

# **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD AGENDA**

**Wednesday, 16th September 2020 at 7:15pm**

In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held via Zoom and by the Council's YouTube channel – Braintree District Council Committees.

Members of the public will be able to view and listen to this meeting via YouTube.  
To access the meeting please use the link below:

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

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**Members of the Performance Management Board are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.**

Councillor J Coleridge  
Councillor G Courtauld  
Councillor Mrs C Dervish  
Councillor T Everard  
Councillor M Radley

Councillor S Rehman  
Councillor B Rose  
Councillor P Schwier (Vice Chairman)  
Councillor N Unsworth (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](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk) by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

A WRIGHT  
Chief Executive

## INFORMATION FOR MEMBER – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

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

### Public Question Time – Registration and Speaking:

In response to the Coronavirus the Council has implemented procedures for Public Question Time for its virtual meetings which are hosted via Zoom.

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

Participation will be via the submission of a written question or statement which will be read out by an Officer or the Registered Speaker during the meeting. All written questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be read **within 3 minutes** allotted for each question/statement.

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](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk) by midday on the 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 Monday, (where there is a bank holiday Monday you will need to register by midday on the previous Friday).

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

Upon registration members of the public may indicate whether they wish to read their question/statement or to request an Officer to read their question/statement on their behalf during the virtual meeting. Members of the public who wish to read their question/statement will be provided with a link to attend the meeting to participate at the appropriate part of the Agenda.

All registered speakers are required to submit their written questions/statements to the Council by no later than 9am on the day of the meeting by emailing them to [governance@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk). In the event that a registered speaker is unable to connect to the virtual meeting their question/statement will be read by an Officer.

Questions/statements received by the Council will be published on the Council's website. The Council reserves the right to remove any defamatory comment in the submitted questions/statements.

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.

**Documents:** Agendas, Reports, Minutes and Public Question Time questions and statements can be accessed via [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)

**Data Processing:** During the meeting the Council will be collecting performance data of participants' connectivity to the meeting. This will be used for reviewing the functionality of Ms Teams/Zoom and YouTube as the Council's platform for virtual meetings and for monitoring compliance with the legal framework for Council meetings. Anonymised performance data may be shared with third parties.

For further information on how the Council processes data, please see the Council's Privacy Policy. [https://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200136/access\\_to\\_information/376/privacy\\_policy](https://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200136/access_to_information/376/privacy_policy)

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](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk)

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|----------|---|----------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>  |                |
| <br>     |   |                |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Member Declarations</b><br>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.<br>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. |                |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Public Question Time</b><br>(See paragraph above)  |                |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b><br>To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 10th June 2020 (copy previously circulated).  |                |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Fourth Quarter and Annual Performance Management Report 2019/20</b>  | <b>5 - 61</b>  |
| <b>6</b> | <b>First Quarter Performance Management Report 2020-21</b>  | <b>62 - 97</b> |
| <br>     |   |                |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Decision Planner</b><br>To consider the Decision Planner for the period 1st October 2020 to 31st January 2021 (published 1st September 2020 and reissued on 3rd September 2020).   |                |

Fourth Quarter and Annual Performance Management Report 2019/20		Agenda No: 5
Portfolio	Finance and Performance Management	
Corporate Outcome:	A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services	
Report prepared by:	Tracey Headford – Business Solutions Manager	
Background Papers:		Public Report
Fourth Quarter and Annual Performance Management Report 2019/20		Key Decision: No
<b>Executive Summary:</b>		
<p>The purpose of the attached report is to summarise the performance of the Council at the end of the fourth quarter (January 2020 to March 2020) and for the end of the financial year.</p> <p>In the last quarter of the year, the Coronavirus and unprecedented lockdown measures impacted on the Council as well as our communities and businesses across the District. The pandemic was a fast moving and developing issue that no one could have predicted and although the majority of the last quarter was not affected, there are some projects and performance indicators that were disproportionately impacted on at the end of the quarter and this will be noted in the report.</p> <p>As at the end of March 2020, a total of 42 projects have been completed and a further ten are on track and progressing well. One project has an amber status and one project was cancelled throughout the year.</p> <p>Ten performance indicators have met or exceeded target and six performance indicators have missed their target. Of the six performance indicators that have missed their target, two have an amber status and were marginally missed and four have a red status missing target by more than 5%. The areas of underperformance are in relation to the recycling rates (&gt;5%), average waiting times for disabled facilities grants (&gt;5%), participation levels at sport centres (&gt;5%), average call answer time in the Customer Service Centre (&gt;5%), collection rates for Council Tax (&lt;5%) and percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt (&lt;5%). Full reasons for missing targets and action being taken is detailed in the report.</p> <p>The report provides details of the Council’s achievements over the year with some of our more ambitious projects continuing into next year.</p>		
<b>Financial Performance</b>		
This part of the report provides the outturn financial position for the year. It examines the		

spending incurred on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; details of movements on the General Fund balances, including earmarked reserves; and a summary of spending on capital projects.

### **Summary Outturn Financial Position**

- An overall positive variance for the year of £565,000 (-3.9%) against budget.
- Across all services staffing budgets were underspent by £228,000; and after allowing for the corporate efficiency target of £200,000, this resulted in a net underspend of £28,000.
- Other expenditure was over budget by £40,000.
- Income was overachieved by £577,000.
- The overall variance changed slightly from that reported at Q3, which had projected a positive variance of £530,000. However, within this overall change there were some individually significant changes, the details of which are provided in the commentary.
- Additional expenditure amounting to £101,710 was incurred in March relating to COVID-19, mainly on the provision of ICT equipment to staff to facilitate the rapid introduction of homeworking due to restrictions introduced by the UK Government. Most of this expenditure was capitalised and was partially funded by the first tranche of government funding (£61,411).
- General Fund unallocated balances were £6.883 million and earmarked reserves £21.931 million at the end of the year.

### **Recommended Decision**

Members of the Performance Management Board are asked to note the report.

### **Purpose of Decision:**

To inform Members of the performance of the Council.

<b>Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail</b>	
<b>Financial:</b>	An assessment of the Council's financial position against the agreed budget for the year is provided and is based on income and expenditure during the year.
<b>Legal:</b>	There are no legal issues raised by this report.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	There are no safeguarding issues raised by this report.
<b>Equalities/Diversity</b>	Equalities and diversity issues are considered fully in the Council's key projects, where appropriate.
<b>Customer Impact:</b>	Performance of front line services, including Customer Services, Housing Benefits and Council Tax, for the quarter is provided. A summary of complaints received each quarter, analysed by outcome (justified, partially justified or not justified) is provided.
<b>Environment and Climate Change:</b>	The report provides details of progress in the delivery of the Council's key projects. This will include supporting residents and businesses in lowering the cost of their energy bills and energy consumption, anti-litter campaigns, campaigns encouraging recycling and responding to the consultations on the new Government Resource and Waste Strategy for England.
<b>Consultation/Community Engagement:</b>	Consultation is considered fully in the Council's key projects, as appropriate.
<b>Risks:</b>	Risks regarding the assumptions used in determining the predicted financial outturn for the year are identified.
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	Tracey Headford
<b>Designation:</b>	Business Solutions Manager
<b>Ext. No.</b>	2442
<b>E-mail:</b>	tracey.headford@braintree.gov.uk



# FOURTH QUARTER **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

1st January 2020 to 31st March 2020

# **AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

2019/20



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## Section 1: Introduction and Summary






### Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the fourth quarter and the end of the year in relation to the publication of the 'Annual Plan 2019/20'. This sets out the key activities and measures used to check our performance for the year and along with the Corporate Strategy 2016-20 sets out the priorities we are working towards. We have also signed up to 'The Future of Essex' which is a vision shared by more than 100 partners, all dedicated to improving the county over the next 18 years. The projects that are supporting this vision are marked with **(E)**. Further detail is given in relation to a set of business performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, our people and health and safety.






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

### Summary of the Corporate Projects current position for the end of the year

The following table provides updates for the end of the year in relation to the key activities in the 'Annual Plan 2019/20'




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Environment and Place	6	1	0	0	0
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure	7	3	0	0	0
Economic Development	7	3	0	0	0
Health and Communities	10	2	1	0	0
Finance and Performance	6	1	0	0	1
Overall Strategy and Direction	6	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

#### KEY:




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

### **Summary of the Performance Indicators position for the end of the year**

The following table shows the performance for the end of the year in relation to the quarterly reported Performance Indicators that have targets set as defined in the 'Annual Plan 2019/20'.

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Environment and Place	3	0	1	0
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure	2	0	0	0
Health and Communities	1	0	2	0
Finance and Performance	4	2	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

#### **KEY:**

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

### **Summary Position**

The Council has performed well throughout the year with 42 projects completed and a further ten on track and progressing well. One projects has an amber status and one project was cancelled during the year. Ten performance indicators have met or exceeded their target and six performance indicators have missed their target.

Over the year, we have remained committed to investing across the district and a number of projects are underway to provide better homes and future job opportunities. We have delivered a total of 233 affordable homes, exceeding our yearly target and our overall four year target. The Horizon 120 development has brought with it the first electric forecourt in the UK and the pedestrianisation of Braintree town centre will allow more opportunities for events and markets which proved very popular with residents, businesses and visitors to the district. The development of the Tourism Plan and website will also promote the district as a key destination to visit.

Our focus on empowering residents to get active and live well continued through a number of campaigns and activities as well as providing support to families to adopt healthier habits. In combating social isolation and loneliness, the 'Meet up Mondays' initiative has expanded to seven venues and we are supporting a number of nationwide campaigns. From our work with the Dementia Action Alliance, it is hoped that Braintree station will become the first station in Essex to be branded a dementia friendly station by the Alzheimer's Society.

A new Corporate Strategy was agreed in March to take us into the next four years with new priorities developed in consultation with our residents and businesses to focus on connecting people and places, enhancing our environment, supporting our communities, promoting prosperity and delivering and innovating.

As the year financial year ended, the coronavirus hit and no one could have predicted how in a few short weeks the Council would have to step up and deliver in a way that no one could have

anticipated. The scale of the challenges we now face, almost makes the achievements of the council in the last year pale into insignificance as it becomes clear that navigating our way through the pandemic and effectively responding to the needs of our residents, communities and businesses is our biggest challenge yet, pivoting the Council into exploring new ways of going above and beyond, adapting fast to changing situations.

All of this has enabled us to recognise our strengths and the positive difference we can make to the lives of everyone in our district.



## Environment and Place







Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Respond to the consultations on the new Government Resource and Waste Strategy for England and consider proposals in relation to the Council's refuse and recycling service</b>		
On 11 March the government issued the 2nd consultation document for Plastic Packaging Tax which is seeking views on 'design' of the tax i.e. how it will work and its implementation. The closing date is 20 May 2020, and we will be submitting our comments accordingly. This project will be ongoing and the end date has been amended to 31st May 2020 to tie in with the deadline for the 2nd consultation. The Consultation on the Deposit Return Scheme is currently on hold.	May 2020	▶
<b>Continue to promote and raise awareness of the importance of minimisation, reuse and recycling to both residents and businesses to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill</b>		
Throughout the year, promotional events such as talks to schools and community groups have taken place to raise the importance of recycling and minimising waste. The recycling calendars were refreshed using a pictorial approach to list what goes in each bin. In the last quarter of the year, the Council has been working with Essex County Council and other local authorities to do their bit and are encouraging residents to join them to 'Love Essex, not plastic'. The Essex wide 2020 campaign aims to tackle the amount of waste across the county by highlighting the issue of single use plastic and urging households, schools and businesses to switch to re-useable options to recycle more. Activities within the Council have changed to support this by significantly reducing the amount of plastic cups used.	March 2020	✔
<b>Refurbish the four play areas at St Mary's Road in Rivenhall, Ashpole Road in Bocking, Mill Chase in Halstead and Clare Road in Braintree</b>		
All refurbishments to the four play areas at St Mary's Road in Rivenhall, Ashpole Road in Bocking Mill Chase in Halstead and Clare Road, Braintree were completed by the end of February 2020.	February 2020	✔
<b>Continue to protect our larger open spaces from illegal encampments by creating earth bunds and ditches to prevent disruption and inconvenience to local residents</b>		
All sites in this project have been completed and are now secured against illegal encampments.	November 2019	✔
<b>Replace the benches in parks and open spaces ensuring they are fit for purpose allowing residents and visitors to enjoy recreational time</b>		

Benches have been replaced in Halstead public gardens and Halstead cemetery allowing residents and visitors somewhere to sit and enjoy recreational time.	August 2019	✓
<b>Continue to investigate and enforce littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping offences to help keep the district looking clean and tidy</b>		
In the fourth quarter of the year, 38 fixed penalty notices have been served for general littering, cigarette butts, smoking and fly-tipping offences. This brings the total number of fixed penalty notices for the year to 130.	March 2020	✓
<b>Deliver a car litter campaign to support the introduction of new legislation</b>		
The district wide 'Love Essex' campaign to highlight the recently increased fines that people throwing litter from their car face and to encourage people to dispose of their litter responsibly ended on the 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2019. We are currently awaiting the results and evaluation of the campaign from Keep Britain Tidy which are delayed by partner organisations not submitting their results in time and the impact of prioritising work due to the coronavirus.	March 2020	✓



## Strategic Growth and Infrastructure

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>(E) Continue to work towards completing the examination and adoption of the Local Plan</b>		
The examination of Section 1 of the Local Plan has now been completed. The Inspector noted he will provide an interim letter of his findings in 'a few weeks'. Once the letter has been received a way forward can be agreed.	December 2020	▶
<b>(E) Formally adopt the first Neighbourhood Plan in the district</b>		
The first Neighbourhood Plan in the district has been formally adopted at a meeting of Full Council in July 2019. The Bradwell and Pattiswick Neighbourhood Plan can now be used when considering planning applications within the parish of Bradwell and Pattiswick.	July 2019	✓
<b>(E) Continue to work with partners to provide housing, employment and supporting infrastructure to address our long term housing and community needs</b>		
The long term approach to how homes, jobs and infrastructure are developed for future generations is set out in Section one of the Local Plan which was considered by the Planning Inspector in January 2020. We are currently awaiting the outcome. A further project will be set up next year detailing the way forward depending on the outcome.	March 2020	✓
<b>(E) Develop Council owned sites to deliver additional mixed tenure homes across the district and consider establishing a Council owned Housing Development Company</b>		
Over the last year, Cabinet members have granted the disposal of seven sites subject to planning. The heads of terms have now been agreed with Chelmer Housing Partnership on all seven sites and progress will be monitored by the Strategic Investment Team. Members also decided not to proceed with establishing a Council owned Housing Development Company at this time, delaying this for future consideration in the context of the proposed Garden Communities.	March 2020	✓
<b>(E) Commence construction of the regeneration of Braintree Town Centre enhancing the appeal of</b>		






<b>the town to residents and visitors</b>		
Kier Construction (Eastern) Ltd took full possession of the new development site in Manor street on the 23rd March and preliminary works are underway. Consultation took place in the fourth quarter on the pedestrianisation scheme giving residents, visitors and businesses the opportunity to have their say on what they want the new space to be used for, to help shape the design plans. The pedestrianisation project will see Market Place, Great Square and most of the High Street become traffic-free, whilst making crucial long-term improvements to the roads and pavements and the creation of new public spaces. Braintree District Council is now working up final design concepts, taking on board comments from the consultation. The first phase of the construction work is expected to start at Fairfield Road and Bank Street in mid-April 2020. This will be reported on as a separate project next year.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Continue to work with Essex County Council to reduce congestion on the local road network in Braintree</b>		
Essex County Council is continuing to work with our Planning Department on the works required to the roundabout as part of the S106 for land West of Panfield Lane, which was granted planning approval subject to S106 in July 2019. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored next year.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Work with Essex County Council and Highways England to secure planning consent and commence construction of new slip roads linking the A120 to Millennium Way alleviating congestion at Galleys Corner</b>		
We continue to work with Essex County Council and Highways England as the project moves into the design phase and it has been confirmed, subject to completion of the necessary sectional agreement, that Essex County Council will lead the project and a project team has been established. Construction is due to commence Spring/Summer 2020 and will continue to be monitored by the Strategic Investment Team.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Continue to work with Essex County Council on securing improvements to the strategic highway network including the A120 and A12</b>		
The Council will continue to work with Essex County Council on improvements to the A120 and A12. Braintree District Council provided a response to a consultation in December on improvements to the A12 between junctions 23 and 25. The Government published their Road Investment Strategy in March 2020 which is now being reviewed. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Commence construction of an improved bus interchange as part of the Manor Street regeneration</b>		
The bus park in Braintree has now closed due to construction work starting on the regeneration of Manor Street which includes a modern and bigger bus interchange. Temporary bus stands are now positioned close to the current bus park site for the duration of the build. This will continue to be reported on as part of the regeneration scheme.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Create a high quality business community through the development of the Horizon 120 business and innovation park</b>		
Braintree District Council has adopted the Local Development Order to encourage businesses onto the new Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park planned for Great Notley. The Authority is adopting this type of planning framework as it automatically grants planning permission for certain forms of development and land uses within particular zones on a site, making it easier and quicker for businesses to build the premises they need without the need to apply for separate planning permission (as long as they meet certain conditions). Despite the lockdown, the Council is pressing ahead with plans, in readiness for when businesses start moving again as and when the coronavirus restrictions are changed or lifted by Central Government. The Marshgate Group will take the lead on the delivery of the business park and as this project is ongoing, we will continue to report on progress.	March 2020	






# Economic Development

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>(E) Complete the acquisition of strategic employment land in Witham supporting business creation and growth</b>		
The Council is committed to the delivery of high-quality business premises, including grow-on units to promote business start-ups and growth in Witham. A suitable site has been identified and acquired at nil capital cost to the public purse through the prudent use of the planning system. Land transfer is progressing.	July 2021	
<b>Complete physical improvements to key industrial estates including new signage and branding</b>		
New and improved signage at Springwood Industrial Estate is now installed improving the branding and wayfinding on the estate. Next year, the Council will be looking at how they can work with other groups to secure BID status to support further improvements.	March 2020	
<b>Work with existing and form new partnerships to increase levels of targeted business and skills support</b>		
In the last year, members, senior managers and officers from the Economic Team have visited a number of businesses to gain a greater understanding of the successes and challenges businesses face and to provide bespoke support and details on access to grant funding. The Council has also worked with partners to deliver various free of charge informative events and training opportunities for the business community. The support service provided by the Economic Team has proven to be vital for businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic with businesses exploring additional routes to business support including self-employment guidance, information on grants and loans, employee support and skills development. Businesses have been encouraged to join the closed Braintree District Businesses Facebook group and sign up to receiving newsletters to keep up to date with changes.	March 2020	
<b>Secure planning consent and commence construction of the I-construct Innovation in Construction Hub at the Braintree Enterprise Centre</b>		
Detailed planning permission for the construction of the I-construct Innovation Hub is effective from 28th October following completion of a unilateral undertaking. The European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) has been approved in principle and the Council is working in close partnership with Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) colleagues and our professional team. A minor material amendment has been submitted for planning approval to be considered at a future planning committee. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Work with the Braintree Education and Skills board to secure funding and develop projects to increase skills across the district providing a workforce that meets employers' needs</b>		
Over the year, the Braintree Education and Skills Board has supported students making post 16 education or work choices by promoting apprenticeships, career days, STEM opportunities and local facilities. This includes approving a STEM work experience opportunity due to start after the May half term which is now on hold due to the coronavirus health pandemic. The board have also secured additional funds which had been allocated towards Primary School engagement and will be the focus of future work. Work with the Education and Skills Board will continue into next year.	March 2020	







<b>(E) Deliver physical improvements to the town centres of Braintree, Witham and Halstead</b>		
Work is continuing in respect of the physical improvements to the town centres and plans have been passed to subcontractors to progress	<b>December 2020</b>	
<b>(E) Establish a Tourism Partnership to promote the district, support businesses and increase tourism</b>		
The Tourism Partnership is now established and meetings have taken place throughout the year. A Tourism Plan has been developed and in February 2020, the Visit Braintree District launched a new tourism website designed to promote the area as a key destination to attract visitors from outside the district. The new website brings together the abundance of attractions, landmarks, businesses and events the district has to offer.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Supporting markets across the district including continuing to develop the street market concept</b>		
Throughout the year, we have supported street markets which have proven to be a great success with local businesses reporting higher sales, an increase in footfall and an all-round positive community atmosphere. In line with the Government Coronavirus advice, we have made the decision to cancel the street markets for March, April and May to help protect our residents, visitors and traders.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Working through the Town Centre Partnership, deliver schemes to improve the vibrancy of Braintree Town Centre</b>		
Over the last year, the Council has supported the Town Centre Partnership in establishing regular meetings of the group where they can discuss projects to improve the vibrancy of the Town Centre. The partnership have received presentations on the pedestrianisation scheme and the new tourism website. With all the planned investment for the town centre, the newly appointed chairman of the partnership has called for more members to join the partnership to enable business owners in the town to get involved and help shape the towns future	<b>March 2020</b>	
The events in Braintree town centre have proven to be a great success with local businesses reporting higher sales, an increase in footfall and an all-round positive community atmosphere.	<b>March 2020</b>	








## Health and Communities

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>(E) Continue to deliver the Livewell child project working with families with young children providing support and advice on nutrition and healthy activities in an attempt to locally halt the rise in childhood obesity</b>		
Over the year, Braintree District Council has worked with partner organisations, local communities, businesses and schools to provide a variety of activities and initiatives to help support families and children to live well and lead healthy lives ranging from Xplorer events to healthy habits programme and play champions scheme which is extending into two more schools. Due to the closure of schools to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Livewell child project has adapted to provide information and advice through the Livewell child facebook page.	<b>March 2020</b>	



<b>Improve the play experience at Great Notley Country Park and Halstead Leisure Centre by replacing the artificial pitches</b>		
Planning permission has been granted to replace the artificial pitch at Halstead Leisure Centre and the Football Foundations have agreed the funding for the project. The assigning of the leases has been delayed due to the impact of coronavirus in shutting all leisure centres and the furloughing of staff involved in the project. This will be progressed once the situation improves and the end date of the project will be revised.	March 2020	
A new artificial pitch surface and associated equipment has been installed at Great Notley Country Park allowing players of all ages to enjoy the facilities.	August 2019	
<b>(E) Work in partnership with local GP surgeries, the NHS and Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (MECCG) to develop a new modern healthcare facility in Sible Hedingham</b>		
The Council continues to work with the NHS and MECCG to develop a modern healthcare facility, which will provide a new combined premises for existing surgeries in Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham. The design team have met with GPs and two pre-app meetings have been held with the Planning Department resulting in a revised scheme which has been costed and will need to go back to a future Cabinet meeting. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Work with partners to improve emotional health and wellbeing and identify improvements to access mental health services for residents</b>		
Over the year, regular mental health workshops have taken place bringing partner organisations together to understand the gaps in support for children and young people. Community Tree sent out leaflets in October providing information on a variety of support services available across the district on a range of matters and meetings have been held to look at the crisis café model to offer a safe, relaxing and friendly environment where people in crisis can go. The Council has also supported the national campaign 'Every Mind Matters', which has launched a range of new resources, designed specifically to help manage mental wellbeing during coronavirus, including a tailored Covid-19 Mind Plan, Covid-19 specific content for individuals and their loved ones, and support for specific mental wellbeing issues such as anxiety, stress, low mood and trouble sleeping.	March 2020	
<b>Develop a Rough Sleeping Strategy setting out how we will provide specialist support for vulnerable people on the street</b>		
The Council's Homelessness Strategy addresses rough sleeping and has been renamed as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to comply with Government requirements. We are currently working in partnership with local authorities across Essex and CHESS to provide a rough sleeper outreach service guiding rough sleepers to the help and support they need to make positive change. In response to the Governments request, the Housing team successfully found accommodation for 11 rough sleepers across our district in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus.	May 2019	
<b>(E) Continue to raise awareness of child exploitation through the 'spot-it, stop-it' campaign</b>		
Promotion of the scheme and training has been provided during the year through Pubwatch meetings in Braintree, Halstead and Witham. A draft awareness program to deliver a countywide approach to child exploitation is being developed with partners and Braintree District Council has provided feedback. Countywide training will continue into next year. In March, a member of staff within the Community Services Team received a commendation from Essex Police for her work and dedication to raising awareness through the 'spot-it stop-it' campaign.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Continue to promote events and provide opportunities that would benefit those living with dementia and their carers</b>		






Events to support those living with dementia and their carers have taken place across the district in the last year including dementia friendly cinema, walk & talk groups, seated exercise classes, afternoon teas and a dementia friendly choir in partnership with the Big Sing and Colne View Care UK who provided a public performance in December. In the last quarter of the year, Braintree District Council have been working to make Braintree Station dementia friendly and it is hoped that a few small alterations and additions at the station will be enough to become the first station in Essex to be branded a dementia friendly station by the Alzheimer's Society.	March 2020	
<b>In partnership with Fusion, encourage inactive over 60's to become active again by developing the Age well sessions at our local sports centres</b>		
Before lockdown closed the Leisure Centres, Fusion had introduced a number of agewell sessions into the leisure centres such as ACE weigh ins, racket ball, seated dance, walking football and chair based exercise classes. An agewell timetable had also been created to show the classes suitable for people aged 60+. Due to the closure of the Leisure Centres in combating the spread of coronavirus, Braintree District Council are working with Greenfields to distribute leaflets through care agencies on chair based exercises and gentle home exercises. We are also working with Active Essex and Active Braintree to put exercise classes on line.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Continue to support community groups to deliver local projects and activities through the Councillor Community Grant Scheme</b>		
In the fourth quarter of the year, a further 32 grants have been awarded bringing the total number of grants issued throughout the year to 69. This amounts to £48,390.	March 2020	
<b>(E) Work with partners to raise awareness and identify ways to combat social isolation and loneliness</b>		
Meet up Mondays, which have been running in the district for over a year, now have seven venues. Meet up Mondays is a weekly meet up for people who want to meet and chat to new people. The venues offer free tea or coffee and a place to sit and chat for a couple of hours. As well as Mondays, there are Meet Up Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays running across the district. Braintree District Council has been supporting a countywide social movement campaign called United in Kind which launched in September to raise awareness of loneliness in Essex. Working with communities, charities and voluntary groups the aim is to help people connect with friends, neighbours and strangers and overcome feelings of isolation. Due to the impact of the coronavirus, United in Kind have become part of the Community Shield befriending service along with Community 360.	March 2020	
<b>Continue to work with key local groups to develop plans for a community facility in Witham</b>		
Braintree District Council has been working with local residents and community groups in shaping plans for a new community facility in Witham. The malting's lane steering group have met with representatives from the Council, Witham Town Council, Ingletonwood (Architects), St Nicholas Church, Witham Boys Brigade and local residents to consider how money funded from various section 106 contributions is best spent to develop the site and outdoor space. Current proposals include a main hall and smaller hall to cater for various activities including indoor sports, community events, meetings, children's activities, performance and music, a café and social area and changing rooms for the outdoor sports space. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, they are currently looking at holding virtual meetings to move this forward. This project will be continuing into next year.	March 2020	
<b>Promote volunteering opportunities to work with young people and promote activities and clubs available to young people in our district</b>		

Volunteers from across the district were recognised and celebrated at the Braintree District Volunteer awards evening in June 2019 for the positive difference they make in their community and in inspiring others which this time included new categories to recognise the contributions made by children and young people in the district. A volunteering protocol to ensure recruitment, support and training for volunteers across all services was adopted to be used in promoting volunteering opportunities throughout the Council. Essex Map, a website designed to bring communities together by promoting activities, clubs and volunteering was launched in 2019 and they are now working with local authorities and other key partners to co-ordinate and offer support, recruit volunteers and promote groups, services and activities for all those affected by the coronavirus pandemic.	March 2020	✓
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## Finance and Performance

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Review our services and processes to ensure they continue to provide value for money</b>		
A service review process is now in place and has been tested on a number of projects. This provides a framework to support the Council in its commitment to modernise the way we work to ensure we continue to delivery high quality and value for money services. Reviews will continue and there has inevitably been impact on some projects with resources redirected or homeworking. The ongoing projects take on greater importance given the financial challenges anticipated over the next few years and we will continue to monitor and report on significant projects.	March 2020	✓
<b>Develop our commercial programme to generate income that can be reinvested in front line services</b>		
Commercial income took a hit in February and March in the lead up to lockdown, particularly across our conference income line. Despite this income increased by 40% across the three commercially controlled services of advertising, sponsorship and the conference centre against 2018/19 figures. The Essex Commercial Network now has membership from 11 Essex authorities and the Local Government Association and is allowing us to look for opportunities to share and trade services.	March 2020	✓
<b>Identify and progress investment opportunities that help us to deliver our corporate strategy whilst providing a return on investment to strengthen our financial independence</b>		
£1million of the additional investment in pooled funds of £2m agreed in principle by the Strategic Investment Group was placed in the Kames Diversified Fund in October 2019. However, the remaining £1million has been held in abeyance due to uncertainties in the market caused initially by Brexit and more recent by the coronavirus pandemic. We are continuing our work with Marshgate to develop 20 acres of the site at Horizon 120. Any further investment opportunities are currently on hold due to a cautious approach being adopted in considering any new investment opportunities in the district due to uncertainties in the market as outlined earlier	March 2020	✓

<b>Respond to the anticipated Government consultation on its proposed 75% Business Rate retention scheme and the Fair Funding Review which will impact on the Council's finances from April 2020</b>		
The fair funding review and 75% business rates retention has been delayed by Government until after 2020/21. This project has therefore been cancelled and will be set up again once we know how and when Government will be proceeding.	March 2020	
<b>Continue to identify improvements in customer focused services using the Customer Service Excellence Standard as a framework</b>		
The Customer Service Excellence assessment took place on the 5th, 6th and 7th November looking at consultation and engagement, satisfaction surveys, customer service standards, how we improve our written, verbal and web based information, benchmarking and best practice and how we improve our delivery of service. Braintree District Council has successfully retained the accreditation retaining three areas of compliance plus and achieving compliance plus in four new areas.	December 2019	
<b>Implement the Council's discretionary Business Rate relief scheme for independent retail businesses</b>		
The new retail rate scheme was approved by Full Council in February 2019. The new relief was awarded to eligible retail businesses and included in the business rate bills for 2019/20. Any further businesses meeting the criteria will be assessed throughout the year and the reduced rate applied.	May 2019	
<b>Expand our online booking and payment systems enabling residents to book and pay for more services through our website.</b>		
The online booking and payment systems are now set up for the pest control service and Enterprise Centre. Due to the coronavirus, changes have been made to the way services are currently operating and therefore the new online booking and payment system will go live when normal services resume.	March 2020	
<b>Develop a digital platform enabling residents to access health information, initiatives and support to improve their health and wellbeing</b>		
This project was originally set up as the Council had applied for funding from the Government 'trail blazer' programme to develop an app that residents could access for information on health initiatives and support to improve their health and wellbeing. As the Council were unsuccessful in securing funding, alternative digital platforms continue to be explored and piloted. The end date of the project has been extended from March 2020 until September 2020 to allow more time for the development of an app as the project has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.	September 2020	

















# Overall Strategy and Direction














Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>(E) Continue to deliver projects under the District Investment Strategy to achieve better outcomes for the district and a return for the taxpayers' purse by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in partnership to improve health provision across the district</li> <li>• Facilitating the need for housing by providing homes and supporting infrastructure</li> <li>• Improving our most congested roads and journeys across the district</li> <li>• Planning for growth by providing jobs delivering increased opportunities for new business and employment</li> <li>• Delivering investment opportunities that support growth and provide a return for the District Council</li> </ul>		
Throughout the year, the council has continued to work with the NHS, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and other healthcare partners to develop modern healthcare facilities in Sible Hedingham, the Newlands Centre in Witham and Braintree Town Centre as part of the Manor Street regeneration. Further projects will be set up next year regarding the support required to deliver improved health care facilities across the district	March 2020	✓
In the year, the Planning service agreed the development of 2,000 homes including some major applications which will provide supporting infrastructure. Cabinet have also agreed to the development of up to seven Council owned sites	March 2020	✓
Work has continued throughout the year on a number of projects in partnership with Highways England and Essex County Council reported under the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure section such as the A120 Millennium slip roads, land west of Panfield Lane, improvements to Springwood Drive roundabout and securing improvements to the A12 and A120	March 2020	✓
A number of projects and actions have been carried out throughout the year to ensure delivery of the Braintree Plan for Growth to provide jobs such as developing the first 20 acres of Horizon 120 and approving the planning applications for grid serve and the Construction Innovation Centre. The regeneration of Manor Street started in March 2020 and Kier Regional Building Eastern are working closely with local subcontractors creating a range of job opportunities for those living in the area	March 2020	✓
There are a number of projects reported on throughout this report that provide an update on investment opportunities under the District Investment Strategy	March 2020	✓
<b>Work with partner authorities (Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council) and other public and private sector organisations to plan for and enable sustainable growth in homes and jobs in the north Essex area</b>		
Throughout the year, Braintree has worked with Tendring and Colchester on the Joint section 1 Local Plan which was submitted to the Planning Inspector in January. Work has also taken place with Essex County Council on Housing Infrastructure Bids (HIF) to support the development of Garden Communities. Essex wide work has also taken place on a number of evidence documents and guidance including the Essex wide Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) study. The North Essex Economic Strategy was agreed at Cabinet in December providing a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation in the overall economic prosperity of the North Essex area. An action plan is being developed to guide the delivery of the key actions	March 2020	✓



## Section 3: Managing the Business

### Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	2019/20									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
Environment and Place										
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	10%	1%	2%	6%		4%	6%		Recorded three times a year – July, November and March
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	54.43%	52.45%	47.65%	42.28%	60%		49.58%	60%		The latest figures are awaiting verification by Essex County Council any may change slightly. Need comments The annual recycling target of 60% is a target adopted by the Essex Waste Partnership Education and intervention activities have taken place throughout the year and the Waste Minimisation & Recycling Officers have been working with local residents living in flats which have communal facilities to reduce contamination of recyclable waste.
Tonnage of residual household waste not recycled	114kgs	113kgs	114kgs	116kgs	117kgs		457kgs	470kgs		
Number and percentage of non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (211)	100% (236)	100% (153)	100% (312)	100%		100% (912)	100%		
Number of fuel poverty and domestic energy reduction installations carried out	Annually reported indicator					n/a		350	TBC	We are waiting for information from BEIS to confirm the number of installations carried out across the district. This information will not be available until later in the year.
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure										
Number of affordable homes delivered	13	52	104	64	37		233	150		
Number of homes granted planning permission	1,103	507	312	212	200		2,134	845		
Health and Communities										
Average waiting time for applicants on the Disabled Facilities Grant	78 days	100 days	89 days	106 days	90 days		98 days	90 days		In the last quarter and at the end of the year, the target has not been met due to delays in responses from builders providing quotes and in some cases we have been waiting for clarification from the Occupational Therapists in complex cases. Customers are kept informed throughout the

Performance Indicator	2019/20									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
										process and builders are reminded of the need to return quotes in a timely manner.
Achieve a 2% increase on the contract baseline in participation levels across all our sports centres	238,842	246,576	218,135	195,094	249,014		898,647	960,970		Due to the closure of all leisure centres on the 20 <sup>th</sup> March to control the spread of coronavirus, we have not been able to include participation rates for the whole of March impacting on the outturns for the fourth quarter and the end of the year. As at the end of February, the cumulative participation levels had been exceeded and it was therefore expected that the overall targets in the fourth quarter and at the end of the year, would have been achieved.
Achieve at least a 1% increase in adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported indicator					n/a	62%	60%		
Finance and Performance										
Average call answer time in the Customer Service Centre	14 seconds	19 seconds	13 seconds	21 seconds	15 seconds		17 seconds	15 seconds		In the last quarter of the year, the Customer Service Centre received an increase in the number of calls in relation to Council Tax due to the 2020/21 bills going out and due to a high number of enquiries from residents and businesses when the Country went into lockdown on the 23rd March.
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	16.25 days	16.09 days	15.87 days	12.56 days	20 days		15.15 days	20 days		
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	5.28 days	4.43 days	3.59 days	3.18 days	6 days		4.12 days	6 days		
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within target	88.98%	93.71%	89.81%	89.83%	90%		90.76%	90%		The target has just been missed In the fourth quarter of the year. In this period, the Authority received 118 stage one complaints of which, 106 where responded to within 7 working days. Of the twelve complaints not responded to, the customer was kept informed and advised that additional time was required to provide a comprehensive response due to the complex nature and/or length of the complaints. We are monitoring the complaints received and further information on complaints is provided in the next section of this report.
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.46%	58.80%	86.20%	98.00%	98.30%		98.00%	98.30%		The collection rate achieved of 98.0% is marginally lower than

Performance Indicator	2019/20									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
										<i>the previous year (of 98.22%) and also the target of 98.3%. Total income of £92.43million was received in the year, the balance of monies outstanding for the year will continue to be collected over the next and future financial years.</i>
Collection rate for Business Rates	31.13%	57.95%	84.58%	99.28%	98.60%	✓	99.28%	98.60%	✓	
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	98.82%	98.52%	99.37%	98.72%	99.25%	⚠	98.86%	99.25%	⚠	<i>In the fourth quarter, the Council processed 2,585 invoices of which 33 were not paid within 30 days of receipt. For the year, a total of 10,182 invoices have been processed of which 117 were not paid within 30 days. Services have been reminded of the importance of passing invoices for payment in a timely manner.</i>

## Complaints

The quarterly complaints analysis for the fourth quarter of 2019/20 and the end of the year is detailed below. This is compared with 2018/19 figures shown in brackets. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

Complaint Category	Q1 2019/20	Q2 2019/20	Q3 2019/20	Q4 2019/20	TOTAL
Justified	45 (110)	52 (92)	51 (61)	44 (60)	192 (323)
Not Justified	54 (76)	69 (88)	49 (59)	49 (54)	221 (277)
Partially Justified	22 (24)	24 (26)	14 (21)	29 (28)	89 (100)
Not known	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	2 (0)	2 (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>121 (210)</b>	<b>145 (207)</b>	<b>114 (141)</b>	<b>124 (142)</b>	<b>504 (701)</b>

## Comments

The number of complaints received in the fourth quarter is low in comparison to the previous year and has continued the trend seen over the last year resulting in an overall reduction of 28% in the number of complaints received. At the time of writing the report, two complaints were still being investigated.

The majority of complaints in the fourth quarter relate to missed waste collections due to restricted access to collection points caused by parked cars or road closures, collections being overlooked by crews due to agency staff not being familiar with collection points, overlooked assisted collections or bins not being returned to the collection point.

The Planning service has also dealt with a higher than normal number of complaints relating to delays with planning applications or the committee process. The planning service have



experienced resourcing issues due to a high demand on their service resulting in the recruitment of new officers throughout the year to meet this demand. The service is now looking at improvements to their processes and the monitoring of cases.

Throughout the year, the Council monitors trends in complaints and uses this information to identify improvements to processes and the service provided with the aim of reducing the number of complaints received.

In the fourth quarter of 2019/20, of the 124 complaints received:

- 118 are stage one complaints
- 5 are stage two complaints
- 1 is a stage three complaints

#### **A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:**

In the fourth quarter of 2019/20, the LGO has not received any new complaints and has issued a final decision in relation to a housing complaint. The LGO did not investigate this complaint as the complainant was offered suitable housing during the process and it was unlikely that the Ombudsman could achieve a better outcome.

#### **Our Organisation**

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q4 19/20	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	480	475	481	492	+ 11	-
Number of temporary staff	28	23	25	27	+ 2	-
Total staff FTE	435.42	429.45	436.31	441.68	+ 5.37	-
Level of employee turnover	2.5%	3.37%	2.29%	1.02%	- 1.27%	-
Number of leavers	12	16	11	5	- 6	-
Number of starters	11	11	17	16	- 1	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.83 days	2.09 days	2.35 days	1.84 days	- 0.51 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness (cumulative)	79.8%	62.9%	48.6%	45.1%	Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	1748	1903.5	2857.5	1954	- 903.5	-
Number of delegates	63	85	225	62	- 163	-
Number of apprentices **	18	18	24	19	- 6	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	472	470	464	466	481	492

\*\* The figures reflect level 2 up to level 6 (degree) apprenticeships.

## **Health & Safety**

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

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

<b>Health &amp; Safety: Indicators of Performance</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	
	(2019/20 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	11 (10)	4 (6)	14 (9)	11 (13)	<i>Most commonly reported accidents/incidents in the fourth quarter are in relation to verbal abuse</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	9 (6)	3 (6)	14 (9)	10 (11)	<i>There have been a variety of accidents in the fourth quarter which have been reported by 5 different services</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	1 (1)	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	<i>In the fourth quarter, a member of public fell ill outside the Town Hall and staff administered assistance.</i>
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	6 (85)	4 (19)	7 (48)	0 (24.5)	
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	1 (2)	0 (1)	1 (1)	4 (1)	<i>Four verbal incidents have occurred in the fourth quarter to a waste operative, housing officer, receptionist and customer services advisor.</i>
Number of near miss incidents	1 (1)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	1 (1)	1 (3)	0 (1)	1 (1)	
Number of claims settled	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	

## **Financial Performance**

This part of the report provides the outturn financial position for the year. It examines the spending incurred on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; details of movements on the General Fund balances, including earmarked reserves; and a summary of spending on capital projects.

### **Background**

Full Council approved a net budget of £14.540 million for the 2019/20 financial year. This included planned spending across all services totalling £13.247 million; corporate items amounting to £1.493 million; and an overall efficiency target to be achieved in-year of £200,000.

Financing of the budget was to be from a combination of: general government grants (£22,000); business rates (£4.965 million); and Council Tax (£9.553 million).

During the year individual budgets have been updated in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure, and against which performance has been reported.

Previously, virements totalling £171,680 were approved between the Development Management and Planning Policy income budgets and the staffing budgets for these service areas. Waste Management budgets were also realigned to reflect changes to the contractual arrangements for transporting and processing of recyclable materials.

### **Summary Outturn Financial Position**

- An overall positive variance for the year of £565,000 (-3.9%) against budget.
- Across all services staffing budgets were underspent by £228,000; and after allowing for the corporate efficiency target of £200,000, this resulted in a net underspend of £28,000.
- Other expenditure was over budget by £40,000.
- Income was overachieved by £577,000.
- The overall variance changed slightly from that reported at Q3, which had projected a positive variance of £530,000. However, within this overall change there were some individually significant changes, the details of which are provided in the commentary.
- Additional expenditure amounting to £101,710 was incurred in March relating to COVID-19, mainly on the provision of ICT equipment to staff to facilitate the rapid introduction of homeworking due to restrictions introduced by the UK Government. Most of this expenditure was capitalised and was partially funded by the first tranche of government funding (£61,411).
- General Fund unallocated balances were £6.883 million and earmarked reserves £21.931 million at the end of the year.
- A number of the variances identified within this report were highlighted at earlier quarters and, where these were judged to be ongoing, have been reflected in the Council's budget approved for 2020/21.
- During the year the Council monitored its overall financial position with the following reported at each quarter end:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2 <sup>1</sup>	Quarter 3	Outturn
	Reported Full-Year Projected Variance Adverse/ (Positive)			Actual Variance
<b>Net Variance</b>	<b>(642)</b>	<b>(715)</b>	<b>(530)</b>	<b>(565)</b>
Staffing	9	(21)	(127)	(28)
Other Expenditure	(72)	(192)	7	40
Income	(579)	(502)	(410)	(577)

<sup>1</sup> Variances from Q2 onwards reported against updated budget reflecting changes summarised in the Background notes above

## Revenue Spending

Service	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Adverse (Positive) variance against budget				RAG Status
			Staffing £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Total £'000	
Asset Management	(2,387)	(2,219)	2	238	(72)	168	R
Community Services	364	335	(4)	(22)	(3)	(29)	G
Corporate Management	1,385	1,521	111	31	(6)	136	R
Economic Development	187	170	5	(19)	(3)	(17)	G
Environment & Leisure	902	805	(75)	30	(52)	(97)	G
Finance	1,423	791	(148)	(132)	(352)	(632)	G
Governance	1,026	1,072	39	32	(25)	46	A
Housing Services	890	801	(28)	(44)	(17)	(89)	G
Human Resources	375	358	2	(17)	(2)	(17)	G
ICT & Facilities	1,564	1,527	10	(46)	(1)	(37)	G
Marketing and Communications	526	511	18	(46)	13	(15)	G
Operations	5,715	5,600	(94)	20	(41)	(115)	G
Strategic Investment	11	(9)	-	(2)	(18)	(20)	G
Sustainable Development	1,244	1,432	(66)	84	170	188	R
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>13,225</b>	<b>12,695</b>	<b>(228)</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>(409)</b>	<b>(530)</b>	<b>G</b>
Corporate Financing	1,515	1,280	-	(67)	(168)	(235)	G
Efficiency target	(200)	-	200	-	-	200	
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,540</b>	<b>13,975</b>	<b>(28)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>(577)</b>	<b>(565)</b>	<b>G</b>

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

Budget = controllable expenditure budget net of direct service income

## Staffing

Staffing budgets included both directly employed staff, and bought-in/ agency staff, the latter used where additional resources were required to meet increased service demands and/ or the need for specialist skills; to provide cover in cases of absence (e.g. vacancies, holidays, sickness, maternity etc.); or where in-house staff were assigned to work on other projects and priorities.

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

Service – Staffing Budgets	Updated Budget	Actual Spend	Adverse/ (Positive) variance	RAG Status
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Asset Management	296	298	2	A
Community Services	376	372	(4)	G
Corporate Management	1,360	1,471	111	R
Economic Development	194	199	5	A
Environment & Leisure	1,617	1,542	(75)	G
Finance	2,666	2,518	(148)	G
Governance	741	780	39	A
Housing Services	961	933	(28)	G
Human Resources	298	300	2	A
ICT & Facilities	787	797	10	A
Marketing & Communications	391	409	18	A
Operations	5,664	5,570	(94)	G
Strategic Investment	579	579	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,675	1,609	(66)	G
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>17,605</b>	<b>17,377</b>	<b>(228)</b>	<b>G</b>
Corporate Financing	-	-	-	
Efficiency	(200)	-	200	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,405</b>	<b>17,377</b>	<b>(28)</b>	<b>G</b>

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

### ***Commentary on staffing variations:***

Across all service areas staffing budgets were underspent by £228,000, a reduction from that reported at Q3 of £99,000.

**Finance:** Savings were mainly achieved in Billing and Recovery (-£100,000); Systems Control (-£13,000); and Customer Services (-£20,000). These were made through a combination of vacant posts; reductions in contracted hours; and new appointments being made at lower grades/ scale points. Furthermore, efficiencies were made in Billing and Recovery by staff absorbing additional tax collection and fraud work which had generated external funding. The outturn variance reduced from that reported at Q3 as it was agreed to meet one-off pension costs relating to a flexible retirement from the in-year service variance.

**Operations:** Mainly due to vacancies in the following areas: Waste Management (-£40,000); Horticultural Services (-£36,000); and Service Management & Administration (-£52,000).

**Environment and Leisure:** Underspent by £75,000 due mainly to vacancies in Health Protection; Health Development; and Building Control.

**Sustainable Development:** During the year, permanent staffing resources in the Development Management team were gradually replenished so that by the year end only 1 planner position and an administrative role remained vacant, both of which are expected to be filled during 2020/21. To supplement the team's resources temporary agency staff were used, the additional cost of which has partially offset underspends on direct staff, giving an overall net underspend of £54,000 in this area. In addition, there were further staffing underspends in Planning Policy and Landscape Services.

**Corporate Management:** Changes in senior management during the year which required the appointment of an interim Corporate Director, and more recently an interim Head of Governance, resulted in net additional costs which contributed mainly to the overall overspend of £111,000. A proportion of the costs of the interim Corporate Director were capitalised to reflect the involvement in the town centre pedestrianisation project which mitigates the overall impact on the General Fund revenue account.

**Governance:** Overspent on staffing by £39,000 due mainly to agency staff being used to cover a vacancy and maternity leave. An unsuccessful attempt was made to recruit a permanent Major Projects and Planning Lawyer earlier in the year, and with the appointment of a new Head of Service the arrangements for legal support will be reviewed in 2020/21.

**Strategic Investment Team:** The team continued to operate largely with interim staffing. During the year additional capacity was added to maintain progress on schemes and accelerate feasibility reviews on a number of pipeline projects. The current budget for the team is funded from a mixture of revenue and capital resources which were allocated for a four-year period and the level of spending to date has remained within the overall resources allocated.

The approved budget provided for a **Corporate Efficiency Target** which in previous years has been achieved from in-year staffing cost variances. The amount included in this year's budget was £200,000, and after taking this into account the overall net staffing underspend for the year was £28,000.

### **Other Service Expenditure**

Other service expenditure is overspent by a net £40,000. The main variances were:

## ***Underspends***

- **Finance** (-£132,000): The net cost of **Housing Benefits** (after allowing for government subsidy) was £22,000 lower than budget. In addition, whilst the government has been reducing the amount of grant paid towards administration costs, the original budget anticipated a higher reduction than was actually made consequently a provision of £62,000 was no longer required. Other areas of underspend within Finance included: charges for banking services; transaction charges for credit/ debit card payments; and savings on a replacement system used for securely submitting direct debit and BACS payment files.
- **ICT and Facilities** (-£46,000): a combination of underspends arising from: delay on implementation of arrangements for business continuity after an unsuccessful attempt to explore a potential solution with another local authority; ongoing projects to upgrade the GIS server and implementation of Wi-Fi improvements now running over into 2020/21; and a net underspend on the running costs of Causeway House.
- **Marketing and Communications** (-£46,000): mainly due to lower spend on external postage and publicity and promotion activities.
- **Housing Services** (-£44,000): includes underspends on temporary accommodation costs recharged by Greenfields Community Housing (net of additional costs at Digby Court and Great Eastern Close); and rent advances which are demand led, and also subject to varying levels of offsetting repayments.
- **Corporate Financing** (-£67,000): includes savings on annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) of £25,000; additional savings from the staff annual leave purchase scheme (£20,000); and lower pension fund payments (-£9,000).

## ***Overspends***

- **Asset Management** (+£238,000): The main reason for the service overspend was a write back to revenue of £198,000 of costs which had been accrued over many years and which were expected to be recouped through a sale of land and properties in Halstead as part of a wider vendor consortium arrangement. Due to difficulties in completing a sale of the site this arrangement has now ended and a review of the Council's options for this site is to be undertaken.
- **Sustainable Development** (+£84,000): Additional costs were incurred for the recruitment of Development Management staff, including providing the new staff with equipment; and within Landscape Services there were unbudgeted storm damage works, higher tree maintenance costs, and additional expenditure for support required from Essex County Council for ecology works.

## **External Income**

A significant proportion of the Council's budget was reliant on external income. Grants and subsidies from government, alongside income from business rates were major elements, totalling around £35million.

The amount of business rates ultimately retained by the Council depended on the actual amounts collectable (taking into account changes in the Valuation List, exemptions and reliefs

granted, and provisions for non-collection and rating appeals). Variances are accounted for via the Collection Fund and taken into account when determining future budgets and council tax setting. Fluctuations from those elements which have a direct impact on the General Fund revenue account, e.g. the levy payable on growth or grants received from Government to fund discretionary reliefs, are managed through the Business Rate Retention reserve.

As a participant in the Essex Business Rates Pool the Council is entitled to an additional share of income from business rate growth. The final determination and receipt of the actual amount will be made after year-end returns have been collated by the County Council from each of the participating authorities. An amount of £674,000 has been estimated for 2019/20 based on returns that were submitted by Pool members at the end of Q3. Sums received from this arrangement are held in the Business Rate Retention reserve pending decisions on how this resource is to be utilised.

Other external income for which the Council had budgeted £15.824 million came from a variety of sources that were subject to external demands and other influences, meaning these were more susceptible to variations against budget. At the year-end, services overachieved their income budgets by a net £577,000, as shown in the table below:

Service	Updated Budget £000	Joint Fin. Other Reimburs.	Sales, Fees & Charges	Rents	Other Income	Total	RAG status
		4,721	6,300	3,127	1,676	15,824	
		<i>Adverse (Positive) Variance £000 against Budget :</i>					
Asset Management	3,308	(6)	(13)	(46)	(7)	(72)	G
Community Services	223	(1)	11	-	(13)	(3)	G
Corporate Management Plan	-	(9)	-	-	3	(6)	G
Economic Development	3	-	-	-	(3)	(3)	G
Environment & Leisure	1,140	36	(5)	-	(83)	(52)	G
Finance	2,464	(18)	-	-	(334)	(352)	G
Governance	243	(5)	-	-	(20)	(25)	G
Housing	63	-	(16)	(1)	-	(17)	G
Human Resources	5	-	(2)	-	-	(2)	G
ICT & Facilities	15	(1)	-	-	-	(1)	G
Marketing & Communications	196	21	10	-	(18)	13	A
Operations	5,499	(13)	71	23	(122)	(41)	G
Strategic Investment	273	-	-	-	(18)	(18)	G
Sustainable Development	1,748	9	161	-	-	170	R
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>15,180</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(615)</b>	<b>(409)</b>	<b>G</b>
Corporate Financing	644	(131)	-	-	(38)	(168)	G
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,824</b>	<b>(118)</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(653)</b>	<b>(577)</b>	<b>G</b>

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

## Joint Financing & Other Reimbursements

Actual income for the year was £4.839 million against a budget of £4.721 million, an additional £118,000.

The main sources of this income were:

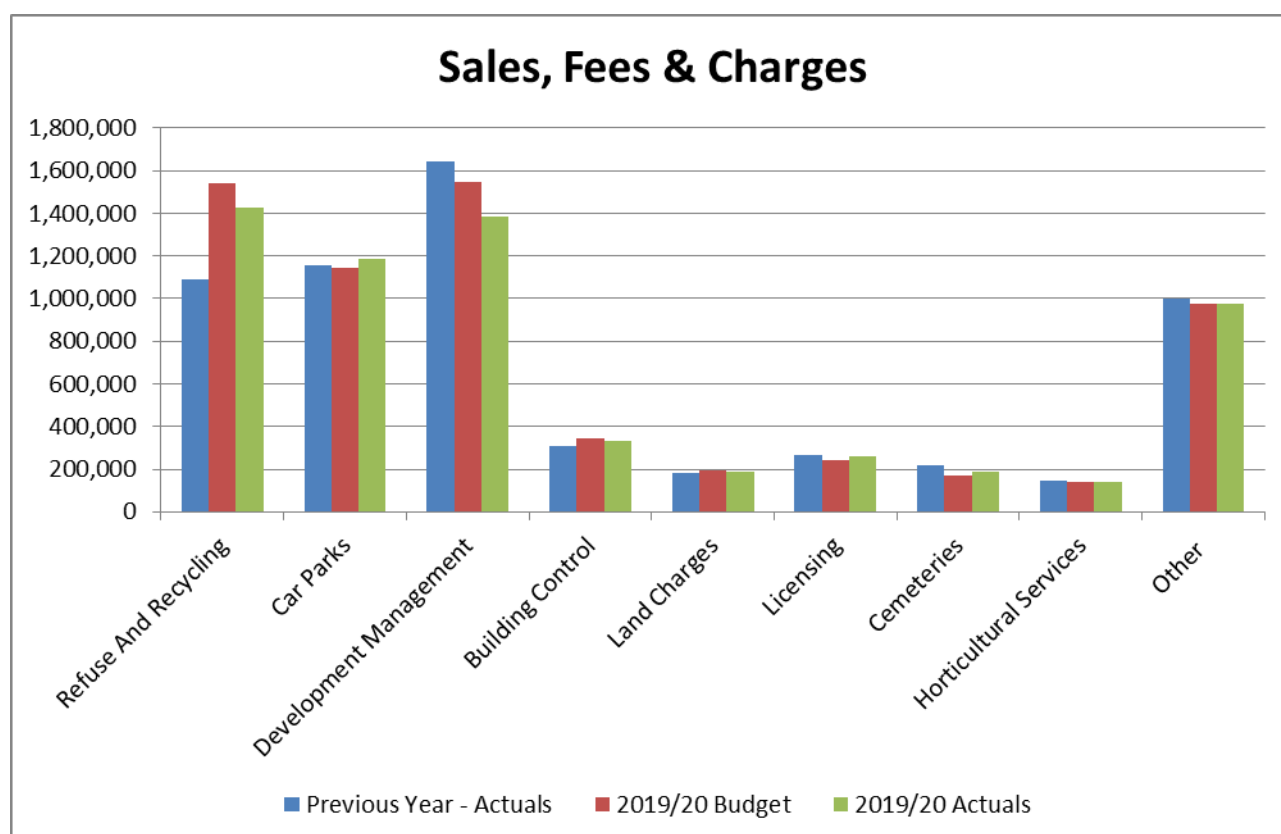
- **Essex County Council** which contributed £2.446 million through a number of arrangements covering waste management, horticultural services, community transport, and public health & livewell initiatives.
- **Council Tax Sharing and Investment Agreement** (£689,000) whereby performance on collection of council tax and the additional income generated for major precepting

authorities is shared with the Council. Funding was also provided to support various anti-fraud and other collection initiatives. A correction of an error in the calculation methodology, found during the year, benefitted the billing authorities and the estimated impact of a reduction in the share agreed with the preceptors did not materialise which meant that the amount received was higher than budget by £128,000.

- **Benefit overpayments, administrative penalties, and costs recovered** – these are amounts that are being recovered due to benefit overpayments relating to claimant error or fraud, and also local tax recovery costs levied when taxpayers are in default. In total the amount collected in the year was £749,000.
- **Procurement Hub** – subscriptions from four Essex local authorities for services provided, along with supplier rebates obtained as a result of third parties using the Hub's procurement frameworks. Total income for the year was £221,000.
- **Business rates collection allowance** – under the business rate retention scheme the Council is allowed to retain £189,000 of income as a contribution towards the cost of collection. The amount is set by Government based on a formula.
- **Other costs recovered** – (£545,000), included: Local Plan costs shared with other local authorities (£122,000); shared payroll service income (£61,000); developer contributions towards revenue costs (£70,000); and many other recoveries and contributions across all service areas (£292,000).

## Sales, Fees & Charges

Income from sales, fees and charges totalled £6.083 million, an overall shortfall of £217,000 from the amount budgeted. The following chart shows the main income streams:



### Commentary on Fees and Charges:

- **Refuse and Recycling:** The budget included income to be generated from the sale of recycling material based on a weighted basket, the value of which was then offset against costs paid to the processing contractor. The weighted basket price reduced at each quarterly review – with the price applied for the final quarter lower by almost 37% from



that used in the budget. Consequently, income for the year was lower than budget by £147,000. This was partially offset by reductions in processing costs, along with other income improvements from various service activities.

- **Car Parks:** A slight increase in income in February offset the marked downturn late in March as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. Income was slightly higher than last year (+£29,000). The original budget included a provision for potential loss of income as a consequence of the proposed Manor Street regeneration project; however, due to the delay in work commencing on-site this meant the car park operated longer than anticipated and overall income from car parking was higher than budget by £40,000.
- **Development Management:** The original budget provided for an increase in planning application fee income of £156,560, with a further in-year increase to budget of £128,500 taking the overall budget to £1.397million. Actual income was £1.239 million, a shortfall of £158,000 against the revised budget and lower than the previous year outturn by £368,000. As well as a marked drop in application income there was also a refund in the final quarter of £50,000 relating to a prior year major application. Income from Pre-application Advice and Planning Performance Agreements was also lower than budget by £38,000, although this was largely offset by increased income from Street Naming and Numbering service (+£35,000).
- **Building Control:** The service achieved slightly higher income this year than the previous year due in part to the transfer of work in progress from another external service provider that ceased trading. However, overall income was still slightly below budget by £10,000 or 3%, although more than offset by savings on staffing and other expenditure.
- **Local Land Charges:** As a result of a reduction in the number of chargeable searches being requested, the income budget was reduced by £78,000 for the 2019/20 budget. Full searches processed have been down compared to numbers for the previous year. However, in December a bulk request for 96 searches was received from Greenfields Community Housing which improved the overall income achieved and taking full year income to £191,000, against a budget of £194,000.
- **Other Income** – Includes income from the following services or activities: Community Transport (£81,000); the Town Hall Centre (£108,000); Commercial Property service charges and other Asset Management income (£275,000); and income received from the Leisure Management operator (£194,000). Overall income was slightly higher than the budget at £978,000 against a budget of £976,000. Income in 2018/19 was higher due to a one-off retrospective adjustment in relation to advertising rights on council-owned bus shelters.

## Rental Income

The budget for rental income from land & property was £3.127million – mainly generated from the Council's commercial property portfolio, local markets, housing properties, and other let properties. The outturn for the year was a net overachievement of £24,000.

### ***Commentary on Rental Income:***

- **Asset Management:** The commercial property budget for rental income was increased by £284,000 to £2.987 million. This reflected the transfer back to the Council of the management of the Braintree Enterprise Centre and Corner House, along with new commercial property: the completed grow-on units at Springwood Drive; and new acquisitions at Osier House, Sible Hedingham, and premises in Silver End. The outturn position was an overachievement of income of £46,000, as overall void levels remained below the level of provision allowed.
- **Operations – Local Markets:** As predicted throughout the year, income was down against budget by £24,000 as free pitches were provided at Witham as an incentive to prospective traders, and the Braintree market continued to suffer from a general reduction

in the number of traders, exacerbated by the COVID-19 restrictions that came into effect in late March.

## Other Service & Corporate Income

Total budgeted Other Income was £1.676 million of which £588,000 related to internal recharges, including staffing costs that were expected to be charged against capital projects – originally budgeted to be £451,000 whereas the actual amount capitalised was £516,000. Other external income was overachieved by £588,000.

Other external income includes the following streams:

- **Investment & Other Interest Income:** The total amount of income earned from treasury management activities was £1.281 million, an overachievement of £250,000. The reasons for the increased income was a combination of higher cash balances being held (a result of increased balances and reserves and later spending on capital projects), improvement in interest rates for most of the year; and an increase in the amount held in long-term pooled investments. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance Management agreed as part of the carry forwards that this overachievement should be added to the Treasury Management reserve to provide further contingency against an anticipated downturn in income as pooled fund dividends reduce and interest rates have been cut as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Additional interest of £41,000 was also generated from a mixture of service loans and deferred payment arrangements.
- **Solar Panel Feed-in-Tariffs:** income achieved was £107,000 (Budget £93,000) and which stems from past investment in solar panels at various Council facilities.
- **Manor Street Income Provision:** the original budget included a provision for the potential reduction of income on car parking and Town Hall bookings as a result of the Manor Street regeneration works. The commencement of these works were delayed and consequently the majority of the provision was unutilised generating a positive variance of £103,000.

Other variances include a number of unbudgeted government grants, or grants that were higher than originally anticipated, giving an overall positive variance of £75,000.

## Treasury Management

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

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity to the end March		Amount Invested at end of the year
	New Investments	Investments Sold or Matured	
£46.97m	£125.50m	£119.35m	£53.12m
Average amount invested for the year			£63.64m
Highest amount invested in the year			£73.26m

The total amount invested in long-term pooled funds was increased to £19 million spread across seven funds. The remaining investments have been in short-term instruments including call accounts and term deposits with UK and Non-UK financial institutions, loans to other local authorities and the UK Government, and investments in highly liquid Money Market Funds (MMF).

Interest and dividends earned for the year are summarised in the table below:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Income Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£18.47m	£922,622	4.98%
Short-Term	£45,17m	£358,351	0.79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£63.64m</b>	<b>£1,280,973</b>	<b>2.01%</b>

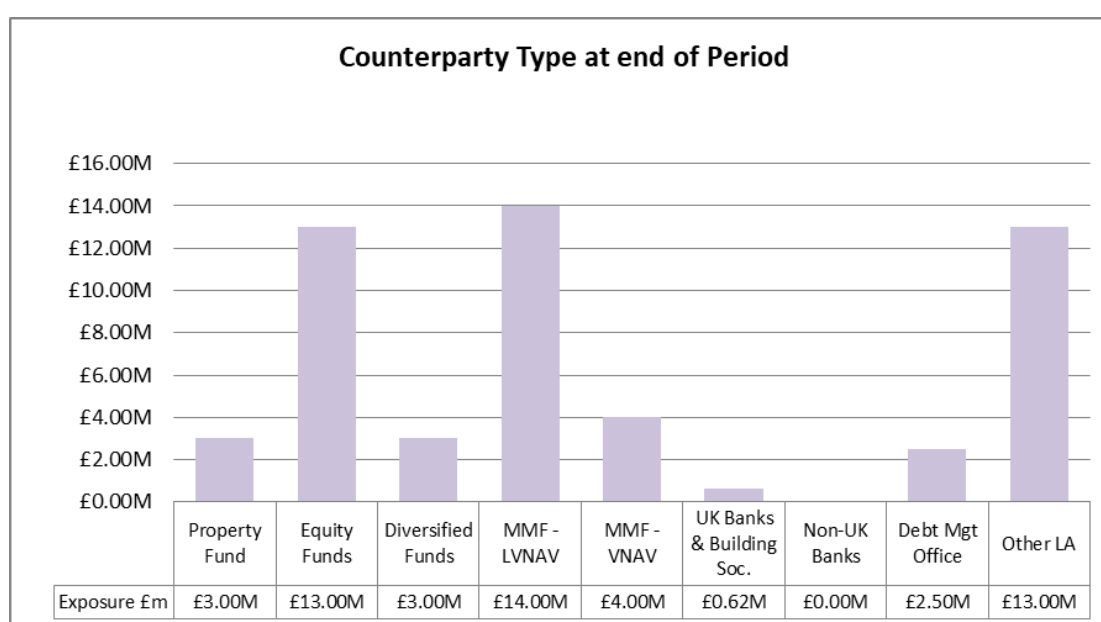
Investment returns have been increased by the dividend income earned from long-term investments. However, being exposed to equities and property, the value of these funds fluctuate based on prevailing market conditions. As a result of the world-wide coronavirus pandemic, financial markets fell in value significantly during the final quarter of the financial year, resulting in marked reduction in the values across all the Council's long-term pooled funds. At the year-end the total valuation for all funds was £16.744 million, an unrealised loss of £2.256 million. This reduction in value is currently held in an unusable reserve and would only be realised if the investments were to be sold.

### **Market Commentary**

Financial markets sold off sharply during the final quarter as the impact from the coronavirus worsened. After starting positively in 2020, the FTSE 100 fell over 30% at its worst point with stock markets in other countries seeing similar huge falls. In March sterling touched its lowest level against the dollar since 1985. The measures implemented by central banks and governments helped restore some confidence and financial markets have rebounded in recent weeks but remain extremely volatile. The flight to quality caused gilts yields to fall substantially. The 5-year benchmark falling from 0.75% in April 2019 to 0.26% on 31<sup>st</sup> March. The 10-year benchmark yield fell from 1% to 0.4%, the 20-year benchmark yield from 1.47% to 0.76% over the same period. 1-month, 3-month and 12-month bid rates averaged 0.61%, 0.72% and 0.88% respectively over the year.

The Bank of England, which had held policy rates steady at 0.75% through most of 2019/20, moved in March to cut rates to 0.25% from 0.75% and then swiftly thereafter brought them down further to the record low of 0.1%.

At the end of the year the Council's investments were allocated as follows:



LVNAV = Low Volatility Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value is expected to remain fairly constant

VNAV = Variable Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value can fluctuate meaning that investors may receive back more or less than invested

## **COVID-19 Expenditure**

As a consequence of the world-wide coronavirus pandemic and the resultant restrictions put in place by the Government, with lockdown introduced from 23 March, additional unbudgeted expenditure was incurred during March totalling £101,710. Most of this expenditure related to the acquisition of ICT equipment to facilitate the rapid introduction of homeworking across services. Under the Council's capitalisation policy £100,028 of this expenditure was met from capital resources, leaving £1,682 charged to the General Fund revenue account.

In addition, the Council received a first tranche of Government funding amounting to £61,411. This has been used to meet the additional revenue expenditure, with the balance transferred to the Capital reserve to partially replenish the resources used to finance the ICT equipment.

## **General Fund Balances**

General Fund balances are held for the following reasons:

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

The movement on the General Fund balance for the year is summarised below:

	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Balance at 1 April 2019</b>	<b>5,787</b>
Add:	
Budgeted addition	128
Pension Fund triennial payment	1,411
Outturn budget variance	565
Prior year carry forwards returned to unallocated balances	13
Less:	
One-off investment	(622)
Carry forward requests approved	(149)
Transfer to the Treasury Management reserve	(250)
<b>Balance at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>6,883</b>

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

- The budget approved by Council included an anticipated addition to balances of £127,947, reflecting savings anticipated being made in advance of future years' budget shortfalls.
- In 2017/18 the Council made a one-off payment to the Essex Pension Fund covering the period April 2017 to March 2020, which was in part funded from General Fund balances. A repayment back into balances was expected in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- The Outturn variance for the year would mean an additional £564,966 being added to balances (before carry forwards).
- A review of prior year carry forwards by service managers identified a balance of £12,521 that was no longer required and has therefore been transferred to the unallocated balance.
- An allocation from General Fund balances was approved by Full Council in February 2019, to meet one-off budget requirements: £500,000 to replenish the Planning Appeals reserve; and a total of £122,000 provision for potential loss of income during redevelopment of Manor Street. As reported, the delay in the start of the Manor Street

project meant that the reduction in income was a lot lower in this financial year, the difference being reflected in the outturn variance.

- Requests to carry forward underspends from 2019/20 totalling £149,153 were considered by Management Board and subsequently approved on 21 May 2020, by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance Management under delegation. The Cabinet Member also approved to transfer the overachieved income generated from treasury management activities to reserve as further contingency against an expected downturn in this source income in 2020/21.

## **Earmarked Reserves**

Earmarked reserves form part of the overall General Fund balances, but reflect decisions which have been made to ring-fence amounts for specific purposes. Generally, these reserves fall into four categories:

- Capital investment – revenue resources set aside to support the Council's capital investment programme, either for specific projects or the programme in general.
- Risk Management – resources set aside to manage some of the inherent risks in the Council's activities e.g. treasury management, business rates income, and collection of housing benefit overpayments
- Service Reserves – reserves set-up for specific services/ initiatives, including annually approved budget carry forwards
- Change Management – to support the Council in terms of organisation development and improvement programmes.

The outturn position reported is after a net withdrawal from reserves of £1.080 million made in accordance with the purposes for which the each reserve was originally established.

A further £149,000 was added to reserves for items approved to be carried forward from the 2019/20 budget outturn, offset by £13,000 of prior year balances that were deemed to be no longer required for the purposes for which they were originally carried over. In addition, £250,000 was added to the treasury management reserve from the overachieved income in the year.

The overall movement on earmarked reserves can be summarised as follows:

	<b>Additions</b>	<b>Withdrawals</b>	<b>Transfer to unallocated balances</b>	<b>Net Movement</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Movement on earmarked reserves	4,505	(5,585)	-	(1,080)
Carry forwards & Treasury Management	399	-	(13)	386
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,904</b>	<b>(5,585)</b>	<b>(13)</b>	<b>(694)</b>

The total amount held in earmarked reserves at the 31st March 2020 was £21.931 million.

## **Risks and Assumptions**

The outturn is subject to finalisation of the Council's Statement of Accounts which is scheduled to be completed by the end of June, following which the Council's external auditors, BDO LLP will carry out their audit. The outcome of the audit could lead to changes in the outturn, details of which will be reported to the Corporate Governance Group at its meeting in October and subsequently Cabinet when receiving the final audited financial statements.

The outturn will be reviewed to ensure that any on-going issues have either been/ will be addressed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy as detailed planning commences for the 2021/22 budget.

### **Capital Investment**

Taking into account projects which were in progress and carried forward from earlier years, new projects approved as part of the Budget agreed in February 2019, and the subsequent decisions taken by Council on some major growth and infrastructure projects, the overall capital programme at the end of March totalled £52.6million. Delivery of significant projects will span a number of years, therefore, the amount expected to be spent in the current year was £8.224 million. The following table shows actual spend against this profiled budget.

	<b>Profiled Spend 2019/20 £000</b>	<b>Outturn Spend 2019/20 £000</b>	<b>Outturn Spend as % of Profile</b>
Commercial and investment property	1,108	1,062	96%
Horizon 120	2,000	1,395	70%
Manor Steet regeneration	1,359	1,548	114%
Town Centre improvements	150	84	56%
Springwood Drive business units and parking	137	126	92%
Planned maintenance to Council premises	563	368	65%
Replacement vehicles and plant	85	32	38%
Information technology systems & equipment	323	357	111%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	427	317	74%
Environmental improvements	25	18	72%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	92	-	0%
Operational equipment	327	262	80%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	101	83	82%
Cordons Farm waste transfer station	23	23	100%
Grants to registered social landlords	13	12	92%
Disabled facilities grants	847	796	94%
Capitalised interest	193	-	0%
Capital salaries	451	516	114%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,224</b>	<b>6,999</b>	<b>85%</b>

The profiled spend for the year reduced from that at Q3 by a net £1.442 million. At Q3 the programme assumed that £1.002 million of costs for replacement refuse freighters would be capitalised. However, following a financial appraisal of options, the Corporate Director (Finance) determined leasing as being the preferred means of financing, the impact of which will be covered in the Fleet Management annual revenue budget. Other changes to the programme profile included deferment of the Council's contribution towards superfast broadband (-£356,000) which is payable to ECC on achievement of project milestones; and slower rate of spend on sites identified as potential housing land (-£261,000). Various other changes increased the profiled spend by +£177,000.

Total spend for the year was £6.999 million, leaving a balance against profiled budget of £1.225 million. Spend in the year for some projects was higher than profiled which largely reflected the estimated nature of profiles and at this stage was not implying an overall project overspend.

Additional ICT costs were incurred in response to the need to provide staff with the necessary equipment to enable homeworking in line with COVID-19 restrictions.

The majority of the budget remaining at the year-end (£1.009 million) will be carried over as it is required to complete those projects that are in progress, leaving a net underspend of £216,000 for the year. The main reason for this underspend relates to capitalised interest, which was allowed for within the budget for a number of the Council's strategic projects. However, thus far, any borrowing requirement relating to these projects has been internalised using the Council's own cash balances. On this basis the capital programme has underspent against this allowance, with the opportunity cost reflected in the Council's treasury management income. This arrangement provides the most economic means of financing the Council's borrowing requirement for the time being.

## **Capital resources**

The original estimate was to generate £4.976 million of capital resources from the sale of council-owned assets. However, one site completed earlier than expected, with a capital receipt of £2.520 million being received in the previous financial year. A sale of land was completed in June generating capital income of £1.317 million, and the expected income from the sale of serviced land plots at Horizon 120 will now be later than originally assumed due to changes in the overall timescales for this project. A further disposal which was expected to complete in the year is still subject to planning matters. A number of small receipts totalling £74,000 were also received in relation to a deed of easement and repayment of housing grants.

Estimated resources to be generated in the year included £1 million from preserved right-to-buy (RTB) receipts. Greenfields confirmed 15 RTB sales were completed in the year generating £1.878 million for the Council. This compares to 27 sales completed last year which generated £3.756 million for the Council. An additional amount of £75,000 was also received being an amount due to the Council from the sale of land by Greenfields.

Receipt generated by the VAT shelter agreement with Greenfields were £246,000 for the year, slightly lower than last year's amount of £252,000.

The Council received £931,000 grant from the Better Care Fund, which has largely been used to fund the Council's expenditure on disabled facilities grants. This was an increase of £68,000 over that originally anticipated for the year and increased the resources available for this programme of work.




















# Environment and Place

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Respond to the consultations on the new Government Resource and Waste Strategy for England and consider proposals in relation to the Council's refuse and recycling service</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The Council has provided a response in May 2019 to the consultation published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) outlining the Governments proposal on plastic packaging tax. We are currently waiting for a further consultation on the Deposit Return Scheme which is likely to take place in early 2020.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The Council has provided a response in May 2019 to the consultation published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) outlining the Governments proposal on plastic packaging tax. We are currently waiting for a further consultation on the Deposit Return Scheme which is likely to take place in early 2020.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - On 11 March the government issued the 2nd consultation document for Plastic Packaging Tax which is seeking views on 'design' of the tax i.e. how it will work and its implementation. The closing date is 20 May 2020, and we will be submitting our comments accordingly. This project will be ongoing and the end date has been amended to 31st May 2020 to tie in with the deadline for the 2nd consultation. The Consultation on the Deposit Return Scheme is currently on hold.	May 2020	
<b>Status</b> <i>The project will continue into next year as the consultations have been delayed. The end date has been amended to 31st May 2020 to tie in with the deadline for the 2nd consultation. Any further consultations will be taken into account under a new action in 2020/21</i>		
<b>Continue to promote and raise awareness of the importance of minimisation, reuse and recycling to both residents and businesses to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The recycling calendars have been refreshed using a pictorial approach to list what goes in each bin and the calendars have been delivered throughout the district. For recycle week in September, we worked with Love Essex to encourage and change people's recycling behaviours and we are currently working on a campaign called 'say no to plastic' which will be launched in the new year.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The Council has been working with Essex County Council and other local authorities on the "Love Essex, not plastic" campaign aimed at encouraging everyone to use reusable products in place of single-use plastics. The campaign starts on 6th January 2020 and is due to last for 12 months with a new reusable alternative product to be promoted every 4-6 weeks. A Christmas e-newsletter with lots of advice on a "greener Christmas" was put together and sent to residents signed up to receiving e-newsletters at the beginning of December, providing details of the revised waste collection dates over Christmas and ideas on how to dispose of real Christmas trees.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Throughout the year, promotional events such as talks to schools and community groups have taken place to raise the importance of recycling and minimising waste. The recycling calendars were refreshed using a pictorial approach to list what goes in each bin. In the last quarter of the year, the Council has been working with Essex County Council and other local authorities to do their bit and are encouraging residents to join them to 'Love Essex, not plastic'. The Essex wide 2020 campaign aims to tackle the amount of waste across the county by highlighting the issue of	March 2020	







single use plastic and urging households, schools and businesses to switch to re-useable options to recycle more. Activities within the Council have changed to support this by significantly reducing the amount of plastic cups used.		
<b>Status</b> <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. A further project around waste minimisation will be set up for 2020/21</i>		
<b>Refurbish the four play areas at St Mary's Road in Rivenhall, Ashpole Road in Bocking, Mill Chase in Halstead and Clare Road in Braintree</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The contract for refurbishment of the play areas has been awarded and works are due to start shortly.	<b>December 2019</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - Refurbishments were completed to the play areas at St Mary's Road in Rivenhall, Ashpole Road in Bocking and Mill Chase in Halstead. The refurbishment to the play area in Clare Road, Braintree is due to be completed by the end of February. A change control has been processed to amend the end date of the project from December to February 2020.	<b>February 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - All refurbishments to the four play areas at St Mary's Road in Rivenhall, Ashpole Road in Bocking Mill Chase in Halstead and Clare Road, Braintree were completed by the end of February 2020.	<b>February 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Continue to protect our larger open spaces from illegal encampments by creating earth bunds and ditches to prevent disruption and inconvenience to local residents</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - All sites are now complete with the exception of Marshalls Park where hedge planting will take place in November. A change control has been processed to amend the end date of the project accordingly.	<b>November 2019</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - All sites in this project have been completed and are now secured against illegal encampments.	<b>November 2019</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - All sites in this project have been completed and are now secured against illegal encampments.	<b>November 2019</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the third quarter</i>		
<b>Replace the benches in parks and open spaces ensuring they are fit for purpose allowing residents and visitors to enjoy recreational time</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Benches have been replaced in Halstead public gardens and Halstead cemetery allowing residents and visitors somewhere to sit and enjoy recreational time.	<b>August 2019</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - Benches have been replaced in Halstead public gardens and Halstead cemetery allowing residents and visitors somewhere to sit and enjoy recreational time.	<b>August 2019</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Benches have been replaced in Halstead public gardens and Halstead cemetery allowing residents and visitors somewhere to sit and enjoy recreational time	<b>August 2019</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the second quarter</i>		
<b>Continue to investigate and enforce littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping offences to help keep the district looking clean and tidy</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Since April, 51 fixed penalty notices have been served for littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping offences.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - Since April, a total of 92 fixed penalty notices have been served for littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping offences. 41 penalty notices were served in the third quarter.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - In the fourth quarter of the year, 38 fixed penalty notices have been served for general littering, cigarette butts, smoking and fly-tipping offences. This brings the total number of fixed penalty notices for the year to 130.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		








Deliver a car litter campaign to support the introduction of new legislation		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Braintree District Council are participating in a district wide 'Love Essex' campaign to highlight the recently increased fines that people throwing litter from their car face and to encourage people to dispose of their litter responsibly.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The district wide 'Love Essex' campaign to highlight the recently increased fines that people throwing litter from their car face and to encourage people to dispose of their litter responsibly ended on the 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2019. Monitoring took place, before, throughout and after the campaign and we are currently awaiting the results of the monitoring from Keep Britain Tidy	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The district wide 'Love Essex' campaign to highlight the recently increased fines that people throwing litter from their car face and to encourage people to dispose of their litter responsibly ended on the 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2019. We are currently awaiting the results and evaluation of the campaign from Keep Britain Tidy which are delayed by partner organisations not submitting their results in time and the impact of prioritising work due to the coronavirus.	March 2020	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter in respect of delivering the campaign. The outcome of the evaluation has been delayed by the pandemic.</i>		





## Strategic Growth and Infrastructure



Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>(E) Continue to work towards completing the examination and adoption of the Local Plan</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The evidence base has now been approved and suggested modifications have been made to the Local Plan by all three authorities involved. A consultation on the additional evidence base in supporting the development of Garden Communities started in August for six weeks closing on the 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2019. This has now been sent to the Planning Inspector to consider the timetable for the reopening of the examination.	December 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The consultation on the additional evidence base in supporting the development of Garden Communities closed on the 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2019 and the independent planning inspector has been reviewing over 1,000 comments received. The inspector has scheduled the examination of the Local Plan for January 2020 and the service is busy preparing statements to feed into this process.	December 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The examination of Section 1 of the Local Plan has now been completed. The Inspector noted he will provide an interim letter of his findings in 'a few weeks'. Once the letter has been received a way forward can be agreed.	December 2020	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project is on target and progressing towards the end date of the project in December 2020.</i>		
<b>(E) Formally adopt the first Neighbourhood Plan in the district</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The first Neighbourhood Plan in the district has been formally adopted at a meeting of Full Council in July 2019. The Bradwell and Pattiswick	July 2019	

Neighbourhood Plan can now be used when considering planning applications within the parish of Bradwell and Pattiswick.		
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The first Neighbourhood Plan in the district has been formally adopted at a meeting of Full Council in July 2019. The Bradwell and Pattiswick Neighbourhood Plan can now be used when considering planning applications within the parish of Bradwell and Pattiswick.	July 2019	✓
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The first Neighbourhood Plan in the district has been formally adopted at a meeting of Full Council in July 2019. The Bradwell and Pattiswick Neighbourhood Plan can now be used when considering planning applications within the parish of Bradwell and Pattiswick.	July 2019	✓
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the second quarter</i>		
<b>(E) Continue to work with partners to provide housing, employment and supporting infrastructure to address our long term housing and community needs</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Work continues with partners on the Garden Communities looking at a long term strategy which will contribute to meeting the needs of North Essex's growing population ensuring that new developments come with the infrastructure, affordable homes, schools, doctor's surgeries and facilities needed for new communities.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The long term approach to how homes, jobs and infrastructure are developed for future generations is set out in Section one of the Local Plan. This will be considered by the Planning Inspector in January following work on the additional evidence supporting three new garden communities.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The long term approach to how homes, jobs and infrastructure are developed for future generations is set out in Section one of the Local Plan which was considered by the Planning Inspector in January 2020. We are currently awaiting the outcome. A further project will be set up next year detailing the way forward depending on the outcome.	March 2020	✓
<b>Status</b> <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. A further project will be set up for 2020/21.</i>		
<b>(E) Develop Council owned sites to deliver additional mixed tenure homes across the district and consider establishing a Council owned Housing Development Company</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - At Cabinet in September 2019, members granted delegated authority for the disposal of seven sites subject to planning. Members also noted that the business case for a wholly owned housing development company is not proven and that the concept will be postponed for future consideration in the context of the proposed Garden Communities.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q3 Update</b> - At Cabinet in September 2019, members granted delegated authority for the disposal of seven sites subject to planning. The heads of terms have now been agreed with Chelmer Housing Partnership on all seven sites on a subject to planning basis. Chelmer Housing Partnership have appointed architects and progress will be monitored by the Strategic Investment Team.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Over the last year, Cabinet members have granted the disposal of seven sites subject to planning. The heads of terms have now been agreed with Chelmer Housing Partnership on all seven sites and progress will be monitored by the Strategic Investment Team. Members also decided not to proceed with establishing a Council owned Housing Development Company at this time, delaying this for future consideration in the context of the proposed Garden Communities.	March 2020	✓
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>(E) Commence construction of the regeneration of Braintree Town Centre enhancing the appeal of the town to residents and visitors</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Three tenders were received but unfortunately were in excess of the pre-tender estimate. At Cabinet on the 9th September, members approved the capital budget for all professional, construction and associated scheme costs and granted delegated authority to execute a design and build	December 2019	▶

construction contract with Kier Construction Limited. A letter of intent with Kier has been signed for approval at Full Council in October.		
<p><b>Q3 Update</b> - Contracts have now been signed with Kier Construction (Eastern) Ltd and pre-construction design is underway. Some preliminary works have commenced with the car parks due to close on the 2nd March 2020 and possession of the full site on the 23rd March 2020. Completion is anticipated late August.</p> <p>A change control has been processed to amend the end date of this part of the overall project from December 2019 to March 2020 to take into account the revised start on site date.</p> <p>Plans to pedestrianise part of Braintree town centre have been approved at Cabinet in December and further consultation has started to give residents and local businesses the opportunity to feedback and influence the designs for the pedestrianisation scheme.</p>	March 2020	
<p><b>Q4 Update</b> - Kier Construction (Eastern) Ltd took full possession of the new development site in Manor street on the 23rd March and preliminary works are underway.</p> <p>Consultation took place in the fourth quarter on the pedestrianisation scheme giving residents, visitors and businesses the opportunity to have their say on what they want the new space to be used for, to help shape the design plans. The pedestrianisation project will see Market Place, Great Square and most of the High Street become traffic-free, whilst making crucial long-term improvements to the roads and pavements and the creation of new public spaces. Braintree District Council is now working up final design concepts, taking on board comments from the consultation. The first phase of the construction work is expected to start at Fairfield Road and Bank Street in mid-April 2020. This will be reported on as a separate project next year.</p>	March 2020	
<p><b>Status</b>  <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. A further project will be set up for 2020/21.</i></p>		
<p><b>(E) Continue to work with Essex County Council to reduce congestion on the local road network in Braintree</b></p>		
<p><b>Q2 Update</b> - Essex County Council is looking at different options and working with our Planning Department on the works required to the roundabout as part of the S106 for land West of Panfield Lane, which was granted planning approval subject to S106 in July 2019. In the interim Essex County Council have relined the 'keep clear' markings on the roundabout which had been requested by the businesses based on the estate.</p>	March 2020	
<p><b>Q3 Update</b> - Essex County Council is continuing to work with our Planning Department on the works required to the roundabout as part of the S106 for land West of Panfield Lane, which was granted planning approval subject to S106 in July 2019.</p>	March 2020	
<p><b>Q4 Update</b> - Essex County Council is continuing to work with our Planning Department on the works required to the roundabout as part of the S106 for land West of Panfield Lane, which was granted planning approval subject to S106 in July 2019. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored next year.</p>	March 2020	
<p><b>Status</b>  <i>This project is an ongoing project and will continue to be monitored in 2020/21</i></p>		
<p><b>(E) Work with Essex County Council and Highways England to secure planning consent and commence construction of new slip roads linking the A120 to Millennium Way alleviating congestion at Galleys Corner</b></p>		
<p><b>Q2 Update</b> - A planning application was submitted to Essex County Council in May 2019 with construction due to commence Spring/Summer 2020. We are currently awaiting the outcome of the planning application.</p>	March 2020	
<p><b>Q3 Update</b> - A planning application was submitted to Essex County Council in May 2019 and we are still awaiting the outcome. We continue to work with Essex County Council and Highways England as the project moves into the design phase and it has been confirmed, subject to completion of the necessary sectional agreement, that Essex County Council will lead the</p>	March 2020	













project and a project team has been established. Construction is due to commence Spring/Summer 2020.		
<b>Q4 Update</b> - We continue to work with Essex County Council and Highways England as the project moves into the design phase and it has been confirmed, subject to completion of the necessary sectional agreement, that Essex County Council will lead the project and a project team has been established. Construction is due to commence Spring/Summer 2020 and will continue to be monitored by the Strategic Investment Team.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. A further project will be set up for 2020/21.</i>		
<b>(E) Continue to work with Essex County Council on securing improvements to the strategic highway network including the A120 and A12</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Government are set to make key decisions in the Autumn on the future investment in major roads. Priti Patel, Essex County Council and regional businesses are showing their support for the favoured option of the A120 dual carriageway proposals by establishing a business board and creating A120 campaign champions to persuade the Government to include the dualling scheme in the Government's Road Investment Strategy 2.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - There has been no change to the position in respect of the improvements to the A120 and we are still awaiting for the government to announce their Road Investment Strategy. Highways England announced in the third quarter the preferred route for the improvements to the A12 between junctions 19 and 23 and a consultation was launched on the options for improvements between junction 23 and 25. The consultation closed in December and the Council have provided a response.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The Council will continue to work with Essex County Council on improvements to the A120 and A12. Braintree District Council provided a response to a consultation in December on improvements to the A12 between junctions 23 and 25. The Government published their Road Investment Strategy in March 2020 which is now being reviewed. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>This project is an ongoing project and will continue to be monitored in 2020/21</i>		
<b>€ Commence construction of an improved bus interchange as part of the Manor Street regeneration</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – Planning consent for the regeneration of Manor Street has been agreed and discussions have started with Essex County Council around leasing the bus interchange.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – Planning consent for the regeneration of Manor Street has been agreed. Detailed discussions have been taking place with Essex County Council Passenger Transport and Highways regarding the temporary relocation of the bus-stops during the construction works.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The bus park in Braintree has now closed due to construction work starting on the regeneration of Manor Street which includes a modern and bigger bus interchange. Temporary bus stands are now positioned close to the current bus park site for the duration of the build. This will continue to be reported on as part of the regeneration scheme.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. This will continue to be reported on as part of the regeneration scheme.</i>		
<b>(E) Create a high quality business community through the development of the Horizon 120 business and innovation park</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - A detailed planning application has been submitted for all Infrastructure works to the Horizon 120 site including highways, main estate roads, drainage, stats and earthworks. Consultation on the Local Development Order commenced with a public drop in session held on the 30 <sup>th</sup> September at Gt. Notley Village. The consultation will run until the 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2019. Grid serve have received planning permission to build an Electric Forecourt in Braintree, the first of over 100 sites across the UK. This will be sited next to the Horizon Business and Innovation Park.	<b>March 2020</b>	

<b>Q3 Update</b> - Consultation on the Local Development Order set for the Horizon 120 Business Innovation Park finished in October 2019 and the responses have been considered. The plans were exhibited to allow residents and businesses the opportunity to view the proposals. A website (www.horizon120.com) has been launched and firm interest has been received from a range of potential occupiers attracted by the location, the quality proposed and the value for money available.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Braintree District Council has adopted the Local Development Order to encourage businesses onto the new Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park planned for Great Notley. The Authority is adopting this type of planning framework as it automatically grants planning permission for certain forms of development and land uses within particular zones on a site, making it easier and quicker for businesses to build the premises they need without the need to apply for separate planning permission (as long as they meet certain conditions). Despite the lockdown, the Council is pressing ahead with plans, in readiness for when businesses start moving again as and when the coronavirus restrictions are changed or lifted by Central Government. The Marshgate Group will take the lead on the delivery of the business park and as this project is ongoing, we will continue to report on progress.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. A further project will be set up for 2020/21.</i>		











## Economic Development

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>(E) Complete the acquisition of strategic employment land in Witham supporting business creation and growth</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The investment opportunity identified in Witham has been put on hold due to a cautious approach being adopted in considering any new property investment opportunities in the district owing to Brexit uncertainty and the potential negative impact on the market and property values.	<b>July 2021</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The Council is committed to the delivery of high-quality business premises, including grow-on units to promote business start-ups and growth in Witham. A suitable site has been identified and will be acquired at nil capital cost to the public purse through the prudent use of the planning system. The site is due to transfer in 2020.	<b>July 2021</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The Council is committed to the delivery of high-quality business premises, including grow-on units to promote business start-ups and growth in Witham. A suitable site has been identified and acquired at nil capital cost to the public purse through the prudent use of the planning system. Land transfer is progressing.	<b>July 2021</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project is on target and progressing towards the end date of the project in July 2021</i>		
<b>Complete physical improvements to key industrial estates including new signage and branding</b>		

<b>Q2 Update</b> - The planning application for the improved signage on the Springwood Industrial Estate has now been approved and the works due to commence in the third quarter.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The new and improved signage at Springwood Industrial Estate was installed in the third quarter, which includes 22 new signs to improve branding and wayfinding on the estate. With the remaining budget from the Industrial Estate Improvement Fund, plans are being drafted to explore the feasibility of an Industrial Unit Front Improvement Scheme for the district, which would provide 50/50 match funded capital grants to improve unit fronts in priority industrial areas. The scheme would aim to improve industrial unit fronts as a way of supporting the growth of local businesses, improving the local environment and raising the image of the area amongst local residents and visitors	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - New and improved signage at Springwood Industrial Estate is now installed improving the branding and wayfinding on the estate. Next year, the Council will be looking at how they can work with other groups to secure BID status to support further improvements.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. A further project will be set up for 2020/21.</i>		
<b>Work with existing and form new partnerships to increase levels of targeted business and skills support</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – In partnership with Witham Chambers of Commerce, a business support roadshow was delivered in September for Witham businesses, involving Superfast Essex, BEST Growth Hub, North Essex Parking Partnership and Essex Highways. 16 businesses signed up and eight attended. A Business Support Roadshow is now being planned for the Halstead area. Officers and members continue to meet businesses across the district as part of the district business tour to find out more about local businesses, their challenges and offer funding opportunities and support services.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – The Economic Development Team have been working with the Colchester Business Enterprise agency (COLBEA) to provide businesses within the district access to fully funded business mentoring for up to three months. It is hoped this will be launched in the new year and open to both new business start-ups and established businesses. Two workshops have taken place in the third quarter around social media innovation to help businesses with promotion and on digital marketing, digital presence and CV writing.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - In the last year, members, senior managers and officers from the Economic Team have visited a number of businesses to gain a greater understanding of the successes and challenges businesses face and to provide bespoke support and details on access to grant funding. The Council has also worked with partners to deliver various free of charge informative events and training opportunities for the business community. The support service provided by the Economic Team has proven to be vital for businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic with businesses exploring additional routes to business support including self-employment guidance, information on grants and loans, employee support and skills development. Businesses have been encouraged to join the closed Braintree District Businesses Facebook group and sign up to receiving newsletters to keep up to date with changes.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. A further project will be set up for 2020/21.</i>		
<b>Secure planning consent and commence construction of the I-construct Innovation in Construction Hub at the Braintree Enterprise Centre</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – Planning approval was granted in September for the construction of the I-construct Innovation Hub. The project will be funded by the Council and by a grant from the European Regional Development fund. The hub will consist of workshop and demonstration spaces, a technology lab, conference and networking facilities, a café and meeting areas. It will become home to a team offering business support, grant schemes and advice to firms connected to the construction industry across the Greater South East region but it will also be a	<b>December 2019</b>	

place where innovative construction ideas, technology and techniques are shared and celebrated. It is anticipated that construction will commence in December 2019.		
<b>Q3 Update</b> – Detailed planning permission for the construction of the I-construct Innovation Hub is effective from 28 <sup>th</sup> October following completion of a unilateral undertaking. The European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) has been approved in principle and the Council is working in close partnership with Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) colleagues and our professional team. It is now anticipated that construction will commence in March 2020 and a change control has been processed to amend the end date of the project	March 2020	▶
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Detailed planning permission for the construction of the I-construct Innovation Hub is effective from 28 <sup>th</sup> October following completion of a unilateral undertaking. The European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) has been approved in principle and the Council is working in close partnership with Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) colleagues and our professional team. A minor material amendment has been submitted for planning approval to be considered at a future planning committee. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	March 2020	▶
<b>Status</b> <i>This project is an ongoing project and will continue to be monitored in 2020/21</i>		
<b>(E) Work with the Braintree Education and Skills board to secure funding and develop projects to increase skills across the district providing a workforce that meets employers' needs</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – The Braintree Education and Skills board are supportive of developing another case study video to promote apprenticeships in the district, this time focussing on the construction sector. This will be used to promote the local opportunities and highlight the importance of construction in our district. The September meeting of the board highlighted the reduced number of funding bids that had been received and officers are working on a plan to promote this.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q3 Update</b> – Following the Braintree Education and Skills Board meeting in September where it was highlighted that a reduced number of funding bids had been received, officers have been actively promoting the opportunity with existing stakeholders. Further promotional activity will take place in the new year to increase the profile of the funding opportunities. At the board meeting in November, a tour of the new STEM Innovation Centre was carried out to showcase the opportunities and facilities available.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Over the year, the Braintree Education and Skills Board has supported students making post 16 education or work choices by promoting apprenticeships, career days, STEM opportunities and local facilities. This includes approving a STEM work experience opportunity due to start after the May half term which is now on hold due to the coronavirus health pandemic. The board have also secured additional funds which had been allocated towards Primary School engagement and will be the focus of future work. Work with the Education and Skills Board will continue into next year.	March 2020	✔
<b>Status</b> <i>The actions for this project in 2019/20 have been completed. A further project will be set up for 2020/21.</i>		
<b>€ Deliver physical improvements to the town centres of Braintree, Witham and Halstead</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – A plan for Halstead high street de-clutter has been drawn up and passed through its first review by highway officers, which has produced a range of amendments to make. Initial designs for wayfinding are being investigated.	December 2020	▶
<b>Q3 Update</b> – Work on the wayfinding and decluttering in Halstead and Witham town centres is progressing and a consultant has now been appointed to provide additional resources to the project.	December 2020	▶
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Work is continuing in respect of the physical improvements to the town centres and plans have been passed to subcontractors to progress	December 2020	▶
<b>Status</b> <i>Project is on target and progressing towards the end date of the project in December 2020</i>		












<b>(E) Establish a Tourism Partnership to promote the district, support businesses and increase tourism</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - A brief has been provided to the Tourism Partnership on the Government Tourism Sector Deal and how our work links into this. Members were also provided with information on regional and national projects that they can take part in to promote tourism within the district. The second Tourism Partnership meeting will be held in October at Colne Valley Railway where the branding and new website format will be shown to attendees.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The second meeting of the Tourism Partnership took place in October, hosted by Colne Valley Railway. The branding for Visit Braintree District was unveiled publicly and received positive responses from attendees. The new tourism website will be launched in the new year and will capture the many local characteristics, heritage, attractions, landmarks and events the district has to offer.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The Tourism Partnership is now established and meetings have taken place throughout the year. A Tourism Plan has been developed and in February 2020, the Visit Braintree District launched a new tourism website designed to promote the area as a key destination to attract visitors from outside the district. The new website brings together the abundance of attractions, landmarks, businesses and events the district has to offer.	March 2020	
<i>Status</i> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Supporting markets across the district including continuing to develop the street market concept</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Six street markets have been run so far in Braintree and three in Witham. The Street Markets in Braintree continue to provide a high level of trader, business and public acclaim, and the council is starting to work with traders to produce a performance report after each one.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - Saturday 16th November saw our largest and most successful street market held in Braintree to date. Over 100 street market stalls were set up in the town centre, a 1920s pop up bar in the Town Hall and the Christmas light switch on. Ten local performers entertained the crowds on the stage in Market Place including choirs from Beckers Green Primary School, St Michael's C of E, John Ray Junior School and Notley Green Primary School. Two further street markets were held in Braintree on 7th and 21st December. 40 and 60 stall holders attended respectively in addition to the regular traders. Poor weather hampered visitors and stall holders on 7th December but the market was still a success. Dates for 2020 events in Braintree, Halstead and Witham are being discussed and will be confirmed in the new year.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Throughout the year, we have supported street markets which have proven to be a great success with local businesses reporting higher sales, an increase in footfall and an all-round positive community atmosphere. In line with the Government Coronavirus advice, we have made the decision to cancel the street markets for March, April and May to help protect our residents, visitors and traders.	March 2020	
<i>Status</i> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Working through the Town Centre Partnership, deliver schemes to improve the vibrancy of Braintree Town Centre</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The Council is actively working to develop and support the Braintree Town Partnership, which now has a logo, website and draft versions of organisation structure, annual objectives and is now a limited company with two Vice Chairs. The meetings of the partnership now have a settled pattern on the first Tuesday of the month and they are discussing a range of projects around improving the vibrancy of the Town Centre.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - Officers are continuing to provide support to the Braintree Town Partnership and a presentation has been provided to the partnership on the pedestrianisation of the Town Centre which was approved by Cabinet in December. A seven week public consultation started on the 20 <sup>th</sup> December for residents and businesses to find out more about what the pedestrianisation scheme could look like.	March 2020	


<p><b>Q4 Update</b> - Over the last year, the Council has supported the Town Centre Partnership in establishing regular meetings of the group where they can discuss projects to improve the vibrancy of the Town Centre. The partnership have received presentations on the pedestrianisation scheme and the new tourism website. With all the planned investment for the town centre, the newly appointed chairman of the partnership has called for more members to join the partnership to enable business owners in the town to get involved and help shape the towns future</p>	March 2020	✓
<p><i>Status</i> Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</p>		
<p><b>Q2 Update</b> – Christmas preparations are well advanced and discussions are being held with stakeholders to ensure a co-ordinated town wide event. We are also working with Braintree Village to set up a series of workshops to develop the 'Day out in Braintree' concept connecting Braintree Village with events in the Town Centre.</p>	March 2020	▶
<p><b>Q3 Update</b> – The Christmas street markets and light switch on have been a success and further events for the next year are in discussion.</p>	March 2020	▶
<p><b>Q4 Update</b> - The events in Braintree town centre have proven to be a great success with local businesses reporting higher sales, an increase in footfall and an all-round positive community atmosphere.</p>	March 2020	✓
<p><i>Status</i> Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</p>		



## Health and Communities









Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<p><b>(E) Continue to deliver the Livewell child project working with families with young children providing support and advice on nutrition and healthy activities in an attempt to locally halt the rise in childhood obesity</b></p>		
<p><b>Q2 Update</b> - Six Xplorer events held in August across Braintree, Witham and Halstead parks were well attended keeping children active during the school holidays.</p> <p>The Healthy Habits programme, designed to improve the health of school children and educate parents has started in Becker's Green School with the assistance of Community 360. The Council is also exploring how to link the Livewell child project with the Essex Healthy Schools Programme.</p>	March 2020	▶
<p><b>Q3 Update</b> - A meeting was held with Provide to identify opportunities to link the Livewell child project with the Healthy Schools Programme. A framework and a set of guidelines needs to be considered for Livewell child stating how a school can become a 'Livewell Child School' in conjunction with Enhanced Healthy Schools status building on the framework for schools to reflect on the relationship between health and achievement.</p> <p>Community 360 continue to facilitate relationships with the Livewell schools and wider community and all Livewell schools in the district are involved to varying degrees with their local care home.</p>	March 2020	▶
<p><b>Q4 Update</b> - Over the year, Braintree District Council has worked with partner organisations, local communities, businesses and schools to provide a variety of activities and initiatives to help support families and children to live well and lead healthy lives ranging from Xplorer events to healthy habits programme and play champions scheme which is extending into two more schools. Due to the closure of schools to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Livewell child project</p>	March 2020	✓







has adapted to provide information and advice through the Livewell child facebook page.		
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Improve the play experience at Great Notley Country Park and Halstead Leisure Centre by replacing the artificial pitches</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – Planning permission has been granted to replace the artificial pitch at Halstead Leisure Centre and the Football Foundations have agreed the funding for the project. We are currently awaiting the closure of the section 77 application to the Secretary of State to proceed.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – Planning permission has been granted to replace the artificial pitch at Halstead Leisure Centre and the Football Foundations have agreed the funding for the project. The legal team are now assigning the leases and conditions of the Football Foundation grant.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Planning permission has been granted to replace the artificial pitch at Halstead Leisure Centre and the Football Foundations have agreed the funding for the project. The assigning of the leases has been delayed due to the impact of coronavirus in shutting all leisure centres and the furloughing of staff involved in the project. This will be progressed once the situation improves and the end date of the project will be revised.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Coronavirus has impacted on this project delaying the assigning of the leases. As leisure centre staff are furloughed, consideration of revised end dates cannot take place until later in the year.</i>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – A new artificial pitch surface and associated equipment has been installed at Great Notley Country Park allowing players of all ages to enjoy the facilities.	<b>August 2019</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – A new artificial pitch surface and associated equipment has been installed at Great Notley Country Park allowing players of all ages to enjoy the facilities.	<b>August 2019</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - A new artificial pitch surface and associated equipment has been installed at Great Notley Country Park allowing players of all ages to enjoy the facilities.	<b>August 2019</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the second quarter</i>		
<b>(E) Work in partnership with local GP surgeries, the NHS and Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (MECCG) to develop a new modern healthcare facility in Sible Hedingham</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The Council continues to work with the NHS and MECCG to develop a modern healthcare facility, which will provide a new combined premises for existing surgeries in Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham. The design team have met with GPs and a final scheme design has been costed. A pre-app meeting has been held with the Planning Department where changes to the design were requested. This has pushed back the end date of the project and a change control has been processed to amend the end date to January 2020.	<b>January 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The Council continues to work with the NHS and MECCG to develop a modern healthcare facility, which will provide a new combined premises for existing surgeries in Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham. The design team continue to meet with GPs and a pre-app meeting has been held with the Planning Department which has resulted in a revised scheme. The revised scheme will be presented at a future cabinet meeting.	<b>January 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The Council continues to work with the NHS and MECCG to develop a modern healthcare facility, which will provide a new combined premises for existing surgeries in Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham. The design team have met with GPs and two pre-app meetings have been held with the Planning Department resulting in a revised scheme which has been costed and will need to go back to a future Cabinet meeting. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b>		

<i>This project is an ongoing project and will continue to be monitored in 2020/21</i>		
<b>€ Work with partners to improve emotional health and wellbeing and identify improvements to access mental health services for residents</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – Regular mental health workshops have been held in the second quarter bringing together partner organisations. The group are carrying out a mapping exercise to understand the gaps in support for children and young people. The Braintree Community Tree, a network of partner organisations providing support for people experiencing mental ill-health and/or related problems will be sending out leaflets in October providing information on a variety of support services available across the district on a range of matters. Officers have also met with Walk & Talk 4 Men which aims to give men a safe place to talk without judgement to avoid bottling up and suffering in silence. Braintree District Council will also be taking part in the national mental health campaign called 'Every Mind Matters' when it launches in October.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – Public Health England, in partnership with the NHS launched a national campaign called 'Every Mind Matters' in October aimed at empowering people to manage and improve their mental health. The Council has been actively supporting the campaign through social media by delivering a different self-help theme each week for seven weeks. The Braintree Community Tree, a network of partner organisations providing support for people experiencing mental ill-health and/or related problems sent out leaflets in October providing information on a variety of support services available across the district on a range of matters. Fortnightly meetings are now in place for Walk & Talk 4 men, a support group for men and their mental health which take place at Great Notley Country Park.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Over the year, regular mental health workshops have taken place bringing partner organisations together to understand the gaps in support for children and young people. Community Tree sent out leaflets in October providing information on a variety of support services available across the district on a range of matters and meetings have been held to look at the crisis café model to offer a safe, relaxing and friendly environment where people in crisis can go. The Council has also supported the national campaign 'Every Mind Matters', which has launched a range of new resources, designed specifically to help manage mental wellbeing during coronavirus, including a tailored Covid-19 Mind Plan, Covid-19 specific content for individuals and their loved ones, and support for specific mental wellbeing issues such as anxiety, stress, low mood and trouble sleeping.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Develop a Rough Sleeping Strategy setting out how we will provide specialist support for vulnerable people on the street</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – The Council's Homelessness Strategy addresses rough sleeping and has been renamed as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to comply with Government requirements. We are currently working in partnership with local authorities across Essex and CHESSE to provide a rough sleeper outreach service guiding rough sleepers to the help and support they need to make positive change.	<b>May 2019</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – The Council's Homelessness Strategy addresses rough sleeping and has been renamed as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to comply with Government requirements. We are currently working in partnership with local authorities across Essex and CHESSE to provide a rough sleeper outreach service guiding rough sleepers to the help and support they need to make positive change.	<b>May 2019</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The Council's Homelessness Strategy addresses rough sleeping and has been renamed as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to comply with Government requirements. We are currently working in partnership with local authorities across Essex and CHESSE to provide a rough sleeper outreach service guiding rough sleepers to the help and support they	<b>May 2019</b>	



need to make positive change. In response to the Governments request, the Housing team successfully found accommodation for 11 rough sleepers across our district in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus.		
<i>Status</i> <i>Project completed on target in the first quarter</i>		
<b>(E) Continue to raise awareness of child exploitation through the 'spot-it, stop-it' campaign</b>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> - Pubwatch meetings have been held to promote the 'spot-it, stop-it' campaign and to provide training. Despite encouraging landlords to attend by speaking to them at events and sending invites, no landlords attended. Officers are now considering how they can engage with landlords and promote the scheme more widely and deliver further training sessions.	March 2020	
<i>Q3 Update</i> - Further Pubwatch meetings have been attended to promote the 'spot-it, stop-it' campaign and to encourage staff to sign up for training. An exercise has been carried out jointly with the police where a Police Officer pretends to be an older man attempting to book a room with a young female. Discussions will be held at the next Child Sexual Exploitation Board to take forward any recommendations from the exercise	March 2020	
<i>Q4 Update</i> - Promotion of the scheme and training has been provided during the year through Pubwatch meetings in Braintree, Halstead and Witham. A draft awareness program to deliver a countywide approach to child exploitation is being developed with partners and Braintree District Council has provided feedback. Countywide training will continue into next year. In March, a member of staff within the Community Services Team received a commendation from Essex Police for her work and dedication to raising awareness through the 'spot-it stop-it' campaign.	March 2020	
<i>Status</i> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>€ Continue to promote events and provide opportunities that would benefit those living with dementia and their carers</b>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> – On-going activities include the three walks in Braintree, Witham and Halstead and the dementia friendly cinema at Halstead Empire who have also set up a workshop to form a Dementia Friendly Choir in partnership with the Big Sing and Colne View Care UK with the aim of giving a public performance in December. A dementia friendly cream tea took place at the Town Hall with 70 people attending and a meeting was held with the Community Rail Partnership at Braintree Railway station to look at ways of making the station more dementia friendly.	March 2020	
<i>Q3 Update</i> – A community information day was held at Braintree Museum with a number of partner organisations to share information, hold a dementia friends session and provide a demonstration of seated exercises. A dementia friendly Christmas Tea was held in December at the Town Hall with approximately 40 people in attendance.	March 2020	
<i>Q4 Update</i> - Events to support those living with dementia and their carers have taken place across the district in the last year including dementia friendly cinema, walk & talk groups, seated exercise classes, afternoon teas and a dementia friendly choir in partnership with the Big Sing and Colne View Care UK who provided a public performance in December. In the last quarter of the year, Braintree District Council have been working to make Braintree Station dementia friendly and it is hoped that a few small alterations and additions at the station will be enough to become the first station in Essex to be branded a dementia friendly station by the Alzheimer's Society.	March 2020	
<i>Status</i> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>In partnership with Fusion, encourage inactive over 60's to become active again by developing the Age well sessions at our local sports centres</b>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> – A meeting has taken place with Fusion to look at the age well sessions at the local sport centres. Fusion have proposed an agewell	March 2020	

programme from September to increase participation in activities for the over 60's.		
<b>Q3 Update</b> – Fusion have now introduced a number of agewell sessions into the leisure centres such as ACE weigh ins, racket ball, seated dance, walking football and chair based exercise classes. An agewell timetable has been created to show the classes suitable for people aged 60+.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Before lockdown closed the Leisure Centres, Fusion had introduced a number of agewell sessions into the leisure centres such as ACE weigh ins, racket ball, seated dance, walking football and chair based exercise classes. An agewell timetable had also been created to show the classes suitable for people aged 60+. Due to the closure of the Leisure Centres in combating the spread of coronavirus, Braintree District Council are working with Greenfields to distribute leaflets through care agencies on chair based exercises and gentle home exercises. We are also working with Active Essex and Active Braintree to put exercise classes on line.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>(E) Continue to support community groups to deliver local projects and activities through the Councillor Community Grant Scheme</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Eleven grants were awarded in August and September to the value of £10,087 bringing the total for the year to £14,987. These included contributions to Community Iron for the costs of a mental health first aid train the trainer course and the Rayne School PSA for traffic cones to help manage traffic safety in and around the school.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - Eighteen grants have been awarded in the third quarter bringing the total number to of grants issued to 37 and the total amount spent to £24,367 representing a third of the monies available.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - In the fourth quarter of the year, a further 32 grants have been awarded bringing the total number of grants issued throughout the year to 69. This amounts to £48,390.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>(E) Work with partners to raise awareness and identify ways to combat social isolation and loneliness</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - A bench in Braintree Town centre has become a Chat a While bench, encouraging residents and visitors to speak to each other in an effort to combat loneliness. The bench was inspired by similar schemes across the country and the hope is that it will get people talking. If the scheme proves successful, it will be extended to other areas across the district such as Witham and Halstead. A countywide social movement campaign called United in Kind launched in September to raise awareness of loneliness in Essex and to give people the means to take positive action directly and through their networks. We supported this through a two week social media campaign and a noticeboard in reception encouraging staff and the public to post acts of kindness.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - An awareness leaflet for Town and Parish Councils has been developed and distributed together with a community cohesion survey to enable us to build up a district wide profile of the services and groups available. Initial discussions have been taking place with regard to phase 2 of the United in Kind campaign 'Learn Together' which we aim to launch in the New Year. A program of events is currently being pulled together.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Meet up Mondays, which have been running in the district for over a year, now have seven venues. Meet up Mondays is a weekly meet up for people who want to meet and chat to new people. The venues offer free tea or coffee and a place to sit and chat for a couple of hours. As well as Mondays, there are Meet Up Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays running across the district. Braintree District Council has been supporting a	<b>March 2020</b>	

countywide social movement campaign called United in Kind which launched in September to raise awareness of loneliness in Essex. Working with communities, charities and voluntary groups the aim is to help people connect with friends, neighbours and strangers and overcome feelings of isolation. Due to the impact of the coronavirus, United in Kind have become part of the Community Shield befriending service along with Community 360.		
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Continue to work with key local groups to develop plans for a community facility in Witham</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – The Strategic Investment Team have appointed architects and an initial meeting was held in July to discuss the outcome of the consultation and the options appraisal report. A further meeting was held in September where land mass plans were presented. Additional surveys to be carried out include topographical, arboricultural and ecological and desk top contamination. A steering group meeting consisting of Braintree District Council, Witham Town Council and the two interested anchor tenants will take place in October.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – The first Maltings Lane steering group meeting took place with representatives from the Council, Witham Town Council, Ingletonwood (Architects), St Nicholas Church, Witham Boys Brigade and local residents in attendance. Updates were provided in relation to progress of the development to date and discussions took place regarding land mass plans and a number of issues/design features to consider. Ideas for the outdoor space were considered and an update was received in relation to further development around the site and the funding available for public art.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Braintree District Council has been working with local residents and community groups in shaping plans for a new community facility in Witham. The malting's lane steering group have met with representatives from the Council, Witham Town Council, Ingletonwood (Architects), St Nicholas Church, Witham Boys Brigade and local residents to consider how money funded from various section 106 contributions is best spent to develop the site and outdoor space. Current proposals include a main hall and smaller hall to cater for various activities including indoor sports, community events, meetings, children's activities, performance and music, a café and social area and changing rooms for the outdoor sports space. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, they are currently looking at holding virtual meetings to move this forward. This project will be continuing into next year.	March 2020	
<b>Status</b> <i>This project is an ongoing project and will continue to be monitored in 2020/21</i>		
<b>Promote volunteering opportunities to work with young people and promote activities and clubs available to young people in our district</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – A protocol to ensure recruitment, support and training for volunteers across all services has been agreed and will be used in promoting volunteering opportunities throughout the Council. United in Kind launched in September and they are recruiting Community Champions to work in local communities to support activities to combat isolation and loneliness. This is being promoted through the Essex Map, a website designed to bring communities together by promoting activities, clubs and volunteering in each area across Essex.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – A volunteering protocol to ensure recruitment, support and training for volunteers across all services was adopted in the third quarter and will be used in promoting volunteering opportunities throughout the Council. Planning has started for the 2020 Volunteer Awards, due to take place in June 2020.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Volunteers from across the district were recognised and celebrated at the Braintree District Volunteer awards evening in June 2019 for the positive difference they make in their community and in inspiring others	March 2020	




















which this time included new categories to recognise the contributions made by children and young people in the district. A volunteering protocol to ensure recruitment, support and training for volunteers across all services was adopted to be used in promoting volunteering opportunities throughout the Council. Essex Map, a website designed to bring communities together by promoting activities, clubs and volunteering was launched in 2019 and they are now working with local authorities and other key partners to co-ordinate and offer support, recruit volunteers and promote groups, services and activities for all those affected by the coronavirus pandemic.		
<i>Status</i> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		



## Finance and Performance

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Review our services and processes to ensure they continue to provide value for money</b>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> – An organisation wide review is taking place as part of our ongoing commitment to ensure all our services deliver value for money to our customers, preparing the Council for the financial challenges anticipated over the next few years. Each department has identified a number of projects with the aim to improve efficiency and reduce operating costs. These have now been considered and prioritised by the Authority's leadership team and a roadmap created. The projects are now progressing.	March 2020	▶
<i>Q3 Update</i> – An organisation wide review is taking place as part of our ongoing commitment to ensure all our services deliver value for money to our customers, preparing the Council for the financial challenges anticipated over the next few years. Each department has identified a number of projects with the aim to improve efficiency and reduce operating costs. Projects are progressing. A service review process has been developed and is currently being tested with a number of the projects.	March 2020	▶
<i>Q4 Update</i> - A service review process is now in place and has been tested on a number of projects. This provides a framework to support the Council in its commitment to modernise the way we work to ensure we continue to delivery high quality and value for money services. Reviews will continue and there has inevitably been impact on some projects with resources redirected or homeworking. The ongoing projects take on greater importance given the financial challenges anticipated over the next few years and we will continue to monitor and report on significant projects.	March 2020	✓
<i>Status</i> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Develop our commercial programme to generate income that can be reinvested in front line services</b>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> – This second quarter has allowed us to get a much better understanding of our markets across sponsorship, advertising and the conference centre. We continue to grow in these areas and adapt our offer, identifying opportunities to bring additional income from these streams. The Essex Commercial Network now represents almost all Essex authorities and is allowing us to look for opportunities to share and trade services, using	March 2020	▶

examples such as the shared payroll service which is now well embedded and the shared sales resource, which continues in to 2020.		
<b>Q3 Update</b> – We are continuing to increase our income from advertising, sponsorship and the conference facilities at the Enterprise Centre. The Essex Commercial Network now has membership from 11 Essex authorities and the Local Government Association and is allowing us to look for opportunities to share and trade services, including our own Shared Payroll Service.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Commercial income took a hit in February and March in the lead up to lockdown, particularly across our conference income line. Despite this income increased by 40% across the three commercially controlled services of advertising, sponsorship and the conference centre against 2018/19 figures. The Essex Commercial Network now has membership from 11 Essex authorities and the Local Government Association and is allowing us to look for opportunities to share and trade services.	March 2020	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Identify and progress investment opportunities that help us to deliver our corporate strategy whilst providing a return on investment to strengthen our financial independence</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – We are continuing to work with Marshgate to develop 20 acres of the site at Horizon 120. Any further investment opportunities are currently on hold due to a cautious approach being adopted in considering any new investment opportunities in the district owing to Brexit uncertainty and the potential negative impact on the market.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – An additional investment in pooled funds of £2m was agreed in principle by the Strategic Investment Group. £1m was placed in the Kames Diversified Fund in October 2019. We are continuing our work with Marshgate to develop 20 acres of the site at Horizon 120. Any further investment opportunities are currently on hold due to a cautious approach being adopted in considering any new investment opportunities in the district owing to Brexit uncertainty and the potential negative impact on the market.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - £1million of the additional investment in pooled funds of £2m agreed in principle by the Strategic Investment Group was placed in the Kames Diversified Fund in October 2019. However, the remaining £1million has been held in abeyance due to uncertainties in the market caused initially by Brexit and more recent by the coronavirus pandemic. We are continuing our work with Marshgate to develop 20 acres of the site at Horizon 120. Any further investment opportunities are currently on hold due to a cautious approach being adopted in considering any new investment opportunities in the district due to uncertainties in the market as outlined earlier	March 2020	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<b>Respond to the anticipated Government consultation on its proposed 75% Business Rate retention scheme and the Fair Funding Review which will impact on the Council's finances from April 2020</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – The fair funding review and 75% business rates retention has been delayed by Government until 2020/21. This project has therefore been cancelled and will be set up again once we know how and when Government will be proceeding.	March 2020	
<b>Q3 Update</b> – The fair funding review and 75% business rates retention has been delayed by Government until 2020/21. This project has therefore been cancelled and will be set up again once we know how and when Government will be proceeding.	March 2020	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The fair funding review and 75% business rates retention has been delayed by Government until after 2020/21. This project has therefore been cancelled and will be set up again once we know how and when Government will be proceeding.	March 2020	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project cancelled in the first quarter of the year as this was reliant on the Government releasing information which they subsequently delayed until 2020/21. Once we know how Government will be proceeding, a further project will be scoped and set up.</i>		

<b>Continue to identify improvements in customer focused services using the Customer Service Excellence Standard as a framework</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The Customer Service Excellence assessment will be taking place on the 5th, 6th and 7th November looking at consultation and engagement, satisfaction surveys, customer service standards, how we improve our written, verbal and web based information, benchmarking and best practice and how we improve our delivery of service. The programme for the assessment has been drawn up.	<b>December 2019</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The Customer Service Excellence assessment took place on the 5th, 6th and 7th November looking at consultation and engagement, satisfaction surveys, customer service standards, how we improve our written, verbal and web based information, benchmarking and best practice and how we improve our delivery of service. Braintree District Council has successfully retained the accreditation retaining three areas of compliance plus and achieving compliance plus in four new areas.	<b>December 2019</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The Customer Service Excellence assessment took place on the 5th, 6th and 7th November looking at consultation and engagement, satisfaction surveys, customer service standards, how we improve our written, verbal and web based information, benchmarking and best practice and how we improve our delivery of service. Braintree District Council has successfully retained the accreditation retaining three areas of compliance plus and achieving compliance plus in four new areas.	<b>December 2019</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the third quarter</i>		
<b>Implement the Council's discretionary Business Rate relief scheme for independent retail businesses</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The new retail rate scheme was approved by Full Council in February 2019. The new relief was awarded to eligible retail businesses and included in the business rate bills for 2019/20. Any further businesses meeting the criteria will be assessed throughout the year and the reduced rate applied.	<b>May 2019</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The new retail rate scheme was approved by Full Council in February 2019. The new relief was awarded to eligible retail businesses and included in the business rate bills for 2019/20. Any further businesses meeting the criteria will be assessed throughout the year and the reduced rate applied.	<b>May 2019</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The new retail rate scheme was approved by Full Council in February 2019. The new relief was awarded to eligible retail businesses and included in the business rate bills for 2019/20. Any further businesses meeting the criteria will be assessed throughout the year and the reduced rate applied.	<b>May 2019</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the first quarter</i>		
<b>Expand our online booking and payment systems enabling residents to book and pay for more services through our website.</b>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - Integration mapping has taken place and issues highlighted from this have now been resolved. The online form has been built and the online booking and payment system for pest control will go live in the third quarter. The team are also looking at online booking systems for the Enterprise Centre and Town Hall.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The team have been working on a number of online booking and payment systems including pest control and the Town Hall. The team have also been developing a new website including a booking and payment system, which will go live in the new year for the Enterprise Centre allowing customers to book and pay for the conference facilities on line.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Q4 Update</b> - The online booking and payment systems are now set up for the pest control service and Enterprise Centre. Due to the coronavirus, changes have been made to the way services are currently operating and therefore the new online booking and payment system will go live when normal services resume.	<b>March 2020</b>	
<b>Status</b> <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		












Develop a digital platform enabling residents to access health information, initiatives and support to improve their health and wellbeing		
<b>Q2 Update</b> – Following the unsuccessful bid to fund the project from the Government ‘trailblazer’ programme, we are looking at other applications that are similar to what we want to develop. Piloting has taken place with different apps to see how they can be used to change the behaviours of users leading to healthier lives.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q3 Update</b> – We are continuing to look at other applications that are similar to what we want to develop. Piloting has taken place with different apps to see how they can be used to change the behaviours of users leading to healthier lives.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q4 Update</b> - This project was originally set up as the Council had applied for funding from the Government ‘trail blazer’ programme to develop an app that residents could access for information on health initiatives and support to improve their health and wellbeing. As the Council were unsuccessful in securing funding, alternative digital platforms continue to be explored and piloted. The end date of the project has been extended from March 2020 until September 2020 to allow more time for the development of an app as the project has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.	September 2020	▶
<b>Status</b> <i>Project has been extended until September 2020 to allow more time for the development of an app as the project has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic</i>		







## Overall Strategy and Direction

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>(E) Continue to deliver projects under the District Investment Strategy to achieve better outcomes for the district and a return for the taxpayers’ purse by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in partnership to improve health provision across the district</li> <li>Facilitating the need for housing by providing homes and supporting infrastructure</li> <li>Improving our most congested roads and journeys across the district</li> <li>Planning for growth by providing jobs delivering increased opportunities for new business and employment</li> <li>Delivering investment opportunities that support growth and provide a return for the District Council</li> </ul>		
<b>Q2 Update</b> - The Council continues to work with the NHS, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and other healthcare partners to develop modern healthcare facilities in Sible Hedingham, the Newlands Centre in Witham and Braintree Town Centre as part of the Manor Street regeneration.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q3 Update</b> - The Council continues to work with the NHS, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and other healthcare partners to develop modern healthcare facilities in Sible Hedingham, the Newlands Centre in Witham and Braintree Town Centre as part of the Manor Street regeneration.	March 2020	▶
<b>Q4 Update</b> - Throughout the year, the council has continued to work with the NHS, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and other healthcare partners to develop modern healthcare facilities in Sible Hedingham, the Newlands Centre in Witham and Braintree Town Centre as part of the Manor Street regeneration. Further projects will be set up next year regarding the support required to deliver improved health care facilities across the district	March 2020	✓
<b>Status</b>		



<i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> - The Manor Street regeneration includes the provision of 35 new homes and approval has been granted by Cabinet to develop up to seven Council owned sites.	March 2020	
<i>Q3 Update</i> - The Manor Street regeneration includes the provision of 35 new homes and approval has been granted by Cabinet to develop up to seven Council owned sites.	March 2020	
<i>Q4 Update</i> - In the year, the Planning service agreed the development of 2,000 homes including some major applications which will provide supporting infrastructure. Cabinet have also agreed to the development of up to seven Council owned sites	March 2020	
<i>Status</i>		
<i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> – Work continues on a number of projects in the district reported under the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure section such as the A120 Millennium Slip roads and improvements to Springwood Drive roundabout. Government are set to make key decisions in the Autumn on the future investment in major roads.	March 2020	
<i>Q3 Update</i> – Work continues on a number of projects in partnership with Highways England and Essex County Council reported under the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure section such as the A120 Millennium Slip roads, land west of Panfield Lane and improvements to Springwood Drive roundabout. The Council have provided a response to the consultation in relation to further options on the A12 between junctions 23 and 25.	March 2020	
<i>Q4 Update</i> - Work has continued throughout the year on a number of projects in partnership with Highways England and Essex County Council reported under the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure section such as the A120 Millennium slip roads, land west of Panfield Lane, improvements to Springwood Drive roundabout and securing improvements to the A12 and A120	March 2020	
<i>Status</i>		
<i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> – A number of projects and actions are underway to ensure delivery of the Braintree Plan for Growth to provide jobs such as developing the first 20 acres of Horizon 120 and approving the planning applications for grid serve and the Construction Innovation Centre.	March 2020	
<i>Q3 Update</i> – A number of projects and actions are underway to ensure delivery of the Braintree Plan for Growth to provide jobs such as developing the first 20 acres of Horizon 120 and approving the planning applications for grid serve and the Construction Innovation Centre. The regeneration of Manor Street will commence in the new year and Kier Regional Building Eastern will be working closely with local subcontractors to create a range of job opportunities for those living in the area.	March 2020	
<i>Q4 Update</i> - A number of projects and actions have been carried out throughout the year to ensure delivery of the Braintree Plan for Growth to provide jobs such as developing the first 20 acres of Horizon 120 and approving the planning applications for grid serve and the Construction Innovation Centre. The regeneration of Manor Street started in March 2020 and Kier Regional Building Eastern are working closely with local subcontractors creating a range of job opportunities for those living in the area	March 2020	
<i>Status</i>		
<i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i>		
<i>Q2 Update</i> – There are a number of projects reported on throughout this report that provide an update on current investment opportunities under the District Investment Strategy. As and when new opportunities arise, projects will be set up accordingly.	March 2020	
<i>Q3 Update</i> – There are a number of projects reported on throughout this report that provide an update on current investment opportunities under the District Investment Strategy. As and when new opportunities arise, projects will be set up accordingly.	March 2020	

<p><b>Q4 Update</b> - There are a number of projects reported on throughout this report that provide an update on investment opportunities under the District Investment Strategy</p>	<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	
<p><i>Status</i>  <i>Project completed on target in the fourth quarter</i></p>		
<p><b>Work with partner authorities (Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council) and other public and private sector organisations to plan for and enable sustainable growth in homes and jobs in the north Essex area</b></p>		
<p><b>Q2 Update</b> – Work with Tendring and Colchester continues on the Joint section 1 Local Plan. Worked with Essex County Council on Housing Infrastructure Bids (HIF) to support the development of Garden Communities and are awaiting outcomes. Positive work continues with Uttlesford in the lead up to their Local Plan examination. Essex wide work also underway on a number of evidence documents and guidance including the Essex wide Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMs) study.</p>	<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	
<p><b>Q3 Update</b> – Braintree has been working with Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council to produce a North Essex Economic Strategy which will provide a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation in the overall economic prosperity of the North Essex area. The Strategy received approval at Cabinet in December and an action plan will now be developed to guide the delivery of the key actions.</p>	<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	
<p><b>Q4 Update</b> - Throughout the year, Braintree has worked with Tendring and Colchester on the Joint section 1 Local Plan which was submitted to the Planning Inspector in January. Work has also taken place with Essex County Council on Housing Infrastructure Bids (HIF) to support the development of Garden Communities. Essex wide work has also taken place on a number of evidence documents and guidance including the Essex wide Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMs) study. The North Essex Economic Strategy was agreed at Cabinet in December providing a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation in the overall economic prosperity of the North Essex area. An action plan is being developed to guide the delivery of the key actions</p>	<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	
<p><i>Status</i>  <i>Project is on target and progressing towards the end date of the project in March 2020</i></p>		

<b>First Quarter Performance Management Report 2020/21</b>		<b>Agenda No: 6</b>
<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Finance and Performance Management</b>	
<b>Corporate Outcome:</b>	<b>A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services</b>	
<b>Report prepared by:</b>	<b>Tracey Headford – Business Solutions Manager</b>	
<b>Background Papers:</b>		<b>Public Report</b>
First Quarter Performance Management Report 2020/21		<b>Key Decision: No</b>
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b></p> <p>The Council normally provides a report to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the first quarter (April to June 2020) in relation to our Annual Plan which sets out key activities and measures to check our performance against the priorities of the Corporate Strategy 2020-24.</p> <p>Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Plan for 2020/21 was amended to ensure it was able to reflect the support required to help our residents, communities and businesses recover and this was agreed at Cabinet in July.</p> <p>Therefore, progress against activities in the Annual Plan for 2020/21 will commence from the second quarter and the first quarter report will focus on how the Council has dealt with the unprecedented challenge brought by Covid-19 with updates included for any projects that have continued in the first quarter of the year.</p> <p>This performance report addresses what has been achieved in the first three months of the financial year under our new Corporate Strategy themes and also looks at what we need to do to assist in the recovery of our district.</p> <p><b>Financial Performance</b></p> <p>The following summarises the financial position for the year as projected at this first quarter (Q1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overall adverse variance is projected for the year of £919,000 (+6%) against budget.</li> <li>• Across all services staffing budgets are forecast to be underspent by £425,000; however, after allowance for the corporate efficiency target of £300,000 and provision for a higher than anticipated pay award, this results in a net projected overspend of £10,000.</li> <li>• Other expenditure is projected to be over budget by £396,000.</li> <li>• Income is projected to be under achieved by £513,000.</li> <li>• Within this overall variance the estimated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the revenue account is a net shortfall of £3.348 million, against which the Council has received funding from Government of £1.894 million, leaving a net shortfall</li> </ul>		



due to COVID-19 of £1.454 million.
<b>Recommended Decision:</b>
Members of the Performance Management Board are asked to note the report
<b>Purpose of Decision:</b>
To inform Members of the performance of the Council.

<b>Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail</b>	
<b>Financial:</b>	An assessment of the Council's financial position against the agreed budget for the year is provided and is based on income and expenditure during the year.
<b>Legal:</b>	There are no legal issues raised by this report.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	There are no safeguarding issues raised by this report.
<b>Equalities/Diversity</b>	Equalities and diversity issues are considered fully in the Council's key projects, where appropriate.
<b>Customer Impact:</b>	There has been some impact due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the report will include detail of the Council's response. Information is included on how we intend to support residents, communities and businesses moving forward. A summary of complaints received each quarter, analysed by outcome (justified, partially justified or not justified) is provided.
<b>Environment and Climate Change:</b>	The Enhancing our Environment priority has a number of actions that are designed to have a positive impact on the environment and climate change.
<b>Consultation/Community Engagement:</b>	Consultation is considered fully in the Council's key projects, as appropriate.
<b>Risks:</b>	Risks regarding the assumptions used in determining the predicted financial outturn for the year are identified.
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	Tracey Headford
<b>Designation:</b>	Business Solutions Manager
<b>Ext. No.</b>	2442
<b>E-mail:</b>	tracey.headford@braintree.gov.uk

# FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

1ST APRIL 2020 TO 30TH JUNE 2020

## Contents

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## **Purpose of the report**

The Council normally provides a report to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the first quarter in relation to our Annual Plan which sets out key activities and measures to check our performance against the priorities of the Corporate Strategy 2020-24. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Plan for 2020/21 was amended to ensure it was able to reflect the support required to help our residents, communities and businesses recover.

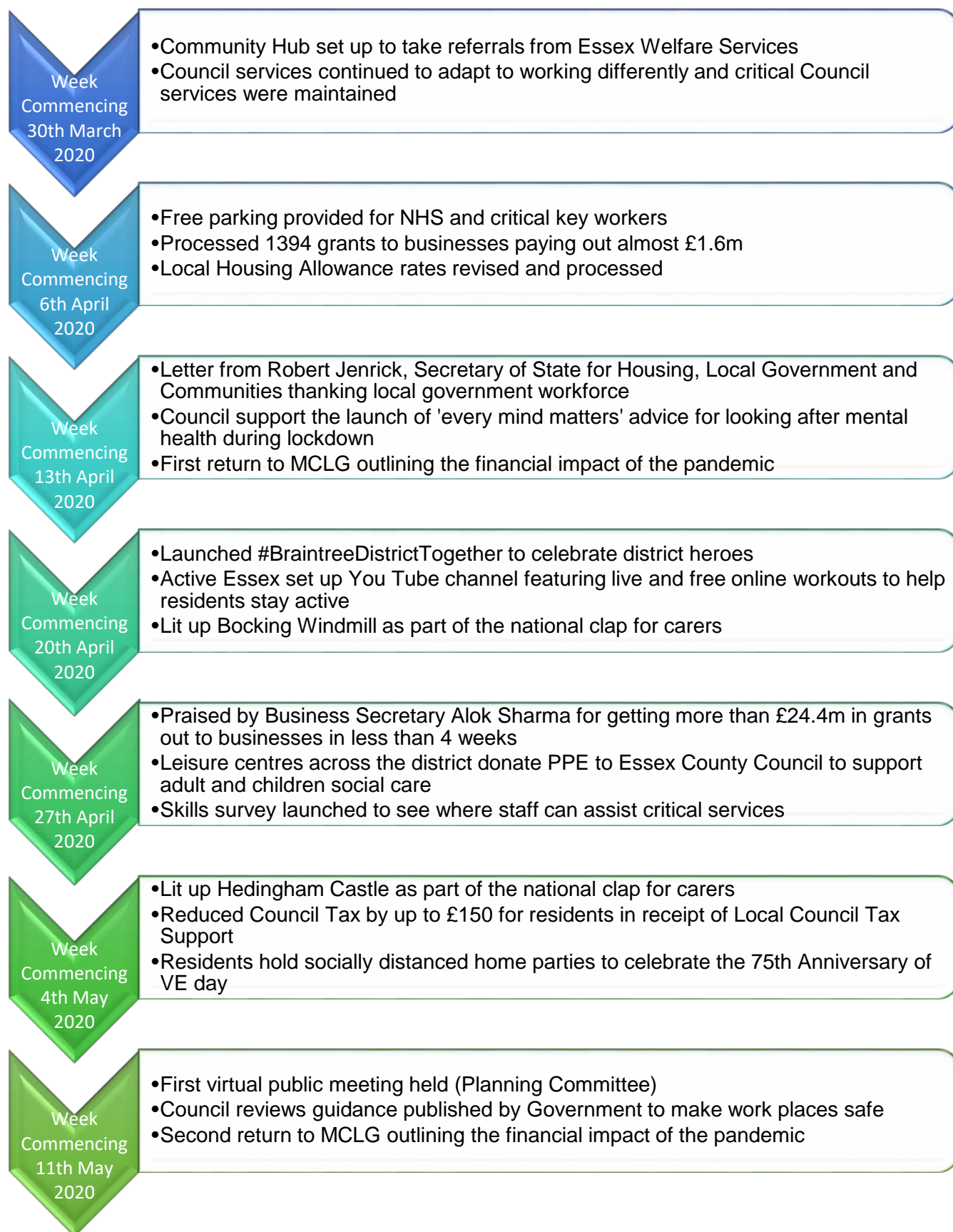
The Annual Plan 2020/21 was presented to Cabinet in July and progress against the activities will commence from the second quarter. Rather than not providing a report, the first quarter will be reported differently, focusing on how the Council has dealt with the unprecedented challenge brought by Covid-19. Updates are still included for any projects that have continued in the first quarter of the year. Further detail is also provided in relation to complaints, our people, health and safety and our finances.

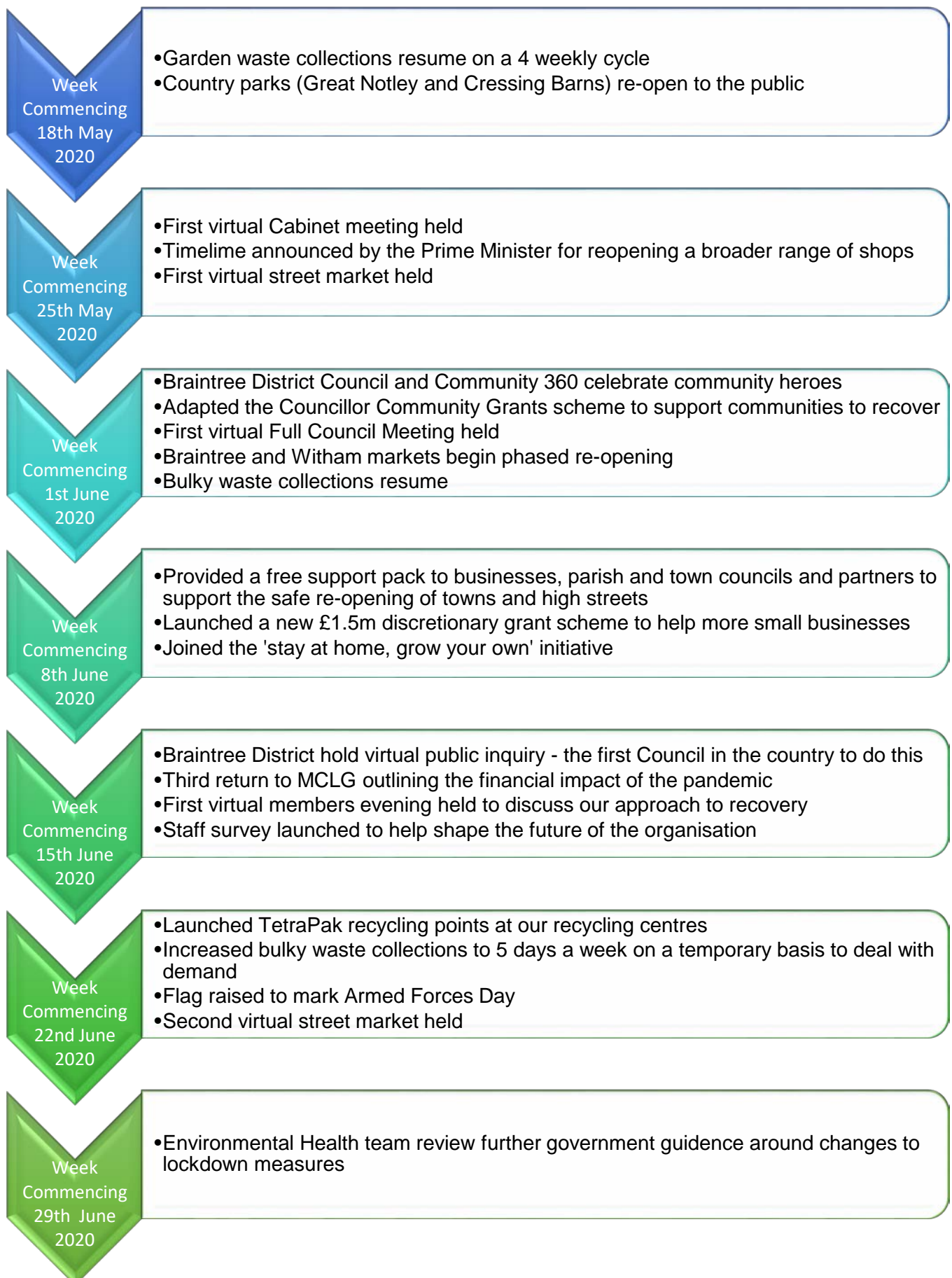
Like many councils across the UK, Braintree District Council has been working to address the challenges brought by Covid-19. From the onset, we have responded as quickly as possible to support local businesses, the voluntary and community sector and local residents. The Council needed to change the way it delivered services and has dealt with the response whilst keeping services running as much as possible.

Throughout this report, there are examples of how the Council have reviewed the way in which they work to ensure continuation of services. Cross departmental working has been the key to the success of responding to the needs of residents, communities and businesses as well as embracing change and new technology to drive the transformation of the organisation so that we can effectively respond to events and plan for the future.

In April, The council agreed our new Corporate Strategy for 2020 -2024. This performance report will address what has been achieved in the first three months of the financial year under our new Corporate Strategy themes and also looks at what we need to do to assist in the recovery of our district.

## Summary Timeline of District response







# CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES



## **Local Plan**

In May 2020, the Planning Inspector followed up his examination with a letter on the joint section one of the Local Plan shared by Braintree District Council, Tendring District Council and Colchester Borough Council advising that to take the plan forward, there are two options:

1. To propose and consult on main modifications to remove the Colchester/Braintree borders and west of Braintree Garden Community proposals for the plan or,
2. Withdraw the plan from examination

Despite the Planning Inspector finding that two of the proposed Garden Communities are not currently deliverable, he has said that the Plan can be made sound subject to modifications.

The council has asked the Planning Inspector for the full list of modifications so we can consider the proposed changes and what it means for our district. A future meeting of Full Council will be arranged to discuss the options and decide on the next stage of the process which could include consultation on the Inspectors proposed changes to the Plan.

## **Pedestrianisation of Braintree Town Centre**

The pedestrianisation of Braintree Town Centre has seen the first phase of construction works completed increasing the disabled parking spaces to 17 for people to use when visiting the town centre. The next phase of works in Fairfield Road have also started which include resurfacing of the footways and carriageways, as well as a new bus gate incorporating a new cycle route for cyclists. Other works include street lighting, drainage and traffic signal improvements. The works started in June and are expected to take up to 11 weeks to complete. The Council continues to work behind the scenes on the final design for the main High Street area which will be shared with the public when finalised.

## **Victoria Square redevelopment**

The Victoria Square redevelopment in Manor Street has also commenced. Early access to the government operating standards ensured the site was Covid-19 safe and compliant to allow works to continue in line with the programme.

## Street Markets

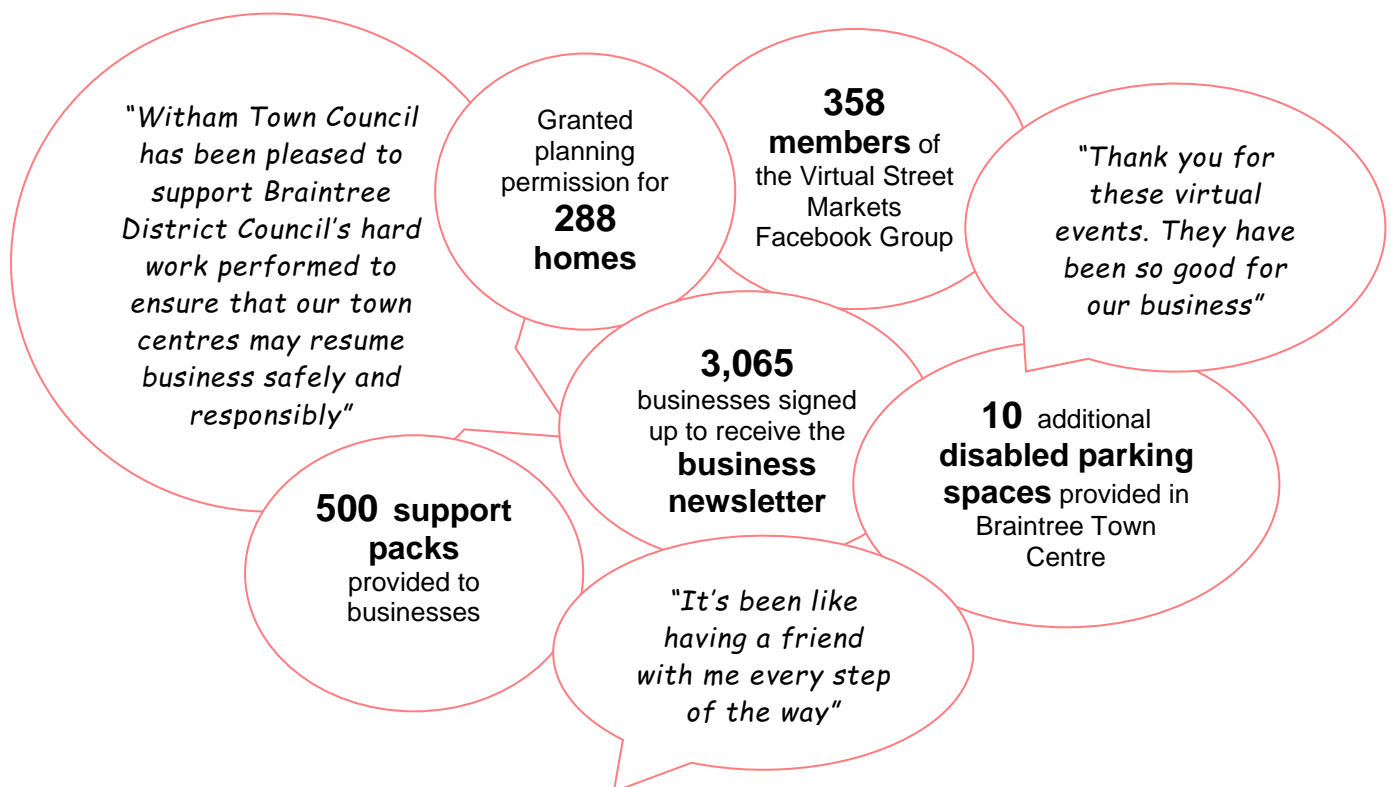
Whilst some areas such as street markets were forced to stop to tackle Covid-19, it didn't mean that the council had forgotten the vital role street markets have played in bringing communities together and increasing footfall in our town centres. To ensure the success of the street markets continued, a new venture was launched and at the end of May, the council hosted their first virtual street market providing traders with a new online outlet to showcase their goods and interact with customers. This new venture is hosted through Facebook connecting residents with local small independent traders to keep the district's street market community spirit alive. Two virtual street markets have been held in the first quarter and these are set to continue.

## Weekly Markets

The outdoor weekly markets continued to provide access to essential goods throughout lockdown and the wider market re-opened in a phased approach with changes to layouts to allow space around individual stalls for the safety of traders and customers.

## Support to Town Centres

When the Government announced that non-essential retail could re-open from the 15<sup>th</sup> June, the council worked with local retail businesses, parish and town councils as well as partners to help support the re-opening of town centres. Measures were put in place to help people shop safely including floor markings and signage to remind people of how to shop safely and responsibly. Local businesses were provided with a support pack on the government guidance to ensure a safe re-opening of their business including posters to display, indoor and outdoor floor stickers have also been provided free of charge. The council will continue to work with everyone and monitor the impacts on our town centres and high streets to identify any other measures that may need to be put in place.



# ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT



## **Parks and Open Spaces**

At the beginning of lockdown, the Council closed all play areas and outdoor gyms in line with government guidance. Parks and open spaces remained open and the horticultural team worked hard to maintain these areas ensuring they were kept clean and tidy to allow residents to use their local area and stay active. The country parks at Cressing Temple and Great Notley were closed by Essex County Council but re-opened in line with government guidance in May, however, play equipment remained out of use. Great Notley continued with their annual maintenance programme to parts of the play trail whilst the play areas were not in use.

## **Recycling**

It has always been difficult to recycle food and beverage drinks cartons as they are made of a mixture of materials and with there being no mechanical way to separate these items from our recycling, it was becoming less cost effective to selectively remove these items by hand. In June, the Council agreed arrangements to install and maintain food and drink carton recycling bins at a number of recycling sites across the district allowing residents to continue recycling food and beverage drink cartons.

## **Waste collection services**

A number of waste services were suspended and brought back in when safe to do so. Braintree District Council worked hard to ensure that refuse, clear sacks and food waste collections could continue but due to social distancing measures put in place, a decision was made to temporarily suspend garden waste and bulky waste collections. Both services started reinstatement in June with garden waste being collected on a monthly basis to begin with. Due to the increase in demand for bulky waste collections, this service has been temporarily increased from three days a week to five days.

With the closure of council owned buildings, customers were no longer able to collect recycling sacks and the service saw a significant increase in requests for clear sacks dealing with up to 1000 requests a week. The Council responded well to this by redeploying staff to ensure all requests were dealt with as quickly as possible. The annual clear sack deliveries commenced in June and will continue through to early October.

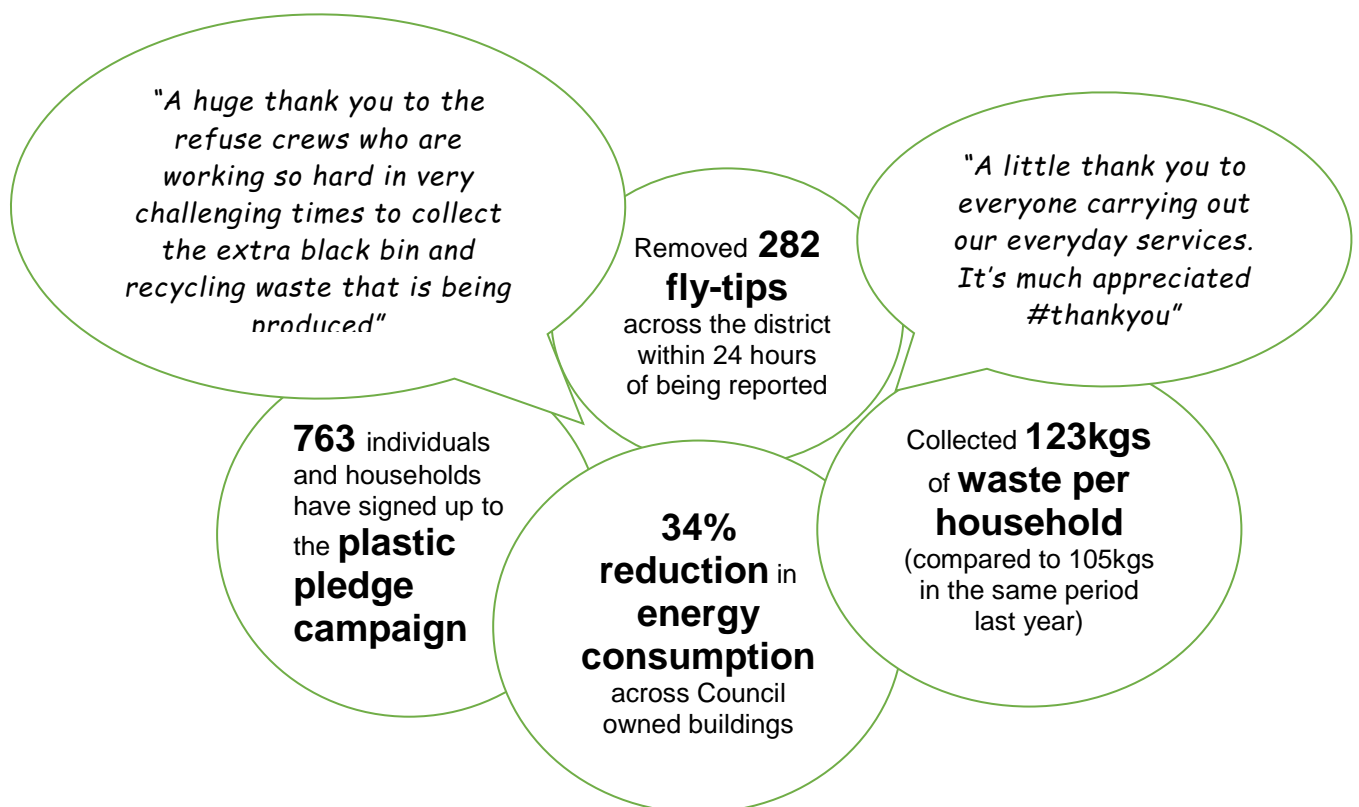
The Operations team also saw an increase in the number of fly tips across the district due

to local recycling centres being closed and dealt with 282 fly tips in the first quarter of the year, an increase of 35% compared to the same period last year. The Council's enforcement team carry out investigations of each fly tip and will issue a fixed penalty notice and proceed to prosecution if evidence is found of who committed the offence. There are currently 10 fly-tipping prosecution cases being progressed.

### Climate change

Work has continued on reviewing the Climate Change Local Strategy although the climate change action group suspended meetings at the beginning of lockdown. Like everywhere else, there has been a positive impact on pollution levels across the district due to the reduction in the number of vehicles on the road during the lockdown period and we will look to embed some of the changes and new approaches introduced during these times in the strategy.

The Council have also continued to promote the Essex plastic pledge campaign to reduce plastic waste by making a few simple changes. Across all authorities in Essex, Braintree has received the highest number of individual pledges and the second highest number of household pledges. The campaign will now run until March 2021 rather than to the original end date of December 2020.



# SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES



## **Community Hub**

In the first few weeks of lockdown, Braintree District Council set up the Community Hub dealing with referrals from the Essex Welfare Service for people who were vulnerable and shielding and required assistance with shopping and prescriptions because they did not have any nearby friends or family available. The Community Services team (including Community Transport, Health and Wellbeing and Braintree Town Hall staff) supported the virtual Community Hub and in the first quarter, they have dealt with 323 referrals and contacted a further 1,117 individuals deemed extremely vulnerable.

The hub referred residents to local community groups or the Community Transport team to help carry out tasks and provide residents with access to vital food and medicine supplies. The Community Hub also made befriending calls to check on people's welfare and alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation as well as signposting and offering support where required. For those unable to be contacted via phone, doorstep welfare checks were carried out.

The Community Transport team also distributed 182 food parcels from the foodbank for those that needed them and collected 88 unwanted Government food parcels from those who did not require them – to donate to the foodbank as well as collecting and delivering shopping and prescriptions. The Community Transport team also transported 124 people to medical appointments.

## **Councillors' Community Grant Scheme**

In supporting communities to recover from the pandemic, the council has adapted the Councillors' Community Grant scheme to focus on recovery from coronavirus. The scheme has also been changed to allow grants to be awarded to some of the newly formed groups that may not have a governing document or formal structure in place allowing community groups to continue to support their communities throughout the next stages of COVID response.

## **Stay at Home, Grow Your Own**

To support the health and wellbeing of residents in the Braintree District, a new community project, funded under the Livewell campaign, was launched to encourage people to 'Stay at Home, Grow Your Own'. In partnership with Abberton Rural Training, 150 free planting starter kits were given away containing everything needed to start growing small food items

at home.

### Rough Sleeping

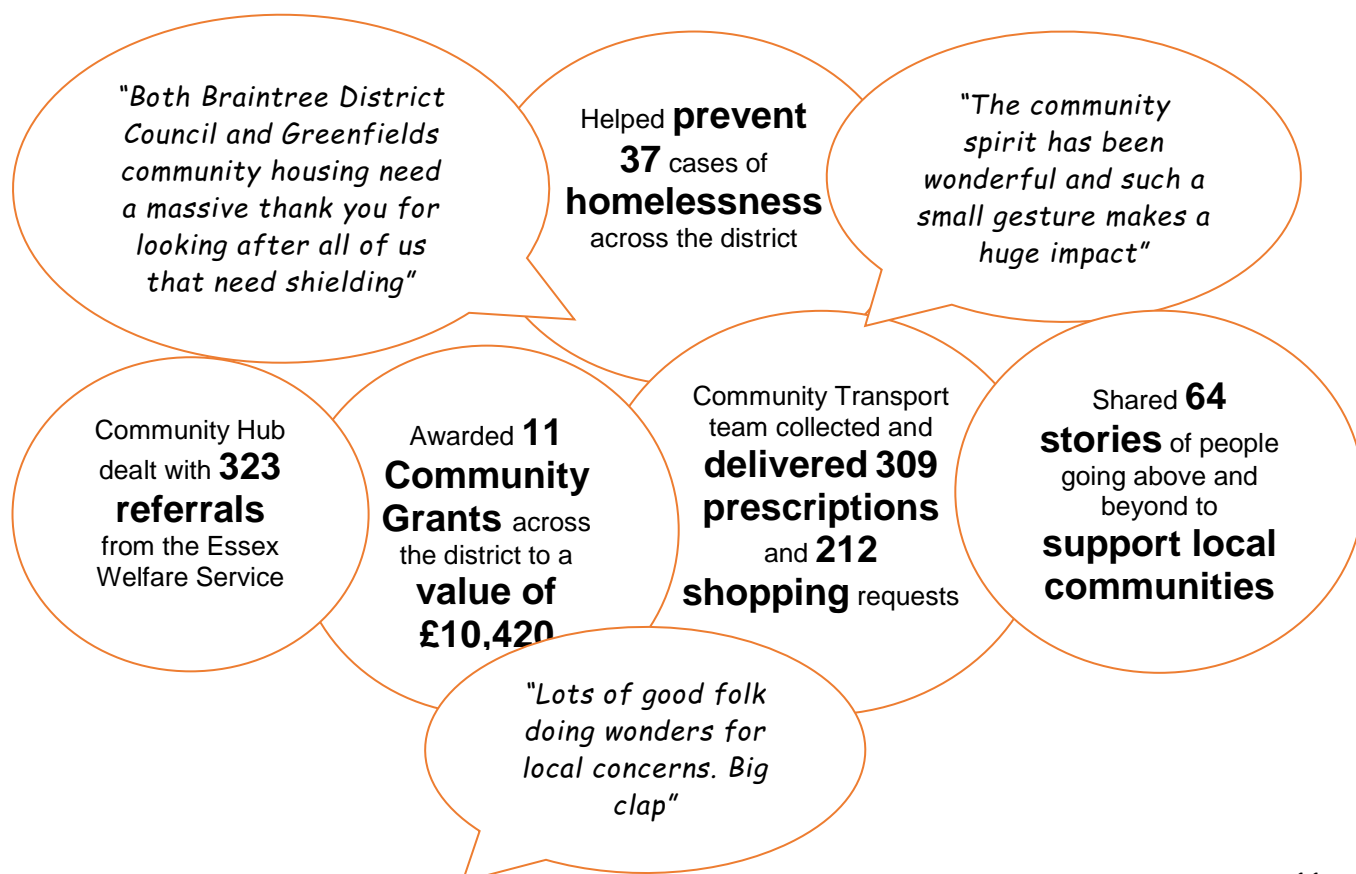
At the beginning of lockdown, local authorities were asked to urgently accommodate all rough sleepers and the Council responded to this quickly providing accommodation to people who were rough sleeping in the district. In total, 20 people who were or would have been sleeping rough have been accommodated. The Housing service have been working to meet the support needed and look at more permanent accommodation and opportunities to access support to help with retention of tenancies.

### #BraintreeDistrictTogether

In April, the Council launched a campaign using the hashtag #BraintreeDistrictTogether to celebrate and say thank you to residents, community groups and local businesses who were going above and beyond carrying out fantastic acts of kindness to support their local community during the pandemic. The campaign has been recognised as good practice by the LGA for celebrating the valuable contribution people are making across the district. #BraintreeDistrictTogether has been widely shared across our social media platforms and the stories have been seen by over 349,370 people.

### Livewell

Following the closure of leisure centres across the district, the Livewell website has been updated to assist people in continuing with exercise programmes and introduced home based exercise videos for people who were shielding to allow them to stay active and keep fit. As well as providing details on physical health, information and advice on mental health is being provided to support people to look after their emotional health and wellbeing whilst at home during the pandemic including signposting to a number of support services available.





# PROMOTING PROSPERITY



## **Horizon 120**

Construction works on the roads at the new Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park in Great Notley is underway with Balfour Beatty taking the lead on the build of two access roads and a central spine road on the business park site. The planning for an entrance off the Cuckoo Way roundabout, a second access point from the A131 to the south and a central spine road was agreed at a meeting of the Planning Committee in February 2020. Horizon 120 is already attracting the attention of well-established companies keen to relocate their growing businesses to the future-proofed site.

## **I-Construct**

The Council has secured the European Regional Development funding to progress the delivery of the construction phase of the project. The new Innovation Centre will provide a focal point for business support, job creation and product development in the construction sector. A paper will be presented to Cabinet in the coming months to award the construction contract enabling the project to proceed with in line with project timescales.

## **Tourism**

We never thought we would be encouraging people not to visit the Braintree district, but that is how the first quarter of the year started. A promotional video was created encouraging people to stay at home and the new Visit Braintree District website was used to provide updates and supported businesses by running promotions and hosting events on their facebook pages. Residents were asked to share their photos of the district to virtually reflect on all the things people love and miss about the district. When places started to re-open, information on changes and guidance on re-openings to keep everyone safe was published on the Visit Braintree District website and social media.

## **Business Engagement**

Business engagement has been a priority for Braintree District Council for some time and it has prioritised establishing the right channels to reach its audience. One of their primary communications channels is a closed Facebook Group for businesses in the district. During the pandemic, the facebook group has seen an increase of 193% in the number of members. The group is used to share information from central government, the council and advise of training and funding opportunities available locally. It also provided a place where local business people could seek support from other local business people,

many dealing with the same sorts of issues as they struggled with the challenges posed by the pandemic on their business.

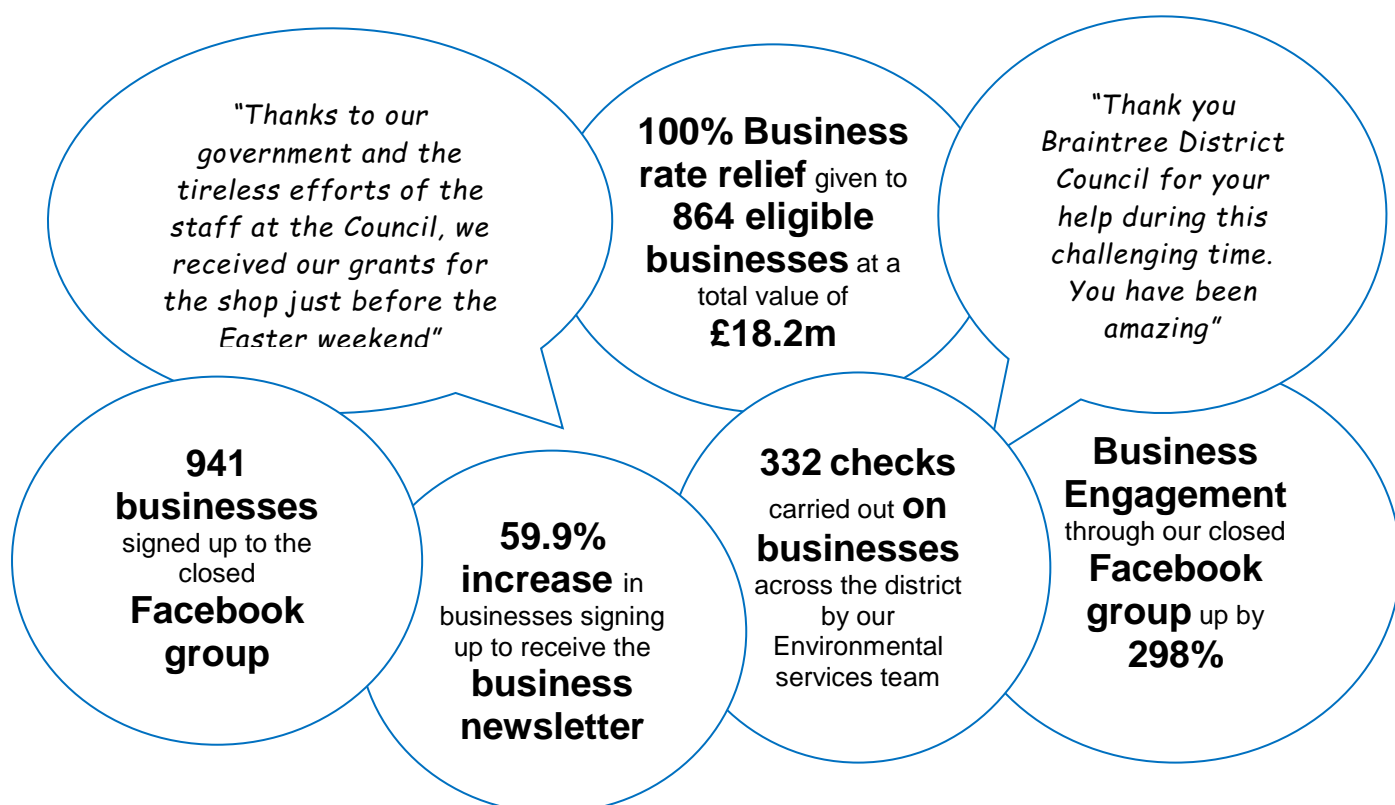
Our Economic Development team have also provided additional business support to over 400 businesses across the district by referring them to the Best Growth Hub who have been running diagnostic checks with businesses to identify other programmes of support for them.

### Business Grants

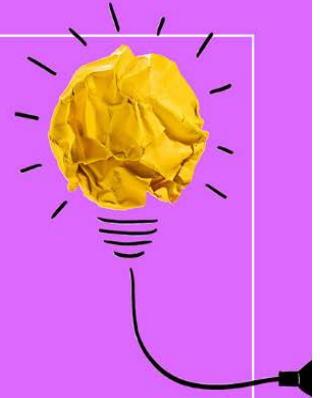
When the government announced the support package for businesses, the council sent out 2,557 application forms to eligible businesses and almost 1600 were received in the first couple of weeks. Of these, the Council processed 1394 grants to business with the council paying out almost £16m before Easter.

Further discretionary grant schemes were launched to help more small businesses impacted by Covid-19. The additional funding supported small businesses, micro businesses and charities with ongoing fixed property-related costs such as rental costs allowing them to apply for grants between £2,000 and £10,000. As at the end of the first quarter, the Council has processed grants to 2,392 businesses paying out £27.955m.

Further support is being provided to businesses by working closely with the Economic Development team to ensure all businesses are aware of what they are entitled to.



# DELIVERING AND INNOVATING



## **Asset Management Strategy**

The Council have continued to develop the new Asset Management Strategy to support our investments in property. The Strategy will link closely to our Corporate Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

## **Home working**

The significant changes and measures needed for managing our workforce through the pandemic has driven culture change across the organisation including supporting staff to work easily from home. This was a transformation that seemed impossible at the start and which happened almost overnight due to the hard work of our IT team in mobilising MS Teams, the provision of laptops, phones, webcams and support in setting everyone up to stay in contact easily.

Safe accommodation was provided for any staff unable to work from home. All guidance for staff regarding home working has been updated and our learning and development team have promoted our e-learning platform and provided access to training to assist staff and managers.

## **Council decision making**

Despite the pandemic, Braintree District Council still needed to make decisions and ensure that local democracy continued. The government removed the legal requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person during the pandemic and brought in regulations allowing local authorities to hold virtual meetings and Braintree District Council were one of the first councils to do this.

The IT team and Governance team were crucial in providing the support to the meetings to ensure everything was tested thoroughly beforehand and not forgetting to address meeting etiquette. The council used MS Teams to host its first meeting of the Planning Committee which took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> May. Since then, the Council has used both MS teams and Zoom to host meetings and in the first quarter, a total of 15 meetings have been held including Cabinet and Full Council. There have also been two licensing hearings. The next stage of this process will be public participation which again will require thorough testing before being introduced.

## Keeping everyone informed

Good and regular communication has been critical throughout the first quarter of the year. Things were changing at a rapid pace and there was an increased demand for communications. Our web advice was placed online within days and a new area of our website created to provide advice and guidance for residents, communities and businesses all in one place.

Social media has content focussed on help and advice, how our services have changed and showcasing the fantastic work of our volunteer community.

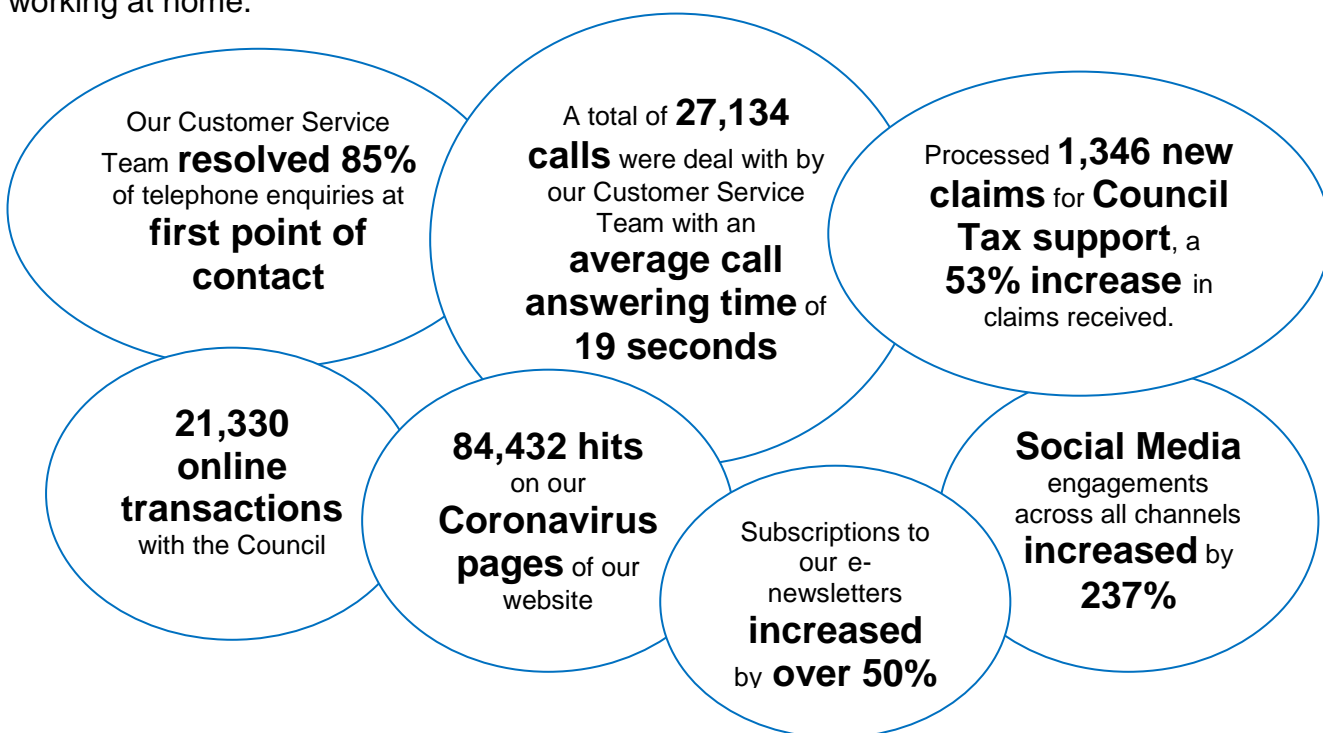
Our customer service phone lines have remained open throughout and we increased the number of people taking calls to deal with the high volume of contact. The customer service team also supported a number of services by dealing with their calls enabling them to prioritise their workloads in supporting our residents and businesses.

MP's, Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, partner organisations and neighbouring authorities were provided with a regular briefings to keep everyone updated with the latest information from the council regarding how we continued to support residents, communities and businesses as well as providing details as to how we were responding to the pandemic including changes to our services.

Staff were also kept well informed and were able to contribute any issues or concerns to senior managers through daily updates ensuring that we were able to respond to the needs of our residents and businesses in a timely manner. Weekly blogs by the Chief Executive provided detailed updates and information to staff.

## Health and wellbeing

Our greatest asset is our people and keeping them safe whilst they deliver key services has been crucial. Our Procurement team were quick to purchase PPE early on to support our front line staff to continue to work safely and our HR team launched a health and wellbeing programme for all staff and managers to look after emotional health and wellbeing whilst working at home.



## **Complaints**

The quarterly complaints analysis for the first quarter of 2020/21 is detailed below. This is compared with 2019/20 figures shown in brackets. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

<b>Complaint Category</b>	<b>Q1 2020/21</b>	<b>Q2 2020/21</b>	<b>Q3 2020/21</b>	<b>Q4 2020/21</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Justified	43 (45)	(52)	(51)	(44)	(192)
Not Justified	55 (54)	(69)	(49)	(49)	(221)
Partially Justified	19 (23)	(24)	(14)	(29)	(89)
Not known	0 (0)	(0)	(0)	(2)	(2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>117 (121)</b>	<b>(145)</b>	<b>(114)</b>	<b>(124)</b>	<b>(504)</b>

## **Comments**

The majority of complaints are in relation to the Operations service, in particular, complaints around missed waste collections. The reasons for missed collections vary with the majority being due to having difficulty accessing roads due to either road closures or more parked vehicles in roads due to lockdown.

Crews were also changed around to accommodate the new ways of working to adhere to social distancing guidelines meaning crews had to familiarise themselves with new routes and collection points. To follow social distancing guidelines, the number of crew members needed for a collection was reduced to a maximum of two in a vehicle at any one time. The third crew member joined the collection vehicle using a separate, smaller council vehicle or in some cases, two collection vehicles were used at the same time. The waste crews endeavour to return to collect any missed waste within 48 hours of being reported.

The Council received a few complaints in respect of the decision to suspend the garden waste collection and reinstate this on a four weekly cycle. This was due to prioritising the waste collections and ensuring our crews were supported and protected whilst out and about in the district collecting waste. All complaints are reviewed on a regular basis to help identify improvements to processes and the service provided.

In the first quarter of 2020/21, of the 117 complaints received:

- 113 are stage one complaints
- 2 are stage two complaints
- 2 are stage three complaints

### **A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:**

The LGO suspended their services in March due to the pandemic. They resumed services from the 22<sup>nd</sup> May but were initially only looking at existing cases of which there are none for Braintree. The LGO have commenced investigations of new complaints with effect from the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

## **Our Organisation**

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

<b>People: Indicators of Performance</b>	<b>Q1 20/21</b>	<b>Q2 20/21</b>	<b>Q3 20/21</b>	<b>Q4 20/21</b>	<b>Change on previous period</b>	<b>Yearly Target</b>
Total headcount	487				- 5	-
Number of temporary staff	25				- 2	-
Total staff FTE	436.74				- 4.94	-
Level of employee turnover	1.44%				+ 0.42	-
Number of leavers	7				+ 2	-
Number of starters	2				- 14	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	0.68 days				-1.16 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	94%				Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	1693.5				- 260.5	-
Number of delegates	58				- 4	-
Number of apprentices **	19				-	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	472	470	464	466	481	492

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



## **Health & Safety**

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

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

<b>Health &amp; Safety: Indicators of Performance</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	
	(2019/20 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	10 (11)	(4)	(14)	(11)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	8 (9)	(3)	(14)	(10)	<i>The majority of incidents relate to the waste service in respect of slips and strains whilst collecting waste</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	2 (1)	(0)	(0)	(0)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	0 (1)	(1)	(0)	(1)	
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	0 (6)	(4)	(7)	(0)	
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	2 (1)	(0)	(1)	(4)	<i>Verbal abuse to a member of our staff who was strimming a communal area and verbal abuse to a Housing advisor</i>
Number of near miss incidents	0 (1)	(0)	(0)	(0)	
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	0 (1)	(1)	(0)	(1)	
Number of claims settled	1 (1)	(0)	(0)	(1)	

## **Financial Performance**

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

### **Background**

Full Council approved a net budget of £15.226 million for the 2020/21 financial year. This included planned spending across all services totalling £13.888 million; corporate items amounting to £1.638 million; and an overall efficiency target to be achieved in-year of £300,000.

Financing of the budget was to be from a combination of: general government grants (£22,000); business rates (£5.192 million); and Council Tax (£10.012 million).

During the year individual budgets may be updated in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure, and against which quarterly performance is monitored.

Following a delegated decision to approve a capital contribution towards expenditure on facilities used by the operator that processes the Council's household recycling material, a budget adjustment of £151,460 has been made between the waste management service (reflecting savings to be made on processing costs) and treasury management (to reflect annual repayments of principal and the opportunity cost of interest foregone).

### **Summary Financial Position**

The following summarises the financial position for the year as projected at this first quarter (Q1):

- An overall adverse variance is projected for the year of £919,000 (+6%) against budget.
- Across all services staffing budgets are forecast to be underspent by £425,000; however, after allowance for the corporate efficiency target of £300,000 and provision for a higher than anticipated pay award, this results in a net projected overspend of £10,000.
- Other expenditure is projected to be over budget by £396,000.
- Income is projected to be under achieved by £513,000.
- Within this overall variance the estimated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the revenue account is a net shortfall of £3.348 million, against which the Council has received funding from Government of £1.894 million, leaving a net shortfall due to COVID-19 of £1.454 million.

### **Revenue Spending**

The following statement shows the overall budget variances projected for the year incorporating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other variances:

Service	Updated Budget £'000	Projected Spend £'000	Adverse (Positive) variance against budget				RAG Status
			Staffing £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Total £'000	
Asset Management	(2,473)	(2,433)	(3)	19	24	40	A
Community Services	393	455	(4)	(17)	83	62	R
Corporate Management	1,451	1,470	14	-	5	19	A
Economic Development	198	198	-	-	-	-	G
Environment & Leisure	982	1,246	(125)	(49)	438	264	R

Finance	1,458	1,828	(155)	(56)	581	370	R
Governance	1,171	1,196	(13)	(41)	79	25	A
Housing Services	924	828	(29)	(25)	(42)	(96)	G
Human Resources	360	376	19	(3)	-	16	A
ICT & Facilities	1,645	1,656	12	(1)	-	11	A
Marketing and Communications	557	595	6	(23)	55	38	A
Operations	6,121	6,456	33	(354)	656	335	R
Strategic Investment	21	21	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	955	1,174	(180)	(8)	407	219	R
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>13,763</b>	<b>15,066</b>	<b>(425)</b>	<b>(558)</b>	<b>2,286</b>	<b>1,303</b>	<b>R</b>
Corporate Financing	1,763	2,009	135	(10)	121	246	R
COVID-19 central fund	-	964	-	964	-	964	R
Efficiency target	(300)	-	300	-	-	300	
<b>Total before COVID-19 grants</b>	<b>15,226</b>	<b>18,039</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>2,407</b>	<b>2,813</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>COVID-19 government grants</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,894)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,894)</b>	<b>(1,894)</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>Net Total General Fund</b>	<b>15,226</b>	<b>16,145</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>R</b>

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

## Analysis of the Projected Budget Full-Year Variances

It is difficult to be precise about the extent to which projected variances arise due solely to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with regards income as under normal circumstances there would inevitably be some level of budget variance. A level of judgement has therefore had to be applied in making this assessment. The following table shows how the projected full year variance has been attributed in terms of COVID-19 impact or for other reasons:

Reason for variance:	Adverse (Positive) variance against budget			
	Staffing	Other Expenditure	Income	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
COVID-19	47	899	2,402	3,348
Other <sup>1</sup>	(37)	(503)	5	(535)
<b>Total before COVID-19 grants</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>2,407</b>	<b>2,813</b>

<sup>1</sup> Staffing variances shown net of the £300k corporate efficiency target

## COVID-19 Pandemic and impact on the Council's Finances

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the Council's finances. Following the lockdown announced on 23 March 2020, the Council had to adapt quickly, putting considerable additional resource into ensuring rough sleepers are safe, providing temporary accommodation for those in need, administering business rate reliefs and other grants, and supporting the most vulnerable residents, including operating a virtual community hub. Staff had to quickly adapt to working from home supported with the necessary ICT equipment. During the crisis the Council has worked with key partners providing immediate financial assistance during lockdown and working together to bring back services as restrictions are being lifted.

The Council is currently forecasting losses in income from across many of its services totalling £2.402 million, with the main areas affected being car parking, planning fees, leisure management, local tax and benefit recoveries, waste management, and the council tax sharing arrangement. Reductions in investment income are also anticipated as a consequence of very low interest rates and a fall in dividends paid by the corporate sector. Forecast reductions in council tax and business rate income will initially manifest in higher arrears; however, write-offs may increase as the economic impact persists and businesses in particular struggle to recover. Any amounts written off will initially impact the Collection Fund (rather than the General Fund account), but will then impact on the Council's finances in future years through its share of the Collection Fund balance. A reduction in the financial gain from the Essex business rate pool is expected due to reduced business growth and increases in irrecoverable debts.

Additional unbudgeted expenditure has been incurred and is expected to continue over the remainder of the year with a current forecast total of £946,000 for this central fund. The Council is also reporting other expenditure budget variances within individual services.

The Council's District Investment programme remains susceptible to the general economic climate through potentially reduced market values on capital receipts and additional capital costs due to contract delays following lockdown and the introduction of additional measures by contractors in line with government guidance.

To date the Government has provided grants totalling £1.894 million for the 2020/21 financial year (including £170,000 of New Burdens funding for administering business grants). This is in addition to the £61,411 provided in 2019/20 and which was used to partially fund additional ICT equipment.

It is still difficult to quantify with any certainty the longer-term financial effects of the pandemic. In addition, the Council awaits further details from the Government on an income support scheme whereby any shortfall in fees and charges greater than 5% of what was originally budgeted will be supported by government at a level of 75p in the £. At this time, however, the net shortfall due to COVID-19 of £1.454 million is being partially offset by service underspends due to other reasons (£535,000), leaving the remaining £919,000 to be met from a combination of the Treasury Management earmarked reserve (£306,000) and unallocated General Fund balances (£613,000).

### **Further Commentary on Budget Variances**

#### **Staffing**

Staffing budgets include both directly employed staff, and bought-in/ agency staff, the latter being used where additional resources are required to meet increased service demands and/ or the need for specialist skills; to provide cover in cases of absence (e.g. vacancies, holidays, sickness, maternity etc.); or where in-house staff are assigned to work on other projects and priorities.

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

<b>Service – Staffing Budgets</b>	<b>Updated Budget</b>	<b>Projected Spend</b>	<b>Adverse/ (Positive) variance</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	
Asset Management	330	327	(3)	G
Community Services	433	429	(4)	G
Corporate Management	1,435	1,449	14	A
Economic Development	206	206	-	G
Environment & Leisure	1,732	1,607	(125)	G
Finance	2,893	2,738	(155)	G
Governance	717	704	(13)	G
Housing Services	1,032	1,003	(29)	G
Human Resources	280	299	19	A
ICT & Facilities	839	851	12	A
Marketing & Communications	445	451	6	A
Operations	6,034	6,067	33	A
Strategic Investment	429	429	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,904	1,724	(180)	G
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>18,709</b>	<b>18,284</b>	<b>(425)</b>	<b>G</b>
Corporate Financing	10	145	135	R
Efficiency	(300)	-	300	
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,419</b>	<b>18,429</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>A</b>

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

### ***Commentary on staffing variations:***

Based on the information known at the end of Q1 there is a projected underspend across all services of £425,000.

### **COVID-19 related Staffing Variances**

Overall net additional staffing costs within service budgets due to COVID-19 are forecast to be £47,000 for the year. This includes measures introduced for operational staff to help maintain social distancing. Additional payments have also been required to ensure daily office coverage of Gold Command. Partially offsetting these costs are savings anticipated where services can flex staffing hours in response to reduced customer demands.

### **Other Staffing Variances**

The largest service area with a projected underspend is **Sustainable Development** (-£180,000). This is mainly due to vacancies with three posts in **Development Management** currently vacant: a planner due to be filled in October; an administrative officer, and a senior enforcement role both of which are expected to be filled by December. In total the estimated budget saving is £163,000, although this is partially offset by increased spending on agency staff (£60,000). **Landscape Services** has one post vacant with another becoming vacant from mid-August, both of which are not expected to be filled until at least December. There are also reduced hours being worked in this service area, making a total forecast underspend of £77,000.

Projected underspends in **Finance** (including the Customer Service Centre) total £155,000, due mainly to 4 posts being vacant and which, subject to any unplanned changes in pressure on services, are expected to remain so for the rest of the financial year. Other savings have been generated from a flexible retirement which was approved after the original budget was set, and reductions in staff hours.

**Environment and Leisure** is projecting underspends (-£125,000), with two posts vacant, one in Building Control and the other in Health Development.

The **Strategic Investment Team** continues to operate with a mix of permanent and interim staffing which is being flexed according to project priorities and workloads. Over the last few months a senior project manager has been recruited along with a part-time administrator. It is currently expected that resources will need to be increased during the year by the addition of an interim project director and project manager. The forecast spend for the year on staffing for the team is now £760,000, which is £331,000 higher than originally planned for 2020/21, and reflects the increase in projects in progress and in development. This increased cost will be borne partially by an increase in recharges by the team to capital projects (£125,000), with the balance met from reserves. The budget for the team is currently funded from a mixture of revenue and capital resources which were originally allocated over an estimated four-year period. The level of spending to date remains within the overall resources allocated.

Under **Corporate Financing** an additional cost of £135,000 is shown. This relates to an expected increase in the annual pay award with effect from April 2020 that is yet to be confirmed. The original budget provided for an increase of 2%; however, after consulting employers, an offer was made to the unions for an increase of 2.75%. At the current time the unions are consulting with their members.

The budget provided for a **Corporate Efficiency Target** which in previous years has been achieved from in-year staffing variances. The amount included in this year's budget was increased by £100,000 to £300,000 based on past experience. The projected variances across all services currently exceeds this target by £125,000, and after taking into account the potential increase in the pay award, this leaves a net staffing variance of £10,000 projected for the year.

### **Other Service Expenditure**

Other expenditure is forecast to be overspent by a net £396,000 by the end of the year. This includes estimated additional spending due to COVID-19 of £899,000, which is partially offset by reductions in spending due to other reasons of £503,000.

### **COVID-19 related Other Service Expenditure Variances**

At the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic the Council established a central fund to account for the additional expenditure incurred. The forecast spend in this central fund for the year is £964,000. This is largely made up of financial support provided to the Council's leisure operator for the initial period of the lockdown, with further funding set aside to be used as the Council works closely with the operator to remobilise and open up leisure facilities to the public in a safe manner following the lifting of restrictions. To support this, Full Council approved on 27 July 2020, to create a provision of up to £700,000 to be drawn from unallocated General Fund balances. Other areas of spending due to COVID-19 include:

- Costs incurred in providing accommodation for rough sleepers and those vulnerable to homelessness (£70,000 net of housing benefit).
- Communications including mail-outs on changes to green waste services (£58,000).
- ICT equipment to support remote working and virtual meetings (£63,000), along with system changes to allow for administration of business grants and hardship reliefs (£15,000).
- Additional staffing costs and operational equipment and supplies (£68,000).

Other budget variances which are attributed to COVID-19 include:

- **Operations - Waste Management** – a net saving of £7,000, which comprises: additional costs on vehicles due to social distancing measures (+£40,000); higher payments for mixed dry waste as lockdown increased household recycling tonnages (+£39,000); and extra costs due to increased demand for recycling sacks (+£7,000); with these being offset by savings on transport and disposal costs for street cleansing, trade waste, and green waste collections as these services were either suspended or produced lower tonnages (-£93,000).
- **Asset Management:** Additional holding costs of £14,000 incurred on one of the Council's investment properties due to a prospective tenant pulling out from a lease completion when lockdown measures were introduced. The property has since been re-let to another tenant from August.
- Across **Various Services** savings are projected as a consequence of lower expenditure being incurred where this is directly related to income activity which has also reduced (-£60,000).

### **Non COVID-19 related Other Expenditure Variances**

Projected underspends for other reasons total £503,000. The main service areas contributing to these variances are:



- **Operations** (-£337,000): mainly in relation to **Waste Management**, where costs are forecast to be lower for vehicles due primarily to the sharp fall in diesel prices (-£102,000) and fleet maintenance and spot hire costs are also expected to be lower (-£32,000). Savings are being made on the processing costs of recycling materials as a result of the Council's capital investment towards improved facilities (-£57,000). New arrangements for the collection of bulky waste are incurring lower operating costs (-£28,000) than budgeted, partly due to suspension of the service for a period of time. Vehicle options for running the service are under review to manage weight restrictions and which may lead to some increase in costs in future. Reductions in market pricing means the cost of black and clear sacks is estimated to be lower (-£22,000).
- **Finance** (-£33,000): Mainly in relation to bank and credit card transaction costs, along with savings on the replacement system used for making BACS payments/ collections.
- **Governance** (-£30,000): Lower expenditure is forecast on Member's allowances and expenses, including those relating to the Chair and Vice-Chair and other Civic hospitality.
- **Environment and Leisure** (-£26,000): a lower than anticipated service charge from the landlord at the Braintree Retail Village – this relates to the land lease for the Braintree swimming centre and includes a prior year adjustment – and a reduction in building insurances.
- **Housing Services** (-£24,000): mainly due to an anticipated lower recharge from Eastlight Community Housing in respect of maintained temporary properties, as government legislation preventing evictions appears to have led to reduced demand for non-covid related housing needs.

### **External Income**

A significant proportion of the Council's budget is reliant on external income. Grants and subsidies from government, alongside income from business rates are major elements, originally totalling around £30million.

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

As a participant in the Essex Business Rates Pool the Council is entitled to an additional share of income from business rate growth. The final determination and receipt of the actual amount will be made after year-end returns have been collated by the County Council from each of the participating authorities. Sums received from this arrangement are initially held in the Business Rate Retention reserve pending decisions on how the money is to be utilised. The budget assumed an amount of £560,000 would be generated and added to this reserve. However, this is likely to change due to the impact of COVID-19 on business rate growth across the county and deterioration in recoverability of arrears. It is difficult to be precise about the knock-on impacts to the Pool from these factors and how this translates to the amount received by the Council, but at the present time a reduction of £276,000 is being estimated and which would result in a lower amount being transferred to reserve.

Other external income for which the Council has budgeted £15.573 million comes from a variety of sources that are subject to external demands and other influences, meaning these are more

susceptible to variations against budget. It is currently forecast that services will under achieve against their income budgets by a net £2.407 million and almost totally attributable to COVID-19, both as a result of the lockdown and assumptions about the rate of recovery over the coming months.

Service	Updated Budget	Joint Financing & Other Reimburs.	Sales, Fees & Charges	Rents & Service Charges	Other Income	Total	RAG status
		4,436	6,153	3,161	1,823	15,573	
	£000	<i>Adverse (Positive) Variance £000 against Budget :</i>					
Asset Management	3,358	-	20	4	-	24	A
Community Services	201	-	71	-	12	83	R
Corporate Management Plan	10	5	-	-	-	5	A
Economic Development	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
Environment & Leisure	1,218	21	384	-	33	438	R
Finance	2,458	284	-	-	297	581	R
Governance	198	-	66	-	13	79	R
Housing	38	-	(42)	-	-	(42)	G
Human Resources	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
ICT & Facilities	2	-	-	-	-	-	G
Marketing & Communications	139	32	39	-	(16)	55	R
Operations	5,395	-	616	46	(6)	656	R
Strategic Investment	300	-	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,696	-	407	-	-	407	R
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>15,013</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>1,561</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>2,286</b>	<b>R</b>
Corporate Financing	560	121	-	-	-	121	R
<b>Total before COVID-19 grants</b>	<b>15,573</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>1,561</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>2,407</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>COVID-19 government grants</b>		-	-	-	(1,894)	(1,894)	<b>G</b>
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>15,573</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>1,561</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>(1,561)</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>A</b>

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

## Joint Financing & Other Reimbursements

The total budget for income from joint financing and other reimbursements is £4.436 million, the main sources of which are: Essex County Council contributions towards service costs (£2.417 million); the Council Tax Sharing and Investment Agreement with the major precepting bodies (£559,000); Housing Benefit (HB) overpayment recoveries and Local Tax costs recovered (£725,000); subscriptions to the Procurement Hub (£195,000); business rate collection allowance (£187,000); planning performance agreements (£85,000); and sponsorship income (£67,000).

### Commentary on Joint Financing & Other Reimbursements

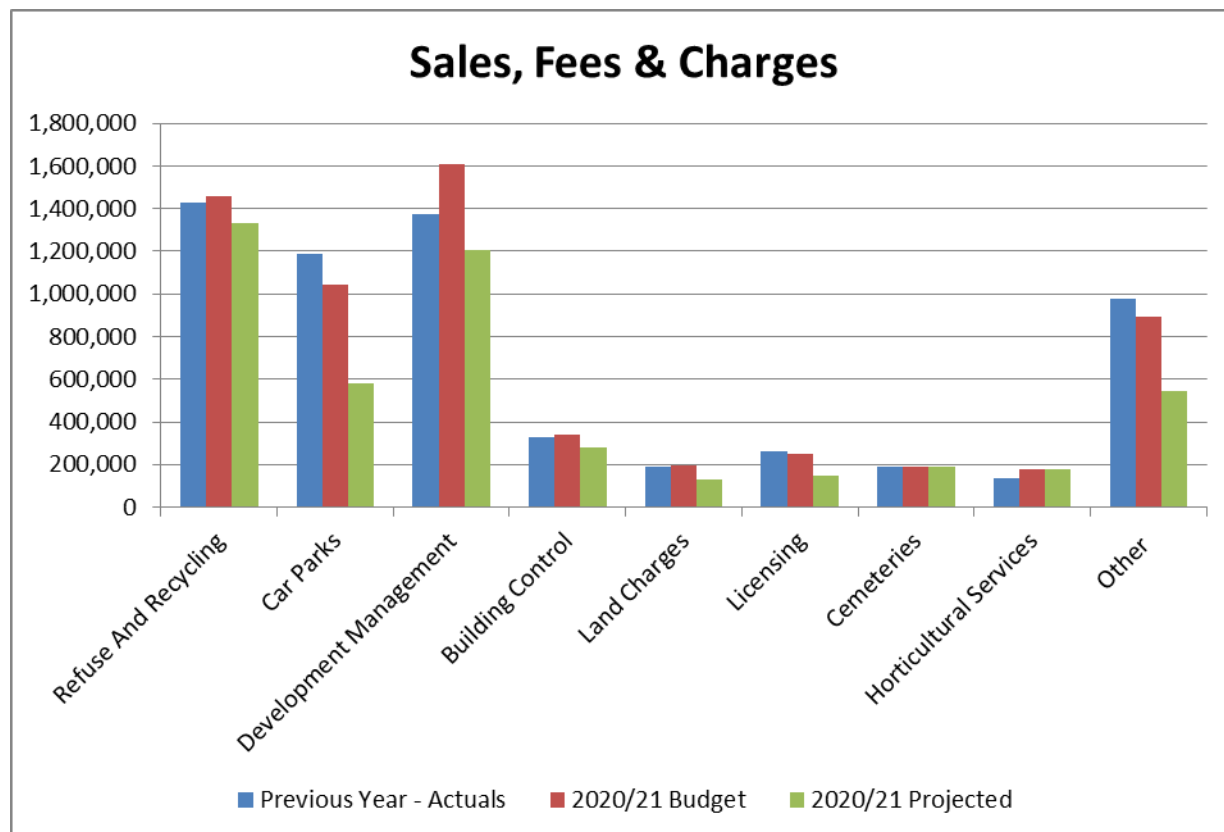
At Q1 an adverse variance for the year is predicted of £463,000 across all services, mainly comprising:

**Finance:** A projected reduction in HB overpayment recoveries (-£133,000) and Local Tax cost recoveries (-£117,000). This was due to the suspension of recovery action whilst resources were prioritised towards administering the new business rate reliefs and grants, and the extra hardship support to local council tax support recipients, including rebilling of accounts. Recovery procedures resumed during June which triggered an upturn in amounts being collected. However, progress on recovering amounts due will depend on the capacity of the courts to deal with cases. Amounts outstanding at the end of year will continue to be subject to the Council's normal recovery procedures for the collection of outstanding debts.

**Corporate Financing:** the anticipated reduction in the in-year council tax collection rate will impact on the amount the Council is able to receive under the sharing agreement with major preceptors. At present this reduction is estimated at £121,000 for the year.

## Sales, Fees & Charges

The budget for income from sales, fees & charges is £6.153 million against which it is projected that there will be a net underachievement of £1.561 million. The following chart shows the position for the main income streams:



### Commentary on Fees and Charges:

- **Refuse and Recycling:** An overall projected shortfall of £124,000, the majority of which has arisen from the suspension and cancellation of accounts by commercial customers during lockdown (-£95,000).
- **Car Parks:** A substantial reduction in car park income from pay and display and season ticket/permit income arising from much lower usage during lockdown. Furthermore, the North Essex Parking Partnership ceased enforcement during this period resulting in a lower level of Penalty Charge Notice income than would normally be expected over this period. The current projection is an overall under achievement against budget of £462,000, with some recovery anticipated within this amount over the remainder of the year. Consumer confidence, the extent of home working and the overall general economy will obviously have an impact.
- **Development Management:** In the period April-June income was £196,000 compared to a budget profile of £362,000, although June saw a small spike compared to the first two months which has been repeated again in July. Income is subject to both overall demand for the service and also the extent of major applications being received from developers. It is possible that applications that were not submitted at the start of the year will now come through with some catch up effect later in the year. However sites have only recently re-opened and so it is still too early to gauge trends. At this stage the forecast is

for income for the year to be £1.068 million against a budget of £1.450 million, a shortfall of £382,000. In 2019/20 actual income was £1.239 million. Pre-application income is also expected to be down against budget for the year by £30,000.

- **Building Control:** Income from fee-earning activities in the first quarter of the year, including work-in-progress brought forward, was around 3% down against the same period for the previous year. The service anticipates full-year income to be around £280,000, compared to a budget of £336,000 (£332,000 achieved in 2019/20) and which is £56,000 lower than budget. However, compensating against this reduction in income, the service continues to carry a vacant post meaning there are savings on staff costs.
- **Local Land Charges:** The forecast reflects actual loss of income in the first quarter (£27,000) and income for July until the end of the financial year at 25% lower than the previous year. This results in projected income for the year of £128,000 which is £66,000 lower than budget. With the recent government announcement on scrapping stamp duty on house purchases of up to £500,000 until 31 March 2021, this may lead to a flurry of activity in the housing market which could lead to an improved income position.
- **Other Income –** The total budget is £892,000 across a wide range of differing services, including: Community Transport; the Town Hall Centre; Braintree Enterprise Centre conference income; non-commercial property service charges; graphics and marketing income; and fees received from the leisure management operator. Overall it is currently projected that income will be lower for the year by £347,000. The most significant element within this shortfall relates the waiver of the leisure management fee for the year which forms part of the overall package of support aimed at getting the Council's leisure facilities back available for public use safely. A fall in demand for the Community Transport service means a shortfall in income is predicted of £71,000 for the year. However, during this time staff and volunteers from this service have been involved in the setting-up and operation of a virtual community hub, providing support to vulnerable residents, including assistance with shopping. With the Town Hall Centre closed during lockdown and with new social distancing measures in place, this has reduced the forecast income from bookings for the year by £35,000.

## Rental Income & Commercial Property Service Charges

The budget for rental income from land & property is £3.161 million – comprising the investment and commercial property portfolio, markets, housing properties, and other let properties. The overall projected outturn for the year is a shortfall of £50,000.

### *Commentary on Rental Income:*

- **Operations – Markets:** There was a 70% drop in income in the first quarter, and whilst this has now picked up in July, the level is still around 33% lower than the monthly average for last year, leading to a projected shortfall for the year of £40,000. **Parks & Open Spaces:** minor rental income from land is projected to be lower by £6,000.
- **Asset Management:** Not a significant variance at this stage. To support tenants during the current crisis the service has been granting some three month rent deferrals with repayment plans in place to collect rents over an extended period. The current estimate is that £17,780 of 2020/21 income will be collected in 2021/22.

## Other Service & Corporate Income

Total budgeted Other Income is £1.823 million of which £615,220 is internal recharges including staffing costs that are expected to be charged against capital projects (£483,000). Other external income is projected to be underachieved by £333,000.

Other external income includes the following streams:

- **Investment & Other Interest Income:** The budgeted amount is £1.061 million, against which it is projected to be under achieved by £306,000, of which £244,000 is from an estimated reduction in dividend income from pooled fund investments. The balance of the shortfall of £62,000 is mainly due to the drop in short-term interest rates after the Bank of England cut the UK Base Rate in March 2020, from 0.75% to 0.10%. Whilst the level of cash balances has been increased due to government funding towards COVID-19 measures, including business grants, these additional balances have been placed with the Debt Management Account facility (UK Government) to ensure the highest level of security but which has been paying interest of between 0.01% and 0.075%. A treasury management reserve is maintained against which it is planned to offset this shortfall in income rather than reducing the unallocated General Fund balances.
- **Carbon Management: Solar Panel Feed-in-Tariffs** the budget of £92,450 is currently anticipated to be achieved for the year, whereas **external work** for another local authority is anticipated to be lower by £15,000 as programmes of work were halted by the contracting authority due to the COVID-19 situation.

## COVID-19 Grants

The Government has provided three tranches of COVID-19 grant to the authority totalling £1.785 million, with £61,411 being accounted for in 2019/20, and the balance of £1.724 million being credited to the 2020//21 financial year. In addition, £170,000 has been received as New Burdens funding towards costs associated with administering business grants.

A grant of £50,000 has been received from Essex County Council to fund expenditure incurred by the Council on contact tracing activities. As the amount to be spent has yet to be determined this grant has not been reflected in the Q1 position, as any underspend would have to be returned.

## Treasury Management

The Council's treasury management activity to the end of the quarter is summarised in the table below:

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity to the end June		Amount Invested at end of the quarter
	New Investments	Investments Matured	
£53.11m	£428.08m	£412.50m	£68.69m
Average amount invested for the period			£72.28m
Highest amount invested			£94.72m

There was a significant increase in the amount of cash to be managed during the first quarter due primarily to funding received from central government to pay grants and hardship relief to businesses and to residents in receipt of council tax support. In addition, the Council received a further tranche of COVID-19 grant, along with changes to the cash flow profile for certain transactions between the Council and government. This additional cash flow has been managed through the Debt Management Office Account Facility (UK Government).

Investments totalling £19m continued to be held in long-term pooled funds across a range of property, equity and diversified funds.

The remaining balance of investments were held in short-term instruments including Lloyds bank account (for immediate liquidity); Money Market Funds; and loans to other local authorities.

Interest and dividends earned to the end of the quarter total £230,318, which is equivalent to an annualised rate of return of 1.28%:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£19.00m	£173,224	3.66%
Short-Term	£53.28m	£57,094	0.43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£72.28m</b>	<b>£230,318</b>	<b>1.28%</b>

Whilst investment returns were bolstered by the dividend income from long-term pooled funds; nevertheless this was around 25% lower than the income received for the same period last year. Short-term investment rates have fallen due to the Base Rate reductions made in March 2020. Loans to other local authorities secured in the final quarter of previous financial year provided some upturn in yield.

Following on from the dramatic reductions in the value of pooled funds at the end of the last financial year, much of this downturn has been recovered during this first quarter, with valuations at the end of June totalling £18.06m; representing an unrealised loss of £940,000.

It is currently projected that investment returns will be £306,000 lower than budget due to the current economic downturn. This shortfall will be met by drawing down on the Treasury Management reserve, leaving a balance in this reserve of £968,000.

### ***Market Commentary***

The UK's exit from the European Union took a back seat during the first quarter as the global economic impact from coronavirus took centre stage. Part of the measures taken to stop the spread of the pandemic included the government implementing a nationwide lockdown in late March which effectively shut down almost the entire UK economy. These measures continued throughout most of the quarter with only some easing of restrictions at the end of May and into June.

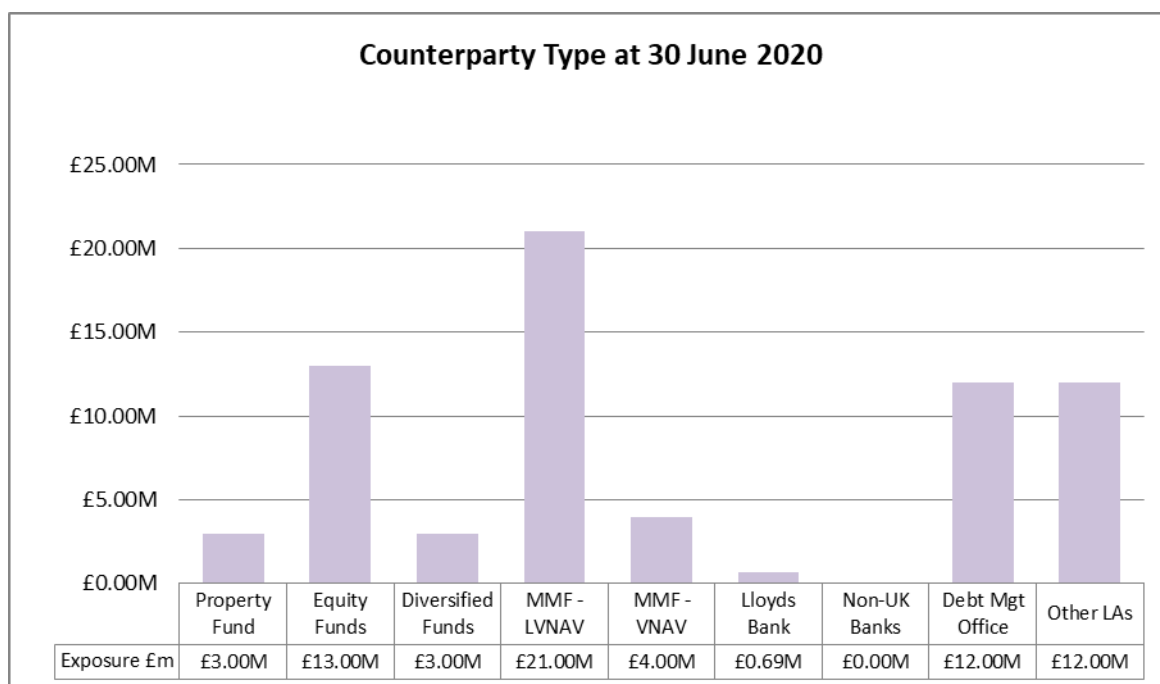
After selling off sharply in March, equity markets started recovering in April and while still down on their pre-crisis levels, the Dow Jones and FTSE 100 and 250 have made up around half of the losses. Measures implemented by central banks and governments continue to maintain some degree of general investor confidence, however volatility remains.

Ultra-low interest rates and the flight to quality continued to keep gilts yields low over the period with the yield on some short-dated government bonds turning negative. 1-month, 3-month and 12-month bid rates averaged 0.04%, 0.28% and 0.44% respectively over the quarter.

The extent of losses that banks and building societies may suffer due to the impact from the coronavirus epidemic remains uncertain but is expected to be substantial. Consequently, in early June, a number of UK banks and building societies were suspended from the Council's counterparty list for unsecured deposits. Whilst better capitalised than before the 2007-09 financial crisis, under the current economic circumstances these entities were suspended for reasons of prudence. For those remaining on the list, the investment duration advice from Arlingclose remains at up to 35 days.

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





LVNAV = Low Volatility Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value is expected to remain fairly constant

VNAV = Variable Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value can fluctuate meaning that investors may receive back more or less than invested

## **General Fund Balances**

General Fund balances are held for the following reasons:

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

Based on the projected outturn set out above, the anticipated movements on the General Fund balances are:

	£'000
<b>Balance at 1 April 2020</b>	<b>6,882</b>
Addition/(deductions):	
Budgeted addition	222
Funding for one-off investment	(136)
Pension Fund triennial payment	(1,645)
Projected budget variance at Q1	(919)
Transfer from Treasury Management reserve	306
<b>Estimated Balance at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>4,710</b>

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

- The budget approved by Council included an anticipated addition to balances of £222,269, reflecting savings anticipated being made in advance of future years' budget shortfalls.
- An allocation from General Fund balances was approved by Full Council in February 2020, to meet one-off budget requirements: £14,000 in total for upgrading the CCTV at the Town Hall Centre and funding a Legal Services case management system; and a total of £122,000 provision for loss of income during the redevelopment of the Manor Street area.

- In 2020/21 the Council is making a one-off payment to the Essex Pension Fund covering the period April 2020 to March 2023, which is being part funded from General Fund balances. A repayment back into balances will be made in 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- The projected outturn variance for the year would mean a withdrawal from balances of £919,000, which includes the provision for remobilisation of leisure services approved by Full Council at the meeting held on 27 July 2020.
- A transfer from the Treasury Management reserve of £306,000 to reflect the shortfall in investment and interest income reflected in the Q1 projected variance.

## **Risks and Assumptions**

The forecasts reflect service managers' "best estimate" of the predicted outturn for the year. Whilst the previous year outturn and trends in-year have been considered; the position is uncertain due to the longer term impact arising from the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently assumptions have had to be made regarding the extent and pace at which the Council is able to return to business as usual, accepting however, that activities remain restricted as a result of social distancing. There is also the risk that future spikes of reported coronavirus cases could impact either locally and/ or nationally.

Directors and service managers continue to scrutinise all expenditure commitments in light of the planned savings set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. External income is inherently difficult to predict as it is substantially demand led and impacted by external factors.

Planning application fee projections are based on the best information available regarding when developers are likely to submit planning applications for growth locations within the district - this could change and income could be significantly higher or lower than projected. Income will be influenced by both the number and type of planning applications received.

Investment income is influenced by the overall level of cash balances held, which in turn are dependent upon the progress of the strategic investment programme and other capital projects, and the level of capital receipts generated. Market sentiment will impact on the value of the Council's long-term pooled fund investments; whereas general economic conditions in both the UK and globally will influence the dividend returns. Interest rates will impact on short-term investments.

The income which is offset from costs incurred for the processing of recycling material collected from households is subject to regular review of the composition of material collected assessed across the whole of the Suffolk Waste Partnership contract, which the Council is party, and market indices for the sale of materials.

The original budget assumed that £483,000 of staffing costs can be recharged to capital projects, which has now increased by a further £125,000 due to the higher staffing expenditure expected in the Strategic Investment Team (SIT). The actual amount recharged will depend on the extent to which projects progress and staff are working on activities that can properly be treated as capital under accounting rules, with any shortfall impacting the General Fund (and/ or quickening the pace at which allocated reserves are used for SIT staffing costs).

The nature of the UK's exit from the European Union after the current transition period ends on 31 December 2020, remains a critical issue. Consequently, there still remains a high level of uncertainty about the economic implications which might manifest in activities undertaken by the Council in the run up to exit and beyond leading to a differing outcome from position currently projected, for example:

- Income generating activities, particularly those which could be influenced by the level of business confidence and future plans, e.g. planning, building control, commercial property rents, etc.
- Income and total returns from financial investments through changes in interest rates, volatility in financial markets, and general market sentiment over negotiations on future trading arrangements.
- Business, housing and other community support services which provide advice, guidance and direct support to those that will be affected by the UK's exit.

### **Capital Investment**

Taking into account projects which were in progress and carried forward from earlier years, new projects approved as part of the Budget agreed in February 2020, and the subsequent decisions taken in-year by Council, the overall capital programme currently totals £58.250m. Delivery of significant projects will span a number of years, therefore, the amount expected to be spent in the current year is £40.303m. The following table shows how much has been spent at the end of Q1.

	<b>Profiled Spend 2020/21 £000</b>	<b>Actual Spend at Quarter 1 £000</b>	<b>Actual Spend at Quarter 1 % of Profile</b>
Commercial and investment property	267	-	0%
Horizon 120	12,466	494	4%
Manor Steet regeneration	17,579	1,440	8%
I-Construct	2,224	1	0%
Town Centre improvements	2,776	50	2%
Springwood Drive business units and parking	113	-	0%
Planned maintenance to Council premises	638	41	6%
Replacement vehicles and plant	137	-	0%
Information technology systems & equipment	527	19	4%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	328	13	4%
Environmental improvements	23	1	4%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	222	-	0%
Operational equipment	144	-	0%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	15	-	0%
Waste Management	1,228	1,228	100%
Grants to registered social landlords	1	-	0%
Disabled facilities grants	674	78	12%
Capitalised interest	368	-	0%
Capital salaries	573	157	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,303</b>	<b>3,522</b>	<b>9%</b>

Actual spend to the end of Q1 is relatively low at 9%. This is partly due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions during this period which caused a general slowdown in project progress and reduced demand in some areas, e.g. disabled facility grants. A number of projects have now been deferred until 2021/22, particularly at leisure facilities as the focus has switched to supporting remobilisation of services.

At this stage, projected variances to budget total a net additional capital spend of £102,000, mainly due to an overall increase in the estimated recharges of staff time to capital projects, reflecting the current priorities of the Strategic Investment team.

Major projects allow for potential capitalised development interest, the total of which is shown in the above table. However, at present any borrowing requirement relating to these projects is likely to be internalised in the short-medium term using the Council's own cash balances. On this basis the capital programme would underspend against this allowance, with the opportunity cost reflected in the Council's treasury management position.

### **Capital resources**

The original estimate was to generate £12.520m of capital resources from the sale of council-owned assets, including serviced land at Horizon 120 and residential sales at Manor Street. At present arrangements are progressing towards finalising agreements and land transfers.

Other estimated resources to be generated in the year included £1.5million from preserved right-to-buy (RTB) receipts. Eastlight (previously Greenfields) has reported that 3 RTB sales have been completed up to the end of Q1 generating approximately £234,000 for the Council. Eastlight have also advised that a further 28 applications are in progress. Based on the timing and likelihood of progression to completion, experience suggests an estimated total of 16 sales may complete this year generating circa £1.532m for the Council. This position compares to 15 sales completed last year which generated £1.878 million for the Council.

VAT shelter monies due to the Council at the end of Q1 were £44,310, which suggest that this is on track to achieving the estimate for the year of £150,000.

The Council has received £931,000 from the Better Care Fund, which is used to meet expenditure incurred under the Council's disabled facilities grant scheme.