

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Wednesday, 21st September 2022 at 7.15pm

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

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

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

Members of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee 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 Mrs T Everard
Councillor M Radley (Chairman)

Councillor S Rehman
Councillor B Rose
Councillor P Schwier (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor N Unsworth

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

S BENNETT
Corporate Director

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

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

Public Question Time – Registration and Speaking:

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

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

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

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

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

Public Attendance at Meetings:

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Public attendance is limited and will be on a first come first served basis with priority given to Public Registered Speakers. In order to maintain safe distances, the Council may have to refuse entry to members of the public. The public may not be able to sit in the Council Chamber, but will be able to observe the meeting from a public gallery through a large screen. Alternatively, the Council meetings are webcast and are available via the Council's YouTube Channel and can be viewed by the public as a live broadcast, or as a recording following the meeting.

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

Health and Safety/COVID:

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Anyone attending meetings is asked to make themselves aware of the nearest available fire exit. In the event of an alarm you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by staff. You will be directed to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building.

Documents: Agendas, Reports and Minutes can be accessed via www.braintree.gov.uk

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Comments and Suggestions:

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

PUBLIC SESSION

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declaration of Interests - Scrutiny Committee

1. To declare the existence and nature of any interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.
2. To declare the existence and nature of any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any Councillor who is a member of that group as to how that Councillor shall speak or vote on any matter before the Committee or the application or threat to apply any sanction by the group in respect of that Councillor should he/she speak or vote on any particular matter.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee held on 27th July 2022 (copy previously circulated).

4 Public Question Time

(See paragraph above)

5 Fourth Quarter and Annual Performance Management Report 2021/22

6 Scrutiny Review into Section 106 - Second Evidence Gathering Session

For this evidence gathering session, the Committee will receive further information/evidence on the Section 106 process, including; collection and spend of Section 106; what monies the Council currently holds and the purpose of this; an exploration of benchmarking and next steps for Section 106 activity within the District Council.

7 Urgent Business - Public Session

To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Report Title: Fourth Quarter and Annual Performance Report 2021/22	
Report to: Performance Management Scrutiny Committee	
Date: 21 st September 2022	For: To inform
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Tracey Headford, Business Solutions Manager	
Enquiries to: Tracey Headford, Business Solutions Manager. tracey.headford@braintree.gov.uk ext 2442	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council provides a report to demonstrate the performance of Braintree District Council (the Council) at the end of the fourth quarter (January 2022 to March 2022) and at the end of the financial year for 2021/22. The performance report was presented to Cabinet on the 11th July 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The report is to inform the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee of the performance of the Council following its presentation and noting at Cabinet on the 11th July 2022.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Council keeps a record of its performance which is reported to cabinet every quarter for consideration and noting.
- 3.2 The last year has seen the Council respond to the challenges created by the pandemic and focus on delivering key support to residents and businesses enabling the district to recover as quickly as possible. In the last quarter, the Council has again gone above and beyond working with our partners and standing with our communities to offer support to the people of Ukraine.
- 3.3 As at the end of March 2022, there has been an improvement in performance with eight projects now complete and 50 projects on track and progressing well. Five projects have an amber status due to supply chain issues causing delays or due to redirecting resources to deal with organisational demands. One project has been closed and will be reconsidered as part of the budget preparations for a future year.
- 3.4 Targets have not been set for all our performance indicators this year due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic. For the targets that remain, eight performance indicators have met or exceed target and five performance indicators have missed their target. Two have missed target by less than 5% and three missed their target by more than 5%. The areas of

underperformance are in relation to cumulative number of homes granted planning permission (>5%), recycling rates (>5%), average waiting time for disabled facility grants (>5%), the collection rate for Council Tax (<5%) and the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days (<5%).

- 3.5 Moving forward, we are committed to enhancing the environment and economic growth as we continue to invest in the future of the district, while balancing the financial challenges faced by the rising costs of inflation, energy and fuel costs and the impact of supply chains. Our Bouncing Back Together document has been reviewed to take account of any changes required and to ensure we remain flexible in our approach to responding to the needs of residents, communities and businesses through to the end of the Plan in March 2023.
- 3.6 The Finance section of the report provides a review of the financial position for the year. It examines the provisional outturn spending on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year, including the impact of the pandemic. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; movements on the General Fund balance; and a summary of spend on capital projects in the year.
- 3.7 The financial position for the year is as follows:
- A positive variance of £480k after allowing for service carry forwards.
 - The impact of the pandemic on the council's financial position is estimated around £1.0m, which has been contained within Government and other funding received.
 - Savings and additional income totalling £401k reflected in the outturn have already been included in the budget approved for 2022/23.
 - The change in the General Fund unallocated balance is an increase of £58k.
 - Spend on capital projects for the year totalled £30.6m with the majority of the spend incurred on the Manor Street development, the Horizon 120 enterprise centre ('The Plaza'), Horizon 120 business park infrastructure, the I-Construct Innovation Centre and Braintree town centre improvement works.

4. Options

- 4.1 There are no options to consider as a result of this report.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 There are no next steps as a result of this report being presented to Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The report provides an update as to the financial position as at the end of the March 2022 covering the revenue and capital outturn for this period.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 The Enhancing our Environment priority has a number of actions that are designed to have a positive impact on the environment and climate change.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 9.3 Equalities and diversity issues are considered fully in the Council's key projects. Where appropriate, an equality impact assessment is prepared and considered for any key projects identified.

10. List of Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Fourth Quarter and Annual Performance Management Report 2021/22.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 Previous performance reports are published on our website once noted by cabinet. They are published at <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/directory/30/our-performance/category/577>

Fourth Quarter Performance Management Report

1st January 2022 to 31st March 2022

And Annual Performance Management Report

2021/2022



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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 financial year in relation to the publication of 'Bouncing Back Together', our plan for the district up to March 2023. This sets out the key activities being implemented to deliver our corporate priorities and summarises the measures in place by aligning key performance indicators to our priorities within the Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2024. 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 financial year

The following table provides updates for the end of the financial year in relation to our key activities.




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Connecting People and Places	2	7	2	0	0
Enhancing our Environment	3	10	0	0	0
Supporting our Communities	1	14	1	0	1
Promoting Prosperity	1	8	2	0	0
Delivering and Innovating	1	11	0	0	0
TOTAL	8	50	5	0	1

KEY:




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

Summary of the Key Performance Indicators position for the end of the financial year

The following table shows the performance for the end of the financial year in relation to key performance indicators

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Connecting People and Places	1	0	1	1
Enhancing our Environment	3	0	1	1
Supporting our Communities	0	0	1	4
Promoting Prosperity	0	0	0	3
Delivering and Innovating	4	2	0	1
TOTAL	8	2	3	10

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 last year has seen the Council respond to the challenges created by the pandemic and focus on delivering key support to residents and businesses enabling the district to recover as quickly as possible. In the last quarter, the Council has again gone above and beyond working with our partners and standing with our communities to offer support to the people of Ukraine.

As at the end of March 2022, there has been an improvement in performance with eight projects now complete and 50 projects on track and progressing well. Five projects have an amber status due to supply chain issues causing delays or due to redirecting resources to deal with organisational demands. One project has been closed and will be reconsidered as part of the budget preparations for a future year.

Targets have not been set for all our performance indicators this year due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic. For the targets that remain, eight performance indicators have met or exceed target and five performance indicators have missed their target. Two have missed target by less than 5% and three missed their target by more than 5%. The areas of underperformance are in relation to cumulative number of homes granted planning permission (>5%), recycling rates (>5%), average waiting time for disabled facility grants (>5%), the collection rate for Council Tax (<5%) and the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days (<5%).

Moving forward, we are committed to enhancing the environment and economic growth as we continue to invest in the future of the district, while balancing the financial challenges faced by the rising costs of inflation, energy and fuel costs and the impact of supply chains. Our Bouncing Back Together document has been reviewed to take account of any changes required and to ensure we remain flexible in our approach to responding to the needs of residents, communities and businesses through to the end of the Plan in March 2023.



Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES








Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Adopt the Braintree District Local Plan providing a vision for the future growth of the district		
Public consultation on the main modifications to Section 2 of the Local Plan alongside an updated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment closed on the 25th January 2022. All comments have been published on the Councils consultation portal and we are currently awaiting the Inspectors feedback	August 2022	
Rejuvenate Braintree town centre by completing the Victoria Square development providing a Livewell health hub, 35 apartments, a hotel, bus interchange and public open space		
There have been delays in construction due to covid and continuing supply chain issues impacting on handover dates for the various build phases. The hotel will open in April but negotiations in respect of the lease for the Livewell Hub are ongoing.	June 2022	
Continue to support the safe return to our town centres and help build back together from the pandemic using the Welcome Back fund and other available funding		
Braintree District Council were allocated £268,835 of Welcome Back funding and the completed spend amounted to £268,811.50. One of the main projects delivered in the fourth quarter is in respect of the High Street Improvement Fund. This has been a hugely successful intervention, with positive engagement and feedback from businesses. 37 businesses successfully achieved improvements consisting of labour to improve the aesthetics of the retail/hospitality premises to create a safe and welcoming environment. Promotion of the intervention also provided marketing for the businesses. Repairs to windows, cleaning of awnings, and repairs to woodwork were some of the labour involved. A detailed report is being compiled to showcase all projects delivered within the Welcome Back Fund.	March 2022	
Deliver events in Braintree town centre to increase footfall and support local retailers taking advantage of the newly pedestrianised town centre		
A street market was held in February ahead of the re-launch of our monthly street markets. Food and drink stalls joined traditional traders at Braintree Market creating a food and drink hub utilising the new pedestrianised area of Braintree town centre. The February half term also saw entertainment from Victorian live statues, Alice in wonderland stilt walkers and events to keep families healthy and active. The popular monthly Braintree Street Markets returned in March bringing a selection of food, drink, craft, homeware and gift stalls to the town.	March 2023	

Deliver physical improvements to the town centres of Witham and Halstead		
At Cabinet in March 2022, Councillors agreed to carry out a tender exercise to move forward with appointing contractors to offer final designs and deliver the improvements to both Halstead and Witham town centres. Highway engineers will also be appointed to deliver a feasibility study to provide opportunities for a new highway layout. The improvements to the town centres include the refurbishment of street furniture and street lighting, new cycle parking, road signage, as well as replacement or maintenance of litter bins, benches and bollards to create a more attractive and functional environment.	March 2023	
Develop a new Housing Strategy setting out how the Council will support the availability of good quality homes which best meet the needs of the current and future residents		
The development of the new Housing Strategy has been delayed due to focusing resources on supporting the increased demand on the Housing Service. Resources required to deliver the Strategy are being reviewed.	March 2023	





Actions carried out in partnership with others







Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue to work with our partners on the planning decisions of strategic highway schemes for the A12, A120 and A131 Chelmsford Bypass		
A consultation on the proposed dualling of the A120 between Galleys Corner and Junction 23 south of Kelvedon closed on the 19 th December. All feedback received will be reviewed and compiled into a consultation report which will form part of the planning application for a Development Consent Order due to be submitted to the Department for Transport in 2022. National Highways are currently conducting ecological surveys to gain a greater understanding of the ecology in the area and to bring information up to date.	March 2023	
Work with partners including Essex Highways on the delivery of our Cycling Strategy and implementation plan which includes developing integrated, high quality cycle routes that are safe to use and connected across our district		
A communications plan has been launched to encourage residents and businesses to utilise cycling within the district. Cycle maps for the district including family friendly routes and tourist routes have been launched on the Visit Braintree website and will be promoted through district events and school bike ability activities. Funding for business to invest in cycle storage facilities at their workplaces was launched in November 2021 in a bid to encourage more people to cycle to work and so far, there have been five enquiries and 2 successful applications.	March 2023	
Introduce the new Digital Demand Responsive Transport service, linking Horizon 120, with a fleet of electric mini-buses, to surrounding areas and central Braintree		
The new digital demand responsive transport Service has been launched and the first live outing was on the 1st April 2022. The service is called DigiGo and is a fully electric shared public transport service which offers on-demand or pre-bookable travel in parts of Essex including linking Horizon 120 to surrounding areas and central Braintree. There are no fixed routes or timetable and is booked through the 'Travel Essex' journey planning app and operates 7 days a week from 7am until 10pm.	March 2022	
Continue to support and monitor Superfast Essex in the delivery of Superfast Broadband across the district		
The Braintree district is currently at 95% of premises able to access superfast broadband and is forecast to reach 99% coverage within 3 years. The district wide take up of superfast broadband is currently at 30%. Final reach figures will be available by mid 2022 following assurance and approval by BDUK.	March 2023	

Facilitate the delivery of a purpose-built medical centre in Sible Hedingham		
The land transfer to the developer is still ongoing. A planning application for the medical centre has been received. Due to the delays with the land transfer, it is likely that the end date of the project will be revised.	May 2022	






Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Carry out air quality reviews in known air pollution hot spots across the district to improve the knowledge of local air quality and the proposed actions to take		
Additional diffusion tubes have been in place in Head Street to provide extensive monitoring of the air quality and see whether it exceeds the set threshold values. The lab results are currently awaited.	May 2022	
The Council has appointed consultants to undertake a review of air quality in the district. It is expected that a full report will be provided by the end of the summer.	December 2022	
Provide replacement litter bins along the A120 and A12 to keep laybys litter free and our district clean and tidy		
The Council has installed a total of 57 new brightly coloured litter bins along the strategic network within its district, at various lay-bys located on the A12, A120 and A131. The new bins have been match funded by WRAP, allowing the council to invest a total of £30k to give the locations a brand new look. The Council is also trialling seven customised bins that have a large single opening allowing people to dispose of litter without having to leave their vehicle.	March 2022	
Continue to deliver campaigns and work with our communities to		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce litter, keeping our district clean and tidy • Reduce waste and increase recycling • Improve awareness and understanding of climate change 		
The Cleaner Essex Group continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss topics for campaigns in 2022. An Essex wide campaign called 'it's a takeaway, not a throwaway' is being planned along with the final creatives for the campaign which is due to be launched in August.	March 2023	

There have been several campaigns during the fourth quarter to encourage residents to reduce waste and increase recycling including not being able to recycle wet cardboard (soggy and sad), promoting home composting and providing discounted compost bins as well as supporting the national campaign to reduce food waste through love food, hate waste by providing recipes and tips for using up leftovers.	March 2023	
The Council has actively promoted climate change activities such as warm homes, Solar together, green homes grant, ride anywhere as well as sharing the success stories from the community tree and bulbs planting scheme and the creative climate change challenge for schools. Several businesses have also created videos to showcase how they are tackling climate change and these have been shared through our social media outlets including the business newsletter.	March 2023	
Carry out drainage works at Braintree cemetery to eliminate flooding and increase burial capacity		
Due to the original quotes for the drainage works at Braintree cemetery coming back more expensive than anticipated, a more cost-effective solution is being sought. A value engineered design has been drafted and submitted to the Environment Agency. The end date of the project has been revised accordingly.	June 2022	
Carry out refurbishments to eight play areas across the district providing improved facilities for young people to enjoy		
The contract to carry out improvements to play areas at Church Street in Bocking, Acorn Avenue in Braintree, Shaw Road in Witham and De Vere Road in Earls Colne has been awarded. Due to issues with supplies, the improvements are not expected to start until the first quarter in 2022/23 and the end date of the project has been updated to take into account the issues with the supply chain.	May 2022	
Consult with local residents and users of our skate parks at Weavers Park in Braintree and Spa Road in Witham around replacement of facilities		
Head of Operations met with the Councils Senior Landscape Architect to clarify the strategic requirements of the project to ensure the public consultation questionnaire can be designed around this. Public consultation will take place later in the year.	June 2022	
Create a garden of remembrance at Bocking cemetery providing a peaceful environment for families to visit		
The works to create the garden of remembrance at Bocking cemetery have been awarded and a pre-construction meeting will be taking place in May with the landscape architects. It is anticipated that works will start in June 2022.	July 2022	





Actions carried out in partnership with others






Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Deliver actions set out in our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to achieve our long term aims of being a carbon neutral district		
<p>A scheme to collect unwanted small electrical items such as toasters and hairdryers has been given the go ahead to continue across the Braintree District, following a successful trial last year ensuring that potentially hazardous waste is properly disposed of, preventing harm to the environment. The Council also supported Food Waste Action Week in March by sharing messages about the impact of food waste on climate change raising people's awareness of the huge impact of household food waste on climate change, Practical advice and tips were shared on how food waste can be reduced.</p> <p>The Council is still waiting for updated government guidance in several areas following the Environmental Bill receiving Royal Assent in November 2021 and we continue to review our action plan to ensure it reflects the national picture and partnership working with Essex County Council. The action plan will be taken to Cabinet in July.</p>	March 2023	

Involve residents and communities in tree and bulb planting across the district		
A high number of applications were received for planting packages. In total, 41,600 bulbs and 4,850 tree whips were handed out to Parish and Town Councils, Schools, Colleges, Charities and local community and voluntary groups. Success stories of planting across the district can be seen on our climate change pages of our website at https://www.braintree.gov.uk/advice-environment/climate-change/6 as well as encouraging everyone who has planted trees to plot their location on the Queens Green Canopy Map.	December 2021	
Complete our trial of anti-litter signage and continue to deter people from littering along highway verges		
The trial of the anti-litter signage closed in November 2021 after a year of strategically placing signs along the highway network. During the trial, there was a reduction in the litter discarded along the highway verges and the merits of the signs were clear. The results will be discussed with Essex Highways and discussions will take place to see if the signs are to become a permanent arrangement across the district.	November 2021	










Actions carried out by Braintree District Council


Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Replace the artificial grass pitch at Braintree Sports and Health Club		
The initial pitch designed has been confirmed and the tender document to procure a project management company drafted. This will be sent out in April via the framework model. The works will be carried out in the summer holidays.	September 2022	
Carry out physical improvements to Braintree Sports and Health club and Halstead Leisure Centre		
The improvements to the sports hall and studio floor at Braintree sports and health club have been postponed for future budget consideration. This project has been closed and will be considered as part of the budget preparations for a future year.	March 2023	
The replacement of the boilers and building plant management systems at Braintree sports and health club were completed in February 2022.	March 2022	
The capital bid to carry out the refurbishments to the wet and dry changing facilities at Halstead Leisure Centre were agreed at Full Council in February 2022. A further bid is being submitted towards payment of the hoist system.	March 2023	

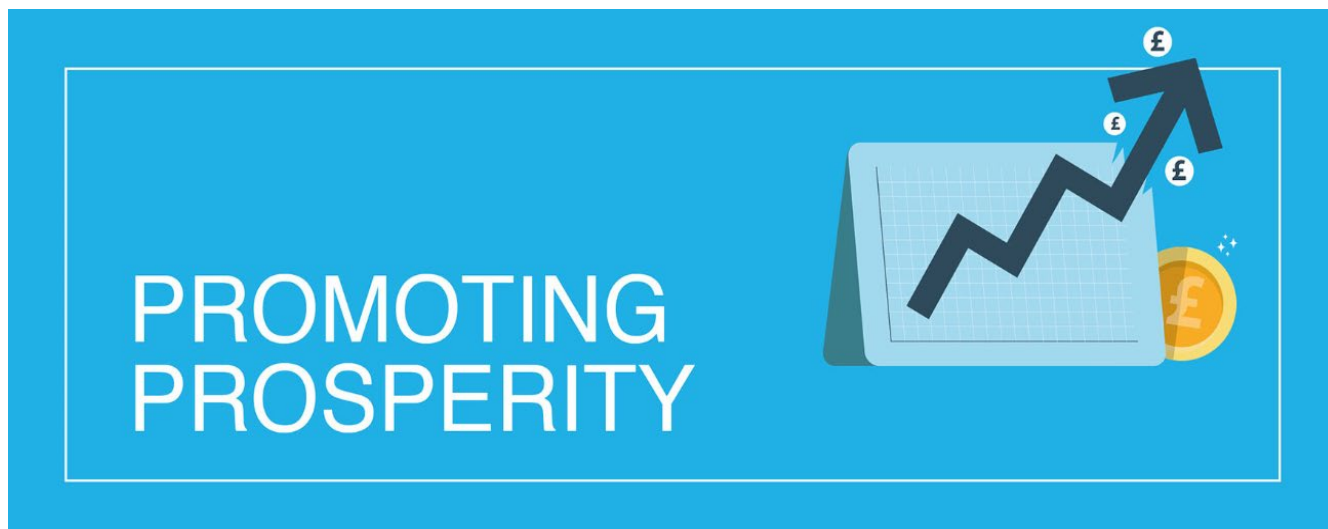
Revitalise our Community Transport scheme and increase the number of volunteers		
A total of 21 volunteer drivers have been recovered across the service including one new volunteer. The Community transport team provided 5,809 passenger journeys in the fourth quarter and a total of 16,523 passenger journeys for the year mainly in respect of transport to vaccinations, food bank parcel deliveries, appointments, shopping and social activities.	March 2023	
Deliver the Braintree District Volunteer Awards to recognise the contribution volunteers make in our district		
The volunteer awards will take place at The Plaza and the date has been moved to August to allow for the completion of the building. Sponsorship work is ongoing and it is expected that the money raised will cover the cost of the event. Nominations for the awards will open in May 2022.	August 2022	
Continue to work with communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live through the development of local neighbourhood plans		
There are five completed plans in the District at Bradwell, Hatfield Peverel and Cressing, The Salings and Coggeshall. The Kelvedon Neighbourhood Plan has completed its examination and went to referendum in March 2022. The Feering Neighbourhood Plan has completed regulation 16 and is currently awaiting the appointment of an examiner. There are a further eight plans underway in the District at Earls Colne, Gosfield, Steeple Bumpstead, Great Yeldham, Great Bardfield, Stisted and Toppesfield, as well as the joint plan at Bures/Bures St Mary.	March 2023	
Set up a young people's panel to encourage more young people to have their say on things that matter to them		
Due to the high levels of Omicron in the district at the beginning of the fourth quarter, schools have been reluctant to have outside visitors into schools and there has not been the level of progress made as expected. We have continued to work with youth groups, Essex Police and the Youth Service to plan some short assemblies for secondary schools for when they can go back into schools.	March 2023	
Continue to deliver our LiveWell programme, focussing on:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children and their families to have the best start in life • Supporting older people to age well • Supporting children and adults to have good mental health • Tackling obesity in adults and children • Reducing hip fractures in over 65's 		
The health and wellbeing panel are reviewing the priorities of the health and wellbeing board and information is currently being collated by partners to help understand the changes required. A number of activities continue to be delivered under the Livewell programme including organised walks, fitness classes for people with health conditions, seated exercise classes, dance lessons, weight management sessions and meet up Mondays and Tuesdays.	March 2023	

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Work with Community 360 and Active Essex to provide support to children and families who need it during school holiday periods through the provision of activity sessions		
We continue to work with Active Essex and Community 360 to provide activities and a nutritious meal through the school holiday periods. The half term programme is funded by Essex County Council and Basildon Borough Council in recognition of the support needed through these shorter school holidays and despite the storms in the February half term, six centres provided support across the district providing 620 spaces for children. Preparations for Easter holiday clubs are well underway with eligible families able to book from mid-March.	March 2023	
Continue to work with Community 360 to promote volunteering opportunities and support the voluntary sector		




Plans for a volunteering campaign are still on hold due to resources being moved to support the Ukrainian refugee scheme.	March 2023	
Continue to develop a range of initiatives to address social isolation and loneliness across the district		
A working group has been set up to plan activities for Loneliness Awareness week (13 th - 17 th June). Activities being considered include Cuppa and Co where coffee mornings or afternoons will be held, pop up lounges for people to sit and have a chat, joining in with jigsaws to encourage people to join in conversations	March 2023	
Continue to work with Essex County Council on the Governments 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' on initiatives to prevent rough sleepers returning to the streets		
Six units of accommodation became available in February 2022 aimed at supporting rough sleepers/those at risk of rough sleeping to develop independent living skills and improve tenancy sustainment. At the end of March 2022, five of the six units are now occupied.	March 2023	
Continue to raise awareness through the Community Safety Partnership of hidden harms such as exploitation and domestic abuse		
Targeted action, training and awareness continues to take place in two areas of Witham that are causing concern in relation to children & young people going missing and exploitation. Almost 50 representatives across multiple agencies attended a hidden harms awareness session in February, delivered by Children and Young People First to increase knowledge and awareness of county lines, exploitation and modern slavery issues. The Community Safety Partnership have updated their plan around five key priority areas: focusing on protecting the vulnerable, promoting healthy relationships, keeping safe online, building community resilience and promoting safety in our communities. This action will be updated to report against all priorities of the partnership.	March 2023	
Work with the integrated care system and Health and Wellbeing panel to understand local health inequalities and develop the role of Primary Care Networks to support and improve the health of our communities		
Officers from the council continue to attend the Mid Essex Alliance meetings and we are working with them to deliver a PCN workshop in May 2022. At the last PCN workshop in March 2022, the following objectives were discussed: - To consider how PCNs and partners fit within the evolving health and care system in Braintree, the local need and the opportunities for local collaboration. - To think creatively about where we could focus to begin to reduce inequalities in Braintree. - To explore the perspectives of key partners in our systems and communities. - To get to know one another better and think about how we would like to work together in future. - To learn some practical tools and techniques to help us build relationships and lead conversations. - To agree to commitment to continuing this work and monitoring impact for our population. A Members Development session focusing on health was held on 24th February. Presentations from Mid Essex Alliance provided an insight into the newly formed Integrated Care Boards and plans for how the Integrated Care System (ICS) will operate. ECC Public Health also presented on highlighting the need to use an evidence led approach to public health and to look at the wider determinants of health.	March 2023	
Work with our leisure providers to get people back into activity improving their physical and mental health		
Man v Fat Football launched in January at Halstead and has been a great success. Whilst many people have reconnected with their exercise routine since the easing of the Covid restrictions, some are still be nervous about attending large, organised events such as Parkrun. A 5k run is being organised to celebrate the queen's jubilee and will be limited to 99 participants to encourage families to try some light physical activity. Other activities ongoing across the district include Sport for	March 2023	

Confidence (approx. 223 participants), cardiac rehab (56 participants), My Weight Matters (52 participants) and walks (238 participants)		
Engage with school age children and young adults through careers, jobs and apprenticeship fairs to inspire young people to raise their aspirations		
A virtual jobs fair was delivered on the 31st March 2022 in partnership with Essex County Council. The Town Hall was opened to provide an access point for those who do not access to the internet or digital devices. We are currently waiting on the statistics to ascertain how successful the event was	March 2023	






Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue with the development of Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park creating up to 2,000 high quality jobs		
The Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park continues to be developed.	March 2023	
Complete the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre providing space for conferences and events as well as serviced offices, café and public plaza for start-up companies and SMEs		
The supply chain issues have now been resolved and practical completion is now programmed for the 30 th June 2022. The building has been renamed The Plaza.	July 2022	
Develop the Witham Enterprise Centre providing small industrial units for start-up companies and SMEs		
The original architect has been dismissed and an alternative practice is now being considered. This will impact on timescales for the project and a revised end date will be considered when new architects are appointed.	March 2024	
Complete the I-construct innovation centre supporting the development of SMEs in the construction sector		
I-Construct, a £2.3 million centre of excellence for construction innovation, has opened for business. Building work finished in December, 15 months after it began. The two-storey building consist of a technology suite, exhibition space, conference facilities and informal meeting areas. It is home to a team offering one-to-one mentoring, grant schemes and advice to small and medium sized firms connected to the construction industry. The business support programme at the hub will be	December 2021	

run by the Haven Gateway Partnership and will serve businesses across Essex, Kent and East Sussex. The programme will support over 350 businesses and create up to 130 jobs. I-Construct was officially opened by Chairman Councillor Sue Wilson in a ribbon cutting ceremony in February 2022.		
Refresh our Plan for Growth to identify future priorities and deliver the outcomes of the associated Action Plan		
The procurement process has been completed and consultants have been appointed to start in April on this project. A detailed timetable now needs to be agreed.	March 2023	
Deliver campaigns to promote Braintree District as a place to invest in, live in and visit		
Several events have been promoted to encourage families into Town Centres including Food and drink markets, street entertainers, cycling activities, walks and the street markets. Family activities were also promoted in the Visit Braintree District Website for the February half term. Other promotions include the opening of I-construct, local plan consultation, Superfast Essex to explain full fibre, gigaclear broadband and how to access it. A new website called Locate Braintree District was launched in March showcasing reasons why businesses should invest, people should live and visitors should visit the district. The new site links to the existing Visit Braintree District website.	March 2023	
Support individuals back into employment by addressing barriers and providing tailored support and access to training		
As of the end of March we have a caseload of 87 individuals, 6 new starts with 18 social justice outcomes being achieved. We have been invited to submit a funding application for further funding for this role for 2022/23.	March 2023	

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Rise to the economic challenges by working in partnership with members of the North Essex Economic board to provide support to businesses and create opportunities to boost growth		
A revised pipeline of contacts for businesses in the Braintree District who are from the construction industry or the supply chain to the construction industry is provided regularly to Haven Gateway Partnership to contact businesses directly and promote the offer of I-Construct. A new marketing campaign is being drafted to encourage Springwood Industrial Estate businesses to sign up.	March 2023	
Continue to develop the business support offer for the construction sector as part of the I-construct innovation centre		
A pipeline of contacts for businesses in the Braintree District who are from the construction industry or the supply chain, has been provided to Haven Gateway Partnership to promote the offer of I-Construct. A promotional bag of business support information and an invite to the launch of I-construct was provided to all relevant businesses on Springwood industrial estate and officers in the Economic Development Team have worked with the Asset Management Team to agree a discount for room rentals for springwood industrial estate businesses to access I-construct.	March 2023	
Continue to provide signposting to business support, advice and suitable grants		
All grant funding for 2021/22 has been allocated to Braintree district businesses. Plans are being drafted to roll out future grant funding such as the Shared Prosperity Fund, however until it is made known what the district allocation will be, nothing can be considered for approval to date.	March 2023	
Ensure residents have access to the skills programmes and education they need to access		

employment opportunities including in new and expanding sectors

A meeting for the Essex Skills Plan working group was held on the 25th January 2022 with Essex County Council, skills providers and key stakeholders to discuss how we can identify and fill skills gaps within the County and identify the emerging priorities for change. These keys priorities can be applied to Braintree District and key research has begun to identify skills gaps and education programmes, which will inform both the Essex Skills plan and Braintree plan for growth.








March
2023




DELIVERING AND INNOVATING

**Actions carried out by Braintree District Council**

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Through our Investment and Development Programme, continue to develop and implement a pipeline of projects focussed on reducing costs, improving efficiency, generating income and becoming more commercially focussed to deliver against the £1.6m financial gap over the next four years.		
In year 1 of the Investment and Development Programme £106,200 was delivered with £84,200 in year 1 and a further £22,000 for years 2 and 3. The pipeline is currently £1,640,720. Of the total four-year programme £157,200 has been included as part of the Mid Term Financial Strategy. The projects delivered in the last year include the renegotiation of the Essex Libraries Service Level Agreement, the embedding of the shared events team and the replacement of the marketplace system.	March 2023	
Refresh our Digital Strategy and action plan to address future demand and improve the way we use technology to deliver services		
An initial internal Digital Strategy Kick off meeting has been scheduled for May 2022, with key dates and resources required for the project to be confirmed by end of May 2022.	September 2022	
Encourage residents to transact with us on line by developing our website to allow customers to make bookings, track requests and sign up to receive council tax bills electronically		
A sports pitch booking form is currently with the service for final sign off before creating the online booking system due to go live in June 2022. The Plaza Meeting Rooms and Hatchery spaces will be added to the Braintree Venues website in readiness for the opening of the Plaza building in the summer.	July 2022	













Residents are now able to sign up to receive their council tax bills electronically and promotion of this will be ongoing.	March 2022	
Develop a plan of community engagement to better understand the needs of our local communities		
Three Community Catch Up Events are being organised in Braintree, Witham and Halstead and will be promoted to local groups. Other opportunities for community engagement are being explored such as Working with Care UK on event in Halstead for Dying Matters week in May, organising a schools 'Forget Me Not' trail for May half term, Little Legs Festival and Armed Forces day in June as well as helping out with the social isolation events	March 2023	
Use customer information and feedback to improve services whilst working towards retaining the accreditation for customer service excellence		
The assessment has been re-arranged for September 2022 as the original dates of the assessment clashed with the recruitment of the Chief Executive. Evidence continues to be pulled together for the assessment.	September 2022	
Review the criteria for the discretionary business rates scheme for charitable and non-profit organisations		
Letters have been sent with annual bills providing notice to relevant businesses that the scheme is being reviewed this year. Businesses will be invited to apply once the scheme (to be applied from April 2023) has been agreed.	March 2023	
Monitor changes to various legislation to understand the impact on services including but not limited to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Environmental Bill 2020 and Planning reforms		
A new Domestic Abuse specialist post has been advertised to provide specialist homelessness support to housing officers around domestic abuse and ensure all aspects of casework are carried out in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance	March 2023	
The Council is waiting for the Government to formally announce the policy changes (expected Spring 2022) within the Environment Act. This will enable the Council to understand the impact of the Act in relation to its Waste Collection Service.	June 2022	
Work is underway to consider the implications of the Environment Bill and in particular the biodiversity net gain. The Planning White Paper now appears to be combined into a Levelling Up White Paper but the timing of this are not clear. The Council is still dependent on the timings of government announcements and the content of those announcements.	March 2023	





Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Work with Fusion to recover and develop leisure services following the pandemic ensuring the district has the right type and level of leisure provision to meet resident's needs		
As national restrictions have now been lifted, Fusion are starting to see an increase in participation levels. They are not yet back to pre-pandemic level and Fusion will be reviewing their membership options to ensure they are in line with competitors. Targets for participation levels were removed during the pandemic and the Council will start to look at baseline figures to re-set targets for 2023.	March 2023	

Section 3: Managing the Business

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	2021/22								
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Target for the end of the year	Status at the end of the year
CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES									
Number of affordable homes delivered	91	99	111	116	37		417	250	
Percentage of superfast broadband coverage across the district	95%	95%	95%	95%	n/a	n/a	95%	n/a	n/a
Cumulative number of homes granted planning permission (outline and full)	654	709	881	941	1,080		941	1,080	
Comments This indicator reports cumulatively on the outline and full planning applications granted permission. Figures will fluctuate each quarter depending on the size of the applications. In the first quarter, one outline application counts towards 575 homes The breakdown between full and outline permissions since April through to the end of September are as follows: Full – 212 Outline - 729 Whilst the 5 year housing land supply position looking forward from March 2021 has shown just over a 5 year supply within this year, the number of permissions granted has not made the yearly target which could cause issues when the 5 year housing supply is rolled forward to March 2022. However, officers are currently in pre application discussions with the biggest allocated housing site in the Local Plan, which if approved in the year 2022/3, would make up the shortfall in approvals this year.									
ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT									
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	54.37%	54.36%	46.82%	41.79%	60%		49.83%	60%	
Comments The recycling target is an aspirational target set by the Essex Waste Partnership. The tonnage of recycling at Qtr. 4 was down by 891 tonnes compared to the same period last year. This quarter includes the suspension of the green waste service. In 2021-22 the total tonnage of waste that was recycled was 1,270 tonnes higher compared to the same period last year. These figures are estimated and are subject to final validation by Essex County Council. We continue with promotional work around waste reduction and increasing recycling to encourage change in attitudes and behaviours.									
Kilograms of residual household waste collected per household	114kgs	116kgs	106kgs	122kgs	117kgs		458kgs	468kgs	
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	7%	5%	2%	6%		4.67%	6%	
Number and percentage of accessible non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (198)	100% (205)	100% (172)	100% (200)	100%		100% (775)	100%	
Number of residents assisted in installing energy saving measures	Annually reported						Currently awaiting figures from providers	n/a	n/a

Performance Indicator	2021/22								
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Target for the end of the year	Status at the end of the year
SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES									
Average waiting time for applicants on the Disabled Facilities Grant (calculated in days from point of referral to approval)	211 days	205 days	180 days	199 days	90 days		199 days	90 days	
Comments Five grants have taken over a year to bring to approval for various reasons relating to covid, the complexity of the grants and the accessibility and wishes of the clients. Removing those 5 outliers reduces the average to 142 days. The team are still clearing the backlog of cases delayed by Covid and the wishes of the clients to delay appointments.									
Participation levels across all our sports centres	91,643	135,223	137,813	177,861	n/a	n/a	542,538	n/a	n/a
Participation of adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported						56.9%	n/a	n/a
Comments The figure reports from November 2020 to November 2021. The restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic have impacted on people's ability to take part in sport and physical activity with activity levels hit hardest during the first national lockdown. Sports England are working with partners to increase levels through several campaigns and funding opportunities.									
Number of customers using out Handyman scheme	25	19	60	48	n/a	n/a	152	n/a	n/a
Number of homelessness cases prevented	64	54	67	61	n/a	n/a	246	n/a	n/a
PROMOTING PROSPERITY									
Percentage of people in the district claiming out of work benefits rate (aged 16 – 64)	4.3%	3.7%	3.2%	2.9%	n/a	n/a	2.9%	n/a	n/a
Number of new business start-ups across the district	259	217	247	288	n/a	n/a	1,011	n/a	n/a
Number of businesses that have contacted us for business support	191	451	387	404	n/a	n/a	1,433	n/a	n/a
DELIVERING AND INNOVATING									
Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the Customer Service Centre	73%	74%	71%	73%	n/a	n/a	73%	n/a	n/a
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt (cumulative)	97.08%	95.77%	96.49%	96.4%	99.25%		96.4%	99.25%	
Comments This indicator is now reported cumulatively to provide a better understanding of the position with paying invoices. Since the start of the financial year, 10,331 payments out of 10,716 have been paid within 30 days of receipt of the invoice. The target will be reviewed considering organisational changes and the emphasis on services receipting goods.									
Number of people transacting with us online	39,311	32,278	29,569	33,861	n/a	n/a	135,019	n/a	n/a

Performance Indicator	2021/22								
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Target for the end of the year	Status at the end of the year
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	16.48 days	14.33 days	14.85 days	16.43 days	20 days	✓	15.75 days	20 days	✓
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	5.59 days	4.64 days	3.67%	4.78 days	6 days	✓	4.76 days	6 days	✓
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 7 working days	93.51%	94.83%	91.67%	95.16%	90%	✓	93.66%	90%	✓
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.10%	57.48%	84.70%	97.39%	98.30%	⚠	97.39%	98.30%	⚠
Comments <i>The target is based on the pre-Covid collection performance recorded in 2019. The outturn this year is above the average across all Essex Authorities. We were almost ¾% higher than 2020/21 collection.</i>									
Collection rate for Business Rates	25.80%	51.57%	81.77%	98.66%	98.60%	✓	98.66%	98.60%	✓

Complaints

The quarterly complaints analysis for the fourth quarter of 2021/22 is detailed below. This is compared with 2020/21 figures shown in brackets. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

Complaint Category	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Q4 2021/22	TOTAL
Justified	51 (43)	67 (51)	39 (53)	49 (50)	206 (197)
Not Justified	82 (55)	68 (56)	49 (43)	60 (73)	259 (227)
Partially Justified	26 (19)	46 (22)	7 (19)	18 (28)	97 (88)
Not known	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)
Total	159 (117)	185 (129)	91 (115)	128 (152)	563 (513)

Comments

There has been an increase in the number of complaints this quarter compared to the previous quarter, however, this is lower than the number of complaints received in the first half of the year. At the time of writing the report, one complaint at stage 3 of the complaints process was still being investigated.

The majority of complaints received are in our Operations service area in respect of missed waste collections with access issues, contaminated waste and missed assisted collections continuing to be the main reasons.

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

In the fourth quarter of 2021/22, of the 128 complaints received:

- 124 are stage one complaints
- 3 are stage two complaints
- 1 is a stage three complaint

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

In the fourth quarter of 2021/22, the LGO has received two new complaint enquiries, both in respect of the Planning service.

The first complaint they declined to investigate as there was no evidence of fault by the Council. The second complaint has temporarily been closed as the complaint to the LGO was premature as the planning application has yet to be determined.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22	Q4 21/22	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	495	492	494	492	- 2	-
Total staff FTE	446.07	441.97	443.2	443.8	+0.6	-
Level of employee turnover	3.03%	2.24%	2.63%	2.85%	+0.22%	-
Number of leavers	15	11	13	14	+1	-
Number of starters	11	8	15	12	- 3	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.4 days	1.72 days	1.94 days	2.12 days	+ 0.18 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	84.8%	71.95%	60.53%	54.88%	N/A Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	1365.5	1556	2594	160	- 2,434	-
Number of delegates	189	169	152	83	- 69	-
Number of apprentices **	16	14	19	19	0	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	464	466	481	492	499	492

** BDC's apprenticeship programme runs throughout the year. The figures reflect various apprenticeships ranging from level 3 through to a degree level 6

Health & Safety

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

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

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	(2020/21 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	8 (10)	7 (13)	9 (10)	15 (12)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	6 (8)	6 (11)	8 (8)	11 (9)	<i>Slips, trips and falls make the majority of the accidents</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	2 (2)	1 (2)	1 (1)	0 (3)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	4 (0)	
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	0 (0)	10 (5)	22 (18.5)	26 (16)	
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	2 (2)	1 (4)	1 (1)	1 (0)	
Number of near miss incidents	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)	
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	2 (0)	1 (2)	3 (3)	3 (2)	
Number of claims settled	1 (1)	0 (1)	3 (1)	2 (1)	

Financial Performance

Summary

This part of the report provides a review of the financial position for the year. It examines the provisional outturn spending on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year, including the impact of the pandemic. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; movements on the General Fund balance; and a summary of spend on capital projects in the year.

The financial position for the year is as follows:

- **A positive variance of £480k** after allowing for service carry forwards.
- The **impact of the pandemic** on the council's financial position is estimated around **£1.0m**, which has been contained within Government and other funding received.
- Savings and additional income totalling £401k reflected in the outturn have already been included in the budget approved for 2022/23.
- The change in the **General Fund unallocated balance** is an **increase of £58k**.
- **Spend on capital projects** for the year totalled **£30.6m** with the majority of the spend incurred on the Manor Street development, the Horizon 120 enterprise centre ('The Plaza'), Horizon 120 business park infrastructure, the I-Construct Innovation Centre and Braintree town centre improvement works.

Background

The budget approved for expenditure on services was £15.4m. This amount was to be financed from a combination of: general government grants (£0.4m); business rates (£5m); and Council Tax (£10m). During the year service budgets may be updated in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure.

General Fund Revenue Spending

Service	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Adverse (Positive) variance				Total £'000	RAG Status
			Staffing £'000	Other Exp. £'000	Gross Income £'000	Carry forwards £'000		
Asset Management	(2,479)	(2,597)	19	(10)	(127)	-	(118)	G
Community & Leisure	754	975	(71)	92	200	15	236	R
Corporate Management Plan	1,496	1,436	(93)	25	8	-	(60)	G
Economic Development	216	200	1	(17)	-	-	(16)	G
Environment	774	662	(9)	(20)	(83)	94	(18)	G
Finance	1,425	1,368	(142)	133	(48)	35	(22)	G
Governance	1,210	1,088	(25)	(58)	(39)	2	(120)	G
Housing Services	956	861	(6)	39	(128)	111	16	A
Human Resources	351	352	(1)	2	-	-	1	A
ICT & Facilities	1,714	1,698	21	(33)	(4)	-	(16)	G
Marketing & Communications	614	558	(14)	(14)	(28)	-	(56)	G
Operations	6,340	6,018	(105)	209	(426)	409	87	R
Strategic Investment	23	23	-	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,031	1,166	(98)	134	99	58	193	R
Service Total	14,425	13,808	(523)	482	(576)	725	108	R
Corporate Financing	1,308	1,441	147	194	(208)	-	133	R
Efficiency	(300)	-	300	-	-	-	300	
Total Budget Variance¹	15,433	15,249	(76)	676	(784)	725	541	R
COVID-19 general grant					(510)	-	(510)	G
COVID-19 specific grants & income compensation					(511)	-	(511)	G
Net Total General Fund	15,433	14,414	(76)	676	(1,805)	725	(480)	G

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

¹See Analysis of the Total Budget Variance below

Analysis of the Total Budget Variance

Except where specific expenditure is being incurred, it is difficult to be precise about the extent to which the budget variances set out above have arisen solely as a result of the Covid pandemic, therefore judgement has been used.

Reason for budget variance:	Adverse (positive) variance					RAG Status
	Staffing £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Carry Forwards £'000	Total £'000	
Covid-19 (before Govt. funding)	194	446	381	-	1,021	R
Base budget	(270)	230	(1,165)	725	(480)	G
Total Budget Variance	(76)	676	(784)	725	541	R

Certain activities required in response to the pandemic have been undertaken by reprioritising the work of services and this element of the resource input is not included in the above analysis.

The position regarding the Base Budget is a net positive variance of £1.2m, before Carry Forwards which compares to the position reported at Q3 of £699k. The main changes during the final quarter relate to the following factors:

- **Council Tax Sharing Agreement (+£237k income)** – The financial gain achieved under this agreement increased in the final quarter due to a combination of reasons: continuous success in the collection of prior year debt; an overall improvement in the in-year collection rate achieved for the year; and recognising the overall collection performance across all billing authorities in the County. Consequently, the percentage of the preceptor's share of the extra Council Tax collected and shared back to the authority increased from an initial 12% to 14%. This improvement is on the back of a significant shortfall in the amount received in 2020/21 as restrictions were in place on seeking recovery through the courts due to the pandemic.
- **Increase in external Income (+£84k)** - In the last quarter, there has been a higher than anticipated increase in income from licensing (£35k), attributable mainly to new business from a large taxi operator; an increase in income from interment ceremonies (£25k); and additional rental income from the commercial portfolio (£24k) as occupation rates remained high.
- **Housing Benefits Net Cost (-£46k)** – A reduction in net cost following receipt of confirmation of the status of a temporary accommodation facility increasing housing subsidy recovery up to 100% of eligible benefits paid.
- **Homelessness & Temporary Accommodation (-£41k expenditure)** - Approval was obtained in the last quarter from DLUHC to allow grant to be applied to a wider range of costs meaning that some base budget expenditure has been funded from grant allowing resources to be carried forward into 2022/23 in anticipation of increased demands on this service.

Carry Forwards

Carry Forwards totalling £725k, including a £361k transfer to a new recycling income reserve, were agreed by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation on 10th May 2022.

Net Total for the General Fund

After taking into account Government and other funding received in relation to the financial impact from the Covid pandemic, the Net Total for the General Fund is a positive variance of £480k.

Commentary on the impact on the budget due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The budget impact from the Covid pandemic is just over £1m, which is mainly as a result of the following:

- Support provided to the Council's leisure operator whilst services were being remobilised after multiple periods of national lockdown and other local restrictions, and recognising the additional measures that had to be put in place to ensure that all facilities continued to operate in accordance with the appropriate guidance and advice. The financial implications of this support is reflected in the reported position for Community & Leisure, which is partially offset by funds received from the National Leisure Recovery Fund.
- Additional grant funded expenditure was incurred aimed at putting in place additional measures to create and promote a safe environment for local trade and tourism, particularly in high streets as local economies reopened; and for helping to reduce the spread of coronavirus and support local public health initiatives.
- Reductions in fees and charges, primarily from off-street car parking, but also other services including Community Transport, the Town Hall Centre, and Markets. The Government committed to continue to provide compensation to local authorities at a rate of 75p in the £ for net losses across certain income streams for the period April to June. A claim was submitted and £108k received under this scheme.

The Government allocated unringfenced grant of £686k for Covid as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22, of which £510k has been utilised in-year towards meeting the £1m impact, with the balance of £176k being transferred to the Covid reserve. A further £511k from various sources of Covid related funding has been applied to meet the remaining balance of the financial impact of the pandemic. New burdens funding received in the final quarter of 2021/22 has been added to the Covid reserve.

It is anticipated that further expenditure will be incurred as a result of Covid, including on capital projects where contractors have indicated that final account claims are likely to include requests for increased costs due to time delays and additional expenditure incurred from complying with government guidance on site operating procedures.

Commentary on Base 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.

Across all service areas staffing budgets were underspent by £523k partially offset by £147k additional expenditure as result of Covid related activities. After allowing for the corporate efficiency factor of £300k, the net underspend was £76k.

The main reasons for the staffing underspends were delays in recruiting to vacant posts, changes in hours and scale points, and other staffing efficiencies.

Other Service Expenditure

Excluding the additional £446k of costs incurred due to Covid, there is a net overspend against the base budget of £230k, which reflects a combination of variances across service areas:

- **Housing Benefits Net Cost (+£145k)** – a complex area involving significant demand-led expenditure in benefits paid to claimants and subsidy received from government. The level of subsidy receivable is subject to claim types where the rate of compensation to the Council can vary. Although there has been an improvement in the last quarter, a net additional cost was incurred based on pre-audit final claim data.
- **Waste Management** costs arising from the additional cost and replacement of wheelie bins – this is due to a mixture of housing growth where grey and green bins are provided, and replacement of damaged bins (**+£90k**). Higher fleet costs due to a combination of fuel price increases (**+£21k**);

and additional hired vehicles, partly covering new vehicles that were awaiting delivery, and to cover the catch-up period following the extended Christmas/ New-year break in service. **(+£100k)**.

- **Street Cleansing (+£59k)** - Higher fleet operating costs as a result of fuel prices, maintenance charges, and hired vehicle costs.
- **Housing Services (+£69.4k)** – Additional cost of providing B and B accommodation which has been funded by an increase in government funding.
- **Planning Enforcement (Net +£40k)** - Additional costs were incurred including legal costs on pursuing planning enforcement cases through the courts; however, the Council has been awarded costs in a number of cases.
- **Landscape Services (+£54k)** - Unbudgeted fees in relation to externalised landscaping works undertaken by Essex County Council due to staff vacancies. This is offset by a positive variance within salaries.
- **External Audit Fees (+£52k)** – A provision has been made for increased audit fees partially from a new 'Use of Resources' requirement introduced by the National Audit Office, and also to reflect an estimated increase in fees for prior year audits. Final fee levels will need to be requested by the auditor and ultimately agreed with the Public Sector Auditor Appointments body.

Within the overall position there are some areas where positive variances have occurred:

- **Essex Pension Fund (-£58k)** – payments to the fund were lower in relation to prior year discretionary benefits.
- **Housing Services (-£48k)** - Recharges from Eastlight Community Housing for voids and repairs on temporary housing accommodation were lower than budgeted **(-£34k)**, and there was an overall underspend on the rent support scheme used to help people access private rented housing **(-£12k)**.
- **Cordons Farm (-£71k)** - Reduced operating costs part of which was from less frequent emptying of the interceptor tank as a result of improved drainage and favourable weather conditions.
- **Governance Services (-£41k)** - Expenditure on Members' allowances and expenses were less than budgeted; and cost savings were made in Electoral Services, partially offsetting a reduction in Cabinet Office grant for Individual Electoral Registration.
- **Customer Services (-£28k)** – A saving was made on the payment for services provided through Essex Libraries.
- **Highway Verge Maintenance (-£35k)** – Expenditure was less due to a reduction in the number of cuts of rural verges.
- **Causeway House (-£25k)** – Net reduction in running costs (after allowing for service charge adjustments).

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. These income streams are normally fairly predictable or fluctuate in response to compensating changes in expenditure. Where uncertainty exists this is managed via earmarked reserves, e.g. the business rate retention reserve. Other income is more susceptible to changes in external factors / service demand and is summarised in the following table.

Service	Updated Budget	Joint Financing & Other Reimburs.	Sales, Fees & Charges	Rents & Service Charges	Other Income	Total	RAG status
		8,440	6,244	3,370	1,682	19,736	
	£000	Adverse (Positive) Variance £000 against Budget :					
Asset Management	3,602	(4)	(1)	(112)	(10)	(127)	G
Community & Leisure	717	(8)	202	-	6	200	R
Corporate Management Plan	10	8	-	-	-	8	A
Economic Development	643	-	-	-	-	-	G
Environment	928	20	(74)	-	(29)	(83)	G
Finance	2,452	63	(1)	-	(110)	(48)	G
Governance	210	(19)	(41)	-	21	(39)	G
Housing	102	-	(93)	7	(42)	(128)	G
Human Resources	6	-	-	-	-	-	G
ICT & Facilities	2	(4)	-	-	-	(4)	G
Marketing & Communications	131	-	(2)	-	(26)	(28)	G
Operations	5,521	(151)	(266)	23	(32)	(426)	G
Strategic Investment	263	-	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,742	(71)	190	-	(20)	99	R
Service Total	16,329	(166)	(86)	(82)	(242)	(576)	G
Corporate Financing	2,721	(239)	-	-	31	(208)	A
Total Budget	19,050	(405)	(86)	(82)	(211)	(784)	G
Attributable to:							
Covid-19 impact		(77)	436	22	0	381	R
Base budget		(328)	(522)	(104)	(211)	(1,165)	G

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

The commentary above on Covid-19 provides an explanation of the income activities that have been most affected by the pandemic.

Commentary on Base Budget income variances

The reasons for the overachievement of income against the base budget include:

- **Recycling Material Income (+£378k)** - Higher income from the sale of mixed dry recycling material. The price paid to the Council for material is based on a basket of indices which are reviewed each quarter. The budget had assumed a basket price of £29 per tonne based on the position at that time. However, this increased over the year: Q1 to £38 per tonne, rising to £62 for Q2, £76 for Q3 and £84 for Q4.
- **Housing (+£135.2k)** – Additional income in relation to reclaimed temporary accommodation expenses (£93.8k) as well as unspent in-year Housing Protection Grant (£41.4k) which has been agreed to be carry-forward as per the funding body.
- **Council Tax Sharing Agreement (+£237k)** - Variance due to an increase in collection rate in the final quarter; recovery of prior year debt; and the collective performance of councils across the County. This has resulted in a greater proportion of Council Tax share back from the major preceptors, increasing from 12% to 14%. The better than anticipated performance this year follows 2020/21 where collection was lower and therefore the budget significantly under achieved.
- **Green Waste Recycling Credits (+£57k)** - During the summer season the amount of green waste tonnage collected increased over that expected resulting in additional compost credits.
- **Housing Benefits and Local Council Tax Support Administration grants (+£92k)** – final allocations for these grants were not announced by the respective government departments until after the 2021/22 budget was approved.
- **Local Land Charges (+£39k)** - overachieved against budget as demand for the service remained high particularly during the first half of the year as residential buyers were looking to benefit from

savings on stamp duty. Demand for the service has now returned to pre-covid levels.

- **Licensing (+£62k)** - A positive variance in relation to licensing income due to an increase in applications including new business from a large taxi operator. The legal framework for licensing means that income should be ring-fenced to meeting costs associated with the service and therefore a carry forward has been approved.
- **Commercial Property Rents (+£86k)** - A higher level of occupancy within the commercial property portfolio and upward yields from rent reviews.
- **Non-Commercial property Income (+£36k)** – additional income from two residential properties previously held for disposal, and higher rental income at the Braintree Enterprise Centre.

Partially offsetting this increased income:

- **Planning Income (-£129k Net)** - A significant downturn in planning application and pre-application income was experienced in the final quarter creating an adverse variance (-£208k); however, income from Planning Performance Agreements for the year was higher than anticipated (+£79k).

Treasury Management

Investment activity

The Council's treasury management activity to the end of the financial 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 Matured	
£35.5m	£194m	£172.7m	£56.8m
Average amount invested for the period			£60.1m
Highest amount invested			£73.7m

At the end of the year the Council still held cash from a number of government grant schemes that will need to be repaid or are committed, including the Energy Rebate grant which was received in March and will be distributed to council tax payers early in 2022/23.

Investment income and valuations

Interest and dividends earned to the end of the financial year totalled £856k, which is equivalent to an annualised rate of return of 1.42%:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£19.0m	£825k	4.34%
Short-Term	£41.1m	£31k	0.08%
Total	£60.1m	£856k	1.42%

Investment income of £856k has been achieved against a budget of £709k, an overachievement of £147k. The original budget was reduced by £350k due to an expectation of lower returns from a combination of ultra-low interest rates, a fall in dividend income, and lower projected cash balances. This reduction in budget was to be met by using the Treasury Management reserve, therefore, with the improvement in income for the year this has resulted in less being required from the reserve.

The market value of shares and units in pooled funds at the end of March was £21.9m, representing an unrealised gain of £2.9m over the amount invested.

Investment portfolio

At the end of the financial year the Council's investment portfolio totalled £56.8m and comprised of the following:

- Long-term pooled fund investments £19m (allocated: £3m property fund; £13m equity funds; and £3m in diversified asset funds);
- Low volatility Money Market Funds (MMFs) £20m;
- Variable net asset value MMF £4m;
- Debt Management Office Account Facility £13m
- Lloyds current account £0.8m.

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

	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2021	5,999
Addition/(deductions):	
Budgeted reduction	(320)
Funding for one-off investment	(1,139)
Pension Fund triennial payment - repayment	823
Refund of prior year costs	86
Outturn variance (net carry forwards)	480
Earmarked Reserve Review	128
Balance at 31 March 2022	6,057

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

- The approved budget included an anticipated reduction in balances of £320k.
- An allocation from General Fund balances was approved by Full Council to meet one-off budget requirements: £1m to be set aside to deal with the potential impact of Covid on services; £75k for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme; £7k for a Noise Level meter; and a total of £58k as provision for loss of income during the redevelopment of Manor Street.
- A one-off payment was made in 2020/21 to the Essex Pension Fund covering the period April 2020 to March 2023, which was part funded from General Fund balances. A repayment back into balances is being made in 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- A refund of prior year court costs was received in the year from the Ministry of Justice of £86k.
- The outturn variance for the year is an overall positive variance of £480k after allowing for carry forwards and a transfer to a new recycling income reserve.
- During 2021/22 an earmarked reserve review was undertaken as part of the MTFS process identifying a total of £128k that was no longer required for the purpose it was set aside.

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. These will then be subject to external audit by BDO LLP. The outcome of the audit could lead to changes in the final outturn.

There are amounts of income included in the outturn that have yet to be confirmed as final in relation to a number of grant and subsidy claims which are subject to post claim assurance reviews and which will not be completed until sometime during 2022/23.

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 the financial position is reviewed ahead of setting the budget for 2023/24.

Capital Investment

The overall planned level of spending in the Council's approved capital programme is currently £43m. Delivery of some of the projects spans a number of years, therefore, the amount profiled to be spent in 2021/22 was £33.2m:

	Profiled Spend 2021/22 £000	Actual Spend at 31.03.22 £000	Actual Spend at 31.03.22 % of Profile
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	3,850	3,371	88%
Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre	9,436	9,213	98%
Manor Street regeneration	13,024	12,290	94%
I-Construct Innovation Centre	1,506	1,366	91%
Town Centre improvements	1,081	1,226	113%
Industrial estate improvements	66	7	11%
Property planned maintenance	396	278	70%
Replacement vehicles and plant	443	443	100%
Information technology systems & equipment	466	66	14%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	262	193	74%
Cemetery improvements	5	7	140%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	19	14	74%
Operational equipment	258	212	82%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	422	412	98%
Climate change initiatives	98	78	80%
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	898	983	109%
Capitalised interest	413	-	0%
Capital salaries	594	452	76%
Total	33,237	30,611	92%

The profiled spend on the programme increased in the final quarter by £237k mainly due to the purchasing a new refuse vehicle, and an agreed contribution towards a replacement heating system at the Braintree Sports & Health Club under the Joint-Use Agreement.

Total spend for the year was £30.6m was mostly in respect of the major projects for the H120 business park, the H120 enterprise centre ('The Plaza'), the Manor Street regeneration and the I-Construct Innovation Centre.

The programme balance of £2.6m is being carried over as it is committed to ongoing projects.

Capital resources

New capital resources in the year included:

Receipts that were generated from arrangements with Eastlight Community Housing (Eastlight) which totalled £2.7m from 19 right-to-buy sales.

Receipts generated by the VAT shelter agreement with Eastlight were £342k for the year.

Two serviced land plots were sold on the H120 business park generating a capital receipt of £8.5m. This, together with sale receipts generated last year are being used to repay the internal borrowing used to finance project expenditure.

The development, sale and transfer of dwellings at the Manor Street regeneration scheme has generated receipts of £6.1m to date, of the total agreed sum of £6.6m. A usable capital receipt of £2.4m has been recognised in respect of 12 units (out of 35) that were completed by the end of March, with the balance to be recognised on practical completion of the remaining 23 units, expected in 2022.

The Council received £1.1m from the Better Care Fund, which has been used to fund expenditure on disabled facilities grants in the year with unused balance increasing resources available for this programme in 2022/23.

Staged claims have been made to drawdown approved funding from European Regional Development Funds, which were awarded for the I-Construct project, and from the government's Getting Building Fund (via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership) for the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre. In total, £7.9m has been received to date, from grant awards totalling £8m.