding TBC
				2023/24 Bid	2024/25 (Indicative)	2025/26 (Indicative)	2026/27 (Indicative)	
				£	£	£	£	
21	Operations and Commercialisation	<p>Roller Brake Tester - Purchase and installation of a new Roller Brake Tester (RBT) for the Fleet Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to enable the HGV technicians to carry out all Preventative Maintenance Inspections (PMI) in line with the requirements of the Operator Licence (each of the 9 tests required per vehicle per year requires an accompanying braking performance report) to permit the technicians to carry out the test in a safe and efficient way that is not dangerous to the technician or to the automatic transmission of most BDC fleet vehicles. 	<p>The continual breakdown of the current RBT is causing additional work for the HGV technicians who either have to outsource the testing to an external workshop or adapt the way vehicles are placed onto the RBT for fear of it breaking down again.</p>	45,000				No
22	Operations and Commercialisation	<p>Winter Gritter for Horizon 120 Business Park - Winter gritting/ salt spreading and snow clearing have been undertaken through the use of our All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) with small hoppers mounted to accommodate grit/ salt to spread safely from the vehicle cab. These have been, and will continue to be, used in our town centres and town car parks.</p> <p>The Horizon 120 site on the outskirts of Gt Notley (off the A131) now requires us to have a gritter/ salt spreader that can be towed by our 3.5t Fleet from our Depot to the Horizon site</p>	<p>The location of the Horizon 120 site requires the acquisition of a Towable Gritter/ Salt Spreader which can be towed by our 3.5t Fleet from our Depot to the Horizon site.</p> <p>This will have greater capacity to accommodate the amounts of grit/ salt required for the car parks and highways in BDC ownership which can be directly accessed via the A131.</p> <p>Applying grit/ salt by this method would be a safe working practice for our In-House Team to deliver as part of our Winter Contingency Plan / Schedule.</p>	15,000				No

Requests for Capital Funding 2023/24

APPENDIX B

	Portfolio	Project Description	Project Drivers	Capital Requirement (gross external funding)				External Funding TBC
				2023/24 Bid	2024/25 (Indicative)	2025/26 (Indicative)	2026/27 (Indicative)	
				£	£	£	£	
23	Operations and Commercialisation	Replacement Car Park Ticket Machines - Purchase and installation of 25 new ticket machines for all BDC owned car parks. Particular importance will be placed on machines (design) that have a good level of engineer support in our area. We will take guidance from North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) on the choice of machine. Programme of installation will be over two year period.	Ticket machines in BDC owned car parks are now reaching the end of their serviceable life. This has resulted in increasingly frequent issues with the machines that are costly to repair, inconvenient for the customer and difficult to manage. The machines that we use can only be repaired by Flowbird engineers, of which there is a shortage in our area. This leads to long wait times to get the machines repaired. There is also a loss of income when machines are out of order.	150,000				No
				906,580	1,390,000	610,000	610,000	338,290
			Less External Funding	98,290	240,000			
			BDC Resources	808,290	1,150,000	610,000	610,000	

Councillor Capital Bids 2023/24

APPENDIX C

	Project Description	Project Drivers	Project Achievements	2023/24 Bid	External Funding
1	<p>Sustainable Parking at Silver End Bowls Club - To provide sustainable parking at Silver End Bowls Club, including a new dropped kerb on to Broadway. The parking would need to use a sustainable and permeable design such as grasscrete or similar, so that it would retain a green appearance. The draft design includes landscape planting along the frontage with sections of privet hedging in keeping with the village and extant Conservation Area rules. The whole site (building and open areas) is owned by BDC. Total project cost £45k less £5k contribution from the Bowls Club towards the cost of a dropped curb.</p>	<p>The Bowls Club is a long-established facility in Silver End in the heart of the Conservation Area. About 3 years ago, it emerged that the access used to park on the grass at the front of the club was no longer available, and that the parking itself was not authorised. BDC is currently negotiating a new lease with the club and it has been agreed to include the grassed area at the front for parking.</p>	<p>Provision of dedicated and well-designed off-road parking for the Bowls Club, thus supporting its continued viability. Improved access to the Bowls Club building for those with mobility issues, thereby assisting all groups who use the facility, e.g. for village events.</p>	45,000	5,000
2	<p>Feering Community Centre & Hall Carbon Footprint Reduction - A three stranded project to continue to reduce the carbon footprint of the Feering Community Centre and Hall by (1) adding 14.2 kWh of battery storage to the recently installed 39 panel solar PV system, which is battery ready (2) replacing the 28 ceiling light panels in the hall (4 fluorescent tubes per panel) with low energy LED light panels & better ceiling tiles to improve insulation & acoustics. This includes replacing the emergency lighting. (3) replacing the two large single-glazed windows with double-glazed windows, including replacing the emergency exit doors. Bid £25,785 plus VAT assuming non-recoverable (tbc)</p>	<p>To continue the carbon footprint reduction journey and to increase the on-site use of the renewable solar PV electricity. This will assist with the journey to net zero, reduce costs and ensure that the community centre remains viable.</p>	<p>(i) an increase in the use of on-site generated renewable energy, reduction in the use of energy from fossil fuels. Progress towards net zero (ii) a reduction in the carbon footprint / reduction in energy used by the installation of more energy efficient LED lighting, improved ceiling tiles & double-glazed windows (iii) the community centre remains viable and can maintain hiring fees at an affordable level. Also helps the primary school's budgeting by reducing their share of the hall electricity bills. (iv) inspiration to the community including what Councils and Councillors can do to make a difference to encourage people to become Councillors.</p>	30,940	No
				75,940	5,000
Less External Funding				5,000	
BDC Resources				70,940	

DECISION PLANNER (INCORPORATING THE FORWARD PLAN)
Originally published on 2nd November 2022 (Re-Published 14th November 2022)
COVERING PERIOD: 1st December 2022 – 28th February 2023

This Decision Planner shows the decisions that Braintree District Council expects to take in the next Three months.

Braintree District Council are only required to publish Key Decisions to be taken in accordance Regulation 9 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 but have included other types of decision that may be made as the Council is committed to being open and transparent about the business it conducts. The Decision Planner also gives Notices pursuant to Regulation 5 where a decision may be taken in private.

The decisions are listed in date order and relates to decisions expected to be taken by Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Members and Committees. It is important to note that the Planner is continually updated so there may be changes made between publication dates. Further information about these decisions can be found in the Agenda for the meeting or by contacting Governance and Members Team at governance@braintree.gov.uk

Key Decisions:

A key decision is a decision made or to be made by a decision maker in connection with the discharge of a function which is the responsibility of the Cabinet and which is likely to either:-

1. Result in the Council incurring **expenditure** or making a **saving** which are in excess of £150,000 (Financial Test) or
2. To be significant in its effect on Communities living or working in an area comprising of **two or more Wards** (Communities Test)

Key decisions are open to scrutiny by other Members of the Council using a process known as “call-in”. The rules for “call-in” can be found in the Council’s Constitution which is published on braintree.gov.uk

Ref No.	Title & Description of Decision	Type of Decision			Decision Maker	Proposed Date of Decision	Consultation & Background Papers	Member Sponsor	Contact Officer	Decision Expected to be Taken in Private?
		Key	Council	Non-Key						
DP/2022/15	Second Quarter Performance Report 2022/23 – To inform Cabinet on the performance of the Council			*	Cabinet	6th December 2022	Second Quarter Performance Management Report 2022/23	Cllr J McKee	Tracey Headford	No
DP/2022/37	Horizon 120 – Additional land – authority to either exercise or assign an option to acquire land subject to planning permission	*			Cabinet	6th December 2022	TBC	Cllr K Bowers	Aidan Kelly	Yes
DP/2022/52	Digital Strategy 2022-2026 – to agree the Digital Strategy 2022-2026	*			Cabinet	6th December 2022		Cllr J McKee	Paul Reid	No
DP/2022/53	IDP and Capital Programme Board			*	Cabinet	6th December 2022	TBC	Cllr G Butland	Suzanne Bennett	No

Ref No.	Title & Description of Decision	Type of Decision			Decision Maker	Proposed Date of Decision	Consultation & Background Papers	Member Sponsor	Contact Officer	Decision Expected to be Taken in Private?
		Key	Council	Non-Key						
DP/2022/55	Halstead Community Fund - To seek agreement to establish a capital grant funding scheme utilising the budget allocated for investment in the Halstead Community.	*			Cabinet	6th December 2022	TBC	Cllr F Ricci	Caroline Elias-Stephenson	No
DP/2022/59	Springwood Drive, Braintree – to grant an easement	*			Cabinet	6th December 2022		Cllr K Bowers	Paul Quin	Yes
DP/2021/11	Strategic Investment Proposal		*		Council	12th December 2022	Economic Development Consultants Report and Minutes of Cabinet 28-11-22	Cllr K Bowers	Dominic Collins/ Aidan Kelly	Yes
DP/2022/47	Approval of the Feering Neighbourhood Plan		*		Council	12th December 2022	Feering Neighbourhood Plan Examiners Report	Cllr Mrs G Spray	Alan Massow	No

Ref No.	Title & Description of Decision	Type of Decision			Decision Maker	Proposed Date of Decision	Consultation & Background Papers	Member Sponsor	Contact Officer	Decision Expected to be Taken in Private?
		Key	Council	Non-Key						
DP/2022/45	Returning Officer Fees – to increase fees in line with legislation to allow for holiday pay for election staff		*		Council	12th December 2022		Cllr G Butland	Heather Patarou	No
DP/2022/56	To receive the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2022/23		*		Council	12th December 2022	Reports and minutes to Governance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Cllr J McKee	Mark Jarvis	No
DP/2022/54	Members Allowances – To suspend Rule 20.8 of the Members Allowance Scheme as set out in the Constitution and to not increase Members Allowances in line with the Local Government Staff Pay Award for 2022/23.		*		Council	12th December 2022	Constitution – Members Allowance Scheme	Cllr G Butland	Kim Mayo	No
DP/2022/57	Towerlands Development		*		Council	12th December 2022		Cllr Mrs G Spray	Tim Havers	No

Ref No.	Title & Description of Decision	Type of Decision			Decision Maker	Proposed Date of Decision	Consultation & Background Papers	Member Sponsor	Contact Officer	Decision Expected to be Taken in Private?
		Key	Council	Non-Key						
DP/2022/49	To approve appointment of contractors for landscaping and consultant works at Witham and Halstead Town Centres	*			Cabinet	6 th February 2023	Previous Cabinet reports and decisions to approve procurement route and budget assignation	Cllr T Cunningham	Nicola Murphy	No
DP/2022/28	Eastlight Community Trust – presentation to Cabinet – to receive a presentation on the progress made and development of merger over the last 12 months			*	Cabinet	6th February 2023		Cllr K Bowers	Caroline Elias-Stephenson	No
DP/2022/60	Strategic Risk Register – to approve the updated Strategic Risk Register for the Council			*	Cabinet	6th February 2023	Strategic Risk Register agreed at Cabinet on 11th July 2022	Cllr J McKee	Phil Myers	No

Ref No.	Title & Description of Decision	Type of Decision			Decision Maker	Proposed Date of Decision	Consultation & Background Papers	Member Sponsor	Contact Officer	Decision Expected to be Taken in Private?
		Key	Council	Non-Key						
DP/2022/25	Council Budget and Council Tax 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27 – To agree proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2023/24; Council Tax for 2023/24; Fees and charges for 2023/24; and the Capital Strategy (including the Treasury Strategy and Investment Policy) for 2023/24		*	*	Cabinet Council	6th February 2023 20th February 2023	Reports and Minutes to Performance Management Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet	Cllr G Butland / Cllr J McKee	Phil Myers	No

DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Title and Description of Decision	Cabinet Member	Corporate Priority/Vision/Outcome	Proposed date of decision	Consultation and Background papers	Contact Officer
To approve procurement and delivery of an open space improvement project at Rose Hill, Braintree	Cllr Mrs W Schmitt	Enhancing our Environment	31st October 2022	None	Nicola Murphy
Procurement of Street Washing Equipment as part of the overall maintenance of the Town Centres	Cllr K Bowers	Housing, Assets and Skills	31st January 2023	Report to Cabinet on 5th October 2022	Dominic Collins
To consider the procurement of contractors to undertake improvements to open space in the vicinity of Mill Park Drive, Braintree	Cllr Mrs W Schmitt	Enhancing our Environment	24th March 2023	None	Nicola Murphy
Award of contract for Garden of Remembrance in Bocking Cemetery	Cllr Mrs W Schmitt	Enhancing our Environment	November 2022		Samir Pandya

**NOTICE OF INTENTION TO HOLD A MEETING IN PRIVATE:
NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 5(2)**

Braintree District Council is required to give 28 clear days' notice of its intention to hold a meeting of an executive decision making body in private. Notice is given that it intends to hold the following Cabinet meeting or part of that meeting in private:

ITEM	DATE OF MEETING (at least 28 clear days after the start of the Notice period)	DATE NOTICE PUBLISHED	REASONS FOR THE MEETING TO BE HELD IN PRIVATE
<p>Springwood Drive, Braintree – to grant an easement</p> <p>(Ref. DP/2022/59)</p>	<p>Cabinet – 6th December 2022</p>	<p>14th November 2022</p>	<p>It is proposed that Cabinet will resolve under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Para 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information).</p>
<p>Horizon 120 – Additional land – authority to either exercise or assign an option to acquire land subject to planning permission</p> <p>(Ref. DP/2022/37)</p>	<p>Cabinet – 6th December 2022</p>	<p>2nd August 2022</p>	<p>It is proposed that Cabinet will resolve under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Para 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information).</p>

Strategic Investment Proposal (Ref. DP/2021/11)	Council – 12th December 2022	30th April 2021	It is proposed that Council will resolve under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Para 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information).
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If a member of the public wishes to make representations about why this meeting(s) should be held in public they should be sent no later than 5 working days before the meeting addressed to: Kim Mayo, Head of Governance, Braintree District Council, Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9HB. Email: - kim.mayo@braintree.gov.uk or governance@braintree.gov.uk