

COUNCIL AGENDA

Monday, 10th October 2022 at 7:15pm

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

This meeting is open to the public.

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

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

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

Councillor J Abbott
Councillor J Baugh
Councillor Mrs J Beavis
Councillor K Bowers
Councillor G Butland
Councillor J Coleridge
Councillor G Courtauld
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham
Councillor T Cunningham
Councillor C Dervish
Councillor P Euesden
Councillor T Everard
Councillor Mrs D Garrod
Councillor A Hensman
Councillor S Hicks
Councillor P Horner

Councillor D Hume
Councillor H Johnson
Councillor A Kilmartin
Councillor W Korsinah
Councillor D Mann
Councillor T McArdle
Councillor J McKee
Councillor A Munday
Councillor Mrs I Parker
Councillor Mrs J Pell
Councillor I Pritchard
Councillor M Radley
Councillor S Rehman
Councillor F Ricci
Councillor B Rose
Councillor J Sandum

Councillor V Santomauro
Councillor Mrs W Scattergood
Councillor Mrs W Schmitt
Councillor P Schwier
Councillor Mrs G Spray
Councillor P Tattersley
Councillor P Thorogood
Councillor N Unsworth
Councillor R van Dulken
Councillor T Walsh
Councillor L Walters
Councillor Miss M Weeks
Councillor D White
Councillor Mrs S Wilson
Councillor J Wrench
Councillor B Wright
Vacancy

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

D GASCOYNE
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBER – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

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

Public Question Time - Registration and Speaking:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Public Attendance at Meeting:

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

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

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

Public Speakers and public attendees are required to attend on their own, and where

possible, only one representative of any community group, family household or company should attend.

Members of the public intending to come to the meeting venue to observe the meeting are recommended to contact the Governance and Members Team to reserve a seat within the public gallery.

Please do not attend the meeting if you are feeling unwell. The Council would recommend that anyone who is intending to attend the meeting take a lateral flow test on the morning of the meeting. This will help to protect you and others.

Health and Safety:

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

Mobile Phones:

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

Webcast and Audio Recording:

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

Documents:

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

Data Processing:

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

Your Comments:

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

PUBLIC SESSION	Page
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 25 th July 2022 (copy previously circulated).	
3 Declarations of Interest	
To declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice where necessary before the meeting.	
4 Public Question Time	
(See paragraph above)	
5 To receive any announcements/statements from the Chairman and/or Leader of the Council.	
6 Motion by Councillor James Abbott – Recycling Targets	5 - 6
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Agenda Item: 6

Report Title: Motion by Councillor James Abbott – Recycling Targets	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Debate
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Motion Presented by: Councillor James Abbott Motion Seconded by: Councillor Paul Thorogood Motion Support by: Councillors B Wright, Mrs J Sandum, Mrs J Beavis, T Walsh, S Hicks and Ms M Weeks	
Enquiries to: Emma Wisbey, Governance and Members Manager	

1. Motion:

Council notes that the targets for recycling have not changed for many years and that in Braintree District and across Essex a significant proportion of municipal waste is still being sent to landfill or incineration.

Therefore, Council agrees to work with its partners, and in particular Essex County Council, through the review of the Waste Strategy, with the ambition of setting new targets and measures which would apply across Essex and in Braintree District to:

1. Progressively reduce the amount of residual municipal waste collected.
2. Increase the recycling target (for collected dry recycling, food waste, green waste, etc, bring bank materials and ECC Recycling Centre materials) to at least 75% of municipal waste by the year 2030.

2. Constitution provisions:

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

Notice of Motion was received on 26th September 2022 at 12:30 hrs giving 9 clear working days' notice and contains the names of five Councillors supporting the Motion including the Proposer and Seconder.

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

In accordance with Council Procedural Rule 12.20 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution, no amendments to the Motion shall be moved unless written notice has been given to the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer by 12 noon on the third working day before the meeting of Full Council, namely 12 noon on Wednesday 5th October 2022.

Agenda Item: 7

Report Title: Motion by Councillor Charley Dervish – Congratulations to the England Women’s Football Team	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Debate
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Motion Presented by: Councillor Charley Dervish Motion Seconded by: Councillor Justin Wrench Motion Support by: Councillors F Ricci, Mrs I Parker, G Butland, J Coleridge	
Enquiries to: Emma Wisbey, Governance and Members Manager	

1. Motion:

Congratulations to the England Women’s Football Team.

This Council congratulates the Women’s England football team on winning the European Championship 2022 in July 2022. In addition to acknowledging their success on the field the Council believes that this leads the way for all women in sport and inspires our young ladies to take up a sport that very much was male dominated until of late.

The Lionesses have proven to also unite us as a nation and have pulled in record support within national and local woman's grass roots football.

Well done Lionesses, good luck for the World Cup. The girls brought it home.

To further support that success this Council agrees to promote and encourage women’s participation in all sporting activity across the District.

2. Constitution provisions:

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

Notice of Motion was received on 26th September 2022 at 13:51hrs giving 9 clear working days’ notice and contains the names of five Councillors supporting the Motion including the Proposer and Seconder.

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

In accordance with Council Procedural Rule 12.20 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution, no amendments to the Motion shall be moved unless written notice has been given to the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer by 12 noon on the third working day before the meeting of Full Council, namely 12 noon on Wednesday 5th October 2022.

Agenda Item: 8

Report Title: Request for Dispensation under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: Kim Mayo, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report concerns a Member's absence due to ill health and the requirement for Braintree District Council (the Council) to approve a dispensation where a Member is unable to attend a meeting of the Council over a six-month period.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve a dispensation for Councillor Darren White from attending meetings of the Council by reason of illness for a six month period commencing on 10 October 2022, in order to avoid Councillor White ceasing to be a member of the Council under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 Members may be aware of Councillor White's on-going inability to attend Council meetings on the grounds of ill-health. Councillor White's last attendance at a qualifying meeting under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 was the meeting of Council held 25 April 2022.
- 3.2 Section 85 states that if a Member fails over a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance to attend any meeting of the Council they shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of the Authority. Qualifying meetings include attendance as a Member at a meeting of any Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council or at a meeting of any Joint Committee, Joint Board or other body discharging functions of the Council. It also includes attendance as a representative of the Council at a meeting of, for example, an outside body.
- 3.3 If the Council do not approve the recommendation, Councillor White will automatically cease to be a Member of the Council on 22 October 2022.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 dispensations for Members are a responsibility of Full Council, and Council is able to approve a Members future absence, if there is good reason for the absences being incurred.
- 4.2 The Ward of Hatfield Peverel and Terling is represented by two District Councillors, Councillor Darren White and Councillor Charley Dervish.
- 4.3 Whilst Constituents of the Ward of Hatfield Peverel and Terling can approach any Ward Member and/or any District Councillor in respect of their concerns; should dispensation not be granted the Ward may not be fully represented.

Report Title: Cycling Strategy Year One	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Recommendation
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2022/29
Report Presented by: Councillor Frankie Ricci, Cabinet Member for Communities	
Enquiries to: Louise Flavell, Economic Development Officer louise.flavell@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to detail the Cycling Strategy progress, following adoption of the Strategy for one year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the targets met for the Cycling Strategy and Implementation Plan
- 2.2 To approve the draft Implementation Plan 2022
- 2.3 To agree that an Annual Cycling report is produced.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 Following the development of the draft cycling strategy an 8 week engagement consultation was undertaken in 2021 and the draft Cycling Strategy was updated to reflect the outcomes of this engagement and ideas generated by the engagement process were incorporated into the implementation plan. In September 2021 the Council adopted the Cycling Strategy with the aim to help make cycling and walking in the Braintree District safer, more convenient and desirable.
- 3.2 In December 2020 the Cycling Steering Group was established to develop the Council's Cycling Strategy and associated Implementation Plan. The aims of the group have evolved to monitor and support the programme of targeted interventions, conducting a 'health check' on the progress of the Cycling Strategy. In addition to Braintree Council and Essex County Council Officers the Steering Group Members currently include:

Councillor F. Ricci	Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Tourism
Councillor J. Pell	Member of Braintree District Council
Councillor D. Mann	Member of Braintree District Council
Councillor J. Abbott	Member of Braintree District Council
Lee Crabb	Local Cycling Representative

Peter Kohn
Chris McCann

Local Cycling Representative/EC2K Champion
Local Cycling Representative

- 3.3 The Cycling Strategy Working Group supports the development of the Cycling Implementation Plan in raising the profile of cycling and walking for Braintree District. The group works to increase the numbers of people cycling in the District and make cycling a safe, convenient and pleasant mode of transport, through the delivery of projects set out in the Councils Implementation Plan. This takes into account the needs of all cyclists from beginner to regular and provides opportunities and encouragement for everyone to cycle.
- 3.4 The Council is partnering with Essex County Council as the Highways Authority, to continue to encourage and prioritise cycling within the District. Through a number of campaigns and projects Braintree District is supporting better physical and mental health, and reducing our impact on the environment, as well as congestion on our roads.

2022/23 Key Projects in the Cycling Implementation Plan

- 3.5 The Council's draft Cycling Implementation Plan has 43 actions identified within the first year to progress across 5 key themes. For ease of reporting the actions have been categorised by their outcomes -

Outcome	Definition
Connectivity and Permeability	To measure the walking and <i>cycling permeability</i> of the road network, reflecting the <i>connectivity</i> of an area.
Improvements in Other Facilities	Partnering with organisations to improve cycling opportunities.
Safer Cycling	Improvement of infrastructure and education of cyclists to promote safer cycling.
Cycle Parking	Increase and improve cycle storage options.
Promotion and Encouragement	Behaviour change activation to encourage cycling and walking to be the first choice of travel.

- 3.6 6 month performance reports will be produced and RAG rated and provided to Management Board, Cycling Strategy Steering Group and the Cycling Strategy Working Group which will detail:
- progress made on cycling and walking projects
 - progress made against internal targets
- 3.7 An Annual summary report will be produced for Full Council that summaries the full years (1st October to 31st September) Action Plan performance. This report will also include an updated Action Plan.

Performance Indicators

- 3.8 Progress on baseline targets identified in the Draft Implementation Plan will be reported against on a half-yearly basis.

The below table summarises the key performance indicators and associated targets/measurements.

Performance Indicator	Target/Measurement
Double the number of cycling trips in the Braintree District by 2031, at our monitored counter sites and other key routes.	Number of cycling trips in Braintree District from monitored counter sites.
Encourage a mind-set that sees cycling as an enjoyable and everyday activity for the majority of short journeys.	Annual update on progress made towards target
Develop safe and easy to navigate cycle networks for cyclists to give greater assurance.	Annual update on progress made towards target
Encourage the uptake of cycling amongst a broad cross section of the community.	Annual update on progress made towards target
Support cycling to ensure access to jobs and services.	Annual update on progress made towards target
Work with relevant partners, looking for opportunities to support improved cycle access in rural areas.	Annual update on progress made towards target
Work with partners to help reduce emissions, congestion and the environmental impact of transport and to ensure the new cycle routes help in reducing emissions.	Annual update on progress made towards target

4. Options

Option 1 – Approve the Cycling Strategy One Year Report and revised Draft Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan.

Option 2 – Do not approve the Cycling Strategy One Year Report and revised Draft Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan.

- 4.1 If the document is not approved, the progress of cycling matters within the district may not reflect currently needed provision. Accordingly, Option 1 is recommended at this time

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Council will work with the Cycling Strategy Steering Group and partners to further progress the revised Draft Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan to increase cycling in the district.
- 5.2 It is proposed that progress against the actions identified in the Implementation Plan continue to be reported to Full Council on an annual basis.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 In 2021/22 budget, the Council agreed to create an initial reserve of £50,000 to support the delivery of the Cycling Strategy through a part-funded Project Manager. During 2022/23 a review of the option resulted in:
- £25k/£30k allocated for a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Witham and environs.
 - £25k/20k allocated for a feasibility study of an identified route.
- 6.2 There are already a number of projects which have been identified and these have been progressed using officer time with BDC and ECC.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no identified legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Legal implications for individual Cycling Strategy Actions will be identified through the business case process of individual actions and projects.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 There will be a number of implications to the Council, residents and businesses of actions identified in the Initial Action Plan. These will be detailed in each business case as it is developed

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 The Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for individual projects.

10. List of Appendices

- A. Cycle Strategy Monitoring Report
- B. Performance Indicator Report
- C. Communications Plan
- D. Draft Implementation Plan 2022/23

11. Background Papers

Cycle Strategy 2021

Draft Implementation Plan 2021

Monitoring Report on 2022/23 Projects in the Draft Cycling Implementation Plan 2022

RAG Rating Key:

- Green denotes favourable/complete
- Amber on track/likely to complete by Sept'22
- Red unfavourable/unlikely to complete by Sept'22

Connectivity and Permeability	To measure the walking and cycling permeability of the road network, reflecting the connectivity of an area.	
Action	Progress	RAG Rating
Review and Rewrite the BDC cycling action plan	To Commence. Braintree and Witham LCWIP commenced August 2022. Expected completion April 23. ECC to issues Cycling Action Plan, once LCWIPs complete.	
Review and Rewrite the BDC LCWIP	In Progress. Braintree and Witham LCWIP commenced August 2022. ECC awaiting funding agreement for Essex County wide LCWIP, incorporating rural Braintree.	
Work with Partners, including public transport, to review digital mapping services of existing routes	Complete. Cycle Maps, showing railway stations, available in digital format.	
Consult with public transport partners on Cycle Strategy and Action Plan	Complete - National Rail, Greater Anglia, Community Rail Partnership. Stephenson's Bus Company, National Express.	

Connectivity and Permeability continued	To measure the walking and cycling permeability of the road network, reflecting the connectivity of an area.	
Action	Progress	RAG Rating
Await CAP review to ensure bid applications are prioritised for feasible, connected schemes, including working with voluntary groups to maximise funding opportunities	To Commence. Awaiting LCWIPs to be completed.	
Await revised CAP review to ensure bids applications are prioritised for feasible, connected schemes	To Commence. Awaiting LCWIPs to be completed.	
CPD for planning team if required on residential and work place travel plans	To Commence. Once LCWIPs are completed, training/CPD session to take place.	
Funding bid required for cycle counter monitoring	In progress. ATF funding, placed 5 monitoring cameras in Braintree town. Further review 2023/24 to establish optimum positioning and funding options.	
Improved access for those with disabilities - Review of best practice to be undertaken and summarised to be issued to planning team and operations.	Complete. Planning aware of LTN120 standards for all new cycleways.	
Reiterate cycling policy, CAP and LCWIP with planning team	To Commence. Once LCWIPs are completed, training/CPD session to take place.	
Review of best practice of access for those with disabilities to be undertaken and summarised to be issued to planning team and operations	Complete. Planning aware of LTN120 standards for all new cycleways.	

Improvements in Other Facilities	Partnering with other organisations to improve cycling opportunities	
Action	Progress	RAG Rating
Consult with local businesses on Cycle To Work Schemes and produce communications plan to support.	Complete. August – promotion to businesses and residents on cycle to work day, sustainable travel plans and cycle rack industrial funding. Partnering with ECC on Smarter Travel for Essex Network (STEN) .	
Review of existing services as part of the Fix-Learn-Ride model including Dr. Bike sessions/School sessions/Cycle for health schemes - signpost residents via comms plan	Complete. 44 schools receiving bikeability, holiday course bikeability delivered in May'22 and Smoothie Bike activity in Braintree town. Partnering with local cycle retailers to promote cycle maintenance.	
Review of e-cycle schemes available and funding bids needed if to be taken forward	In progress. Awaiting details of schemes and potential funding opportunities.	
Source existing Air Quality Monitoring	Complete	
Source existing base line monitoring levels for all activities	In progress.	

Safer Cycling	Improvement of infrastructure and education of cyclists to promote safer cycling.	
Action	Progress	RAG Rating
Review current maintenance schedule for cycling accident hotspots.	To commence. LHP meeting reviewing schedule.	
Review of adult cycle coaching scheme and funding bid needed if to be taken forward	In Progress. ECC continuing to offer free adult training.	
Bike Library/Adult Coaching - Review of scheme and funding bid needed if to be taken forward	In Progress. ECC continuing to offer free adult training.	
Bikeability - Review of scheme delivered in schools and funded by ECC	Complete. 44 schools in Braintree district receiving Bikeability.	
Source existing Bikeability monitoring	Complete.	
Source existing School Active Travel Plans	Complete.	
Review speed limit options on last mile.	To commence. LHP meeting reviewing schedule.	
Review the Quiet Lanes that are currently awaiting funding / approval by ECC to assess those particularly advantageous for cycling.	Complete.	

Cycle Parking	Increase and improve cycle storage options.	
Action	Progress	RAG Rating
Assess security of principal bicycle parks within the District	In progress. Review of cycle parks with security ongoing.	
Review of cycle parking locations, level of provision and security	In progress. Review of cycle parks with security ongoing.	
Review of Cycle Parking standards in new Development	In progress. Cycle parking standards reviewed for each new development.	

Promotion and Encouragement	Behaviour change activation to encourage cycling and walking to be the first choice of travel.	
Action	Progress	RAG Rating
Produce on-line map of current cycle routes with links to transport.	Complete. GPX file map showing links to train stations.	
Write a communications strategy to promote short trips by bike in the large towns and villages.	Complete.	
Write a communications strategy to promote cycling for leisure, linking tourism in the district	Complete.	
Promote leisure cycling/tourism within the rural areas. Identify circular routes for cyclists on quiet lanes linking tourism.	Complete.	
Consult with Parish and Town Council partners on Cycle Strategy and Action Plan.	Complete.	
Consult with public health partners on cycle strategy and action plan. Consider social prescribing.	Complete. Community 360 and Active Essex engaged.	
Consult with Sustrans and local retailers on cycle trends and analysis	Complete.	
Annual resident cycle survey	To commence.	
Promote Active Lives Survey	The survey sample is randomly selected from the Royal Mail's Postal Address File and BDC has no control or notice of when survey's will be distributed.	

Promotion and Encouragement continued	Behaviour change activation to encourage cycling and walking to be the first choice of travel.	
Action	Progress	RAG Rating
Review how other Councils' work with local businesses and review possible pilot business promotion plan.	In Progress. Essex Economic Development team meetings review local business interaction.	
Review how other Councils' work with local businesses on cycle strategy.	In Progress. Partnering with Uttlesford and Epping to understand cycle strategy deliverables.	

Performance Indicators & 2022/23 Key Projects

Performance Indicator	Target/Measurement
Double the number of cycling trips in the Braintree District by 2031, at our monitored counter sites and other key routes.	Number of cycling trips in Braintree District from monitored counter sites.
2021 Baseline	Sept'22 Measurement
At 4 monitored counter sites in Braintree Town 7 day average: 3062	7 day average: Awaiting info from ECC
Increase number of cycle counters: 2019: 4 sites	5 new cameras installed in Braintree town to monitor ATF scheme.

Performance Indicator	Target/Measurement
Encourage a mind-set that sees cycling as an enjoyable and everyday activity for the majority of short journeys.	Annual update on progress made towards target
2021 Baseline	Sept'22 Measurement
Cycling as method of travel to work 2011 census: 4%	Awaiting 2021 census information
Paper and electronic cycle mapping available via either BDC website or upon request.	10 cycle routes available on VBD website and in paper copies on request.
Number of adults whom cycle once per month in the District. 2019: 76	Awaiting updated figures from DoT
Number of children cycling/walking to school. 2011 census: Cycling: 249 Walking: 10,276 (out of 19,539 children in school)	Awaiting new census info for comparable information. NB This question was not included in 2021 census.
Reported bike thefts. 2021: 91	Awaiting 2022 figures.
Reported bike thefts from rail stations 2020/21: Witham – 5 Braintree – 0 Freeport – 1 Cressing – 0 White Notley – 0 Kelvedon – 2 Hatfield Peverel – 0 Total: 8	2021/22 Witham: 5 Braintree: 3 Freeport: 2 Cressing: 1 White Notley – 0 Kelvedon – 1 Hatfield Peverel – 0 Total: 12

Performance Indicator	Target/Measurement
Develop safe and easy to navigate cycle networks for cyclists to give greater assurance.	Annual update on progress made towards target
2021 Baseline	Sept'22 Measurement
Cycling accidents in the District – 2021: Fatal: 1 Serious: 5 Slight: 11 Total: 17	Awaiting 2022 figures
Increase by 2% the length of cycle infrastructure implemented. 2021: Nil	2022: Nil
Increase number of quiet lanes across the district. 2021: 1 Quiet Lane	12 Quiet lanes in progress.
Linear metres of cycleway provided as part of a new developments of large new housing schemes (+100 dwellings) 2021: Nil	Nil
On smaller developments number of roads designed to a max speed limit of 20mph.	ECC Highways determine the speed limit new adopted roads.
New cycling schemes across the district to be clearly signed as specified in TSRGD	No new cycling schemes.
S106 agreements naming CAP projects.	Two agreements – Hatfield Peverel and Halstead.

Performance Indicator	Target/Measurement
Encourage the uptake of cycling amongst a broad cross section of the community.	Annual update on progress made towards target
2021 Baseline	Sept'22 Measurement
Paper and electronic cycle mapping available via either BDC website or upon request	10 cycle routes available on VBD website and paper copies on request.
Comms Cycling Strategy	Cycle Comms Strategy and programme agreed for 2022
Number of Public health contacts made with partners	2
Number of contacts made with public transport partners	4
Number of parish and town council contacts made with partners	All parish and town councils contacted.
Number of EATF/voluntary contacts made with partners	EATF steering group updated. Contact with community team and local cycling groups.
Number of secondary school pupils cycling to school: 2011 census: 190 children	Awaiting new data.
Number of adults whom cycle once per month in the District: 2019/20: 76	Awaiting new data
Proportion of primary school pupils achieving level 2 bikeability before they leave school. 2021/22: 78% of schools in the district undertake Bikeability	
Number of e-cycling trips in Braintree District, monitored through survey	Awaiting launch of District Travel Survey
Undertake Cycle Survey	Awaiting launch of District Travel Survey

Performance Indicator	Target/Measurement
Support cycling to ensure access to jobs and services.	Annual update on progress made towards target
2021 Baseline	Sept'22 Measurement
By 2030 a minimum of 2 urban routes with a completed feasibility study awaiting implementation.	Nil Routes
Help to facilitate business cycle parking facilities.	Industrial Grant approved 3 business premises grants.
Number of bikes parked at prime town centre locations.	In progress.

Performance Indicator	Target/Measurement
Work with relevant partners, looking for opportunities to support improved cycle access in rural areas.	Annual update on progress made towards target
2021 Baseline	Sept'22 Measurement
By 2025 a minimum of 2 rural routes with a completed feasibility study awaiting implementation. By 2030 a minimum of a further 2 rural routes with a completed feasibility study awaiting implementation.	Nil routes.

Performance Indicator	Target/Measurement
Work with partners to help reduce emissions, congestion and the environmental impact of transport and to ensure the new cycle routes help in reducing emissions.	Annual update on progress made towards target
2021 Baseline	Sept'22 Measurement
New cycle schemes meet required standards, where possible	
All BDC owned cycle ways meet LTN 1/20 standards, where possible	Audit to be undertaken.
Transformational Funding – Target 4.	1 bid – BDC LCWIP funding
Reduction of AQMA traffic emissions	Awaiting new report December 2022.

Cycling Strategy and Draft Implementation Plan
Communications Campaigns/Activity

<p>Activity</p> <p><u>November 2021</u> Cycle Storage Grant - Supporting with the provision of bike racks, targeting businesses on industrial estates Platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Braintree District Businesses page, Business newsletter (4,747 subscribers) Facebook – 4,451 reach, 71 engagements, 49 clicks Twitter – 346 reach, 6 engagements, 2 clicks</p>	 <p>The poster features a blue background with the text 'Cycle storage grant' in white, a white pound symbol (£) inside a circle, and 'Open to applications' in a green box. It includes the website 'www.braintree.gov.uk/cyclestorage' and a bicycle icon. To the right is a photo of a bike rack with a bicycle parked in it.</p>
<p><u>November /December 2021</u> Bikeability – Adult and Family cycle training Platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Health & Wellbeing newsletter (4,112 subscribers) Facebook – 2,117 reach, 38 engagements, 22 clicks Twitter – 572 reach, 17 engagements</p>	 <p>The poster has a green background with a blue box containing the text 'Want to get on your bike?'. Below it, a bicycle wheel is shown with the text 'but haven't ridden for a while'. It also features the slogan 'SAFER GREENER HEALTHIER' and the Essex County Council logo.</p>
<p><u>January 2021</u> Love to Ride/Winter Wheelers Platforms - Health & Wellbeing newsletter (4,112 subscribers)</p>	 <p>The poster shows a man with a beard and glasses wearing a yellow helmet and a high-visibility jacket, standing next to a bicycle. The background is split, with a photo on the left and a teal section on the right containing the text 'LOVE TO RIDE WINTER WHEELERS' and icons for weather conditions (cloud with lightning, snowflake, cloud with rain).</p>

February 2022

Get Active/Half Term – Including Bike Security Marking and Smoothie Bike Activation

Platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Health & Wellbeing newsletter (4,112 subscribers), Residents newsletter (8,438 subscribers)

Facebook – 9,702 reach, 683 engagement, 616 clicks

Twitter – 1379 reach, 22 engagement, 1 click



February 2022

Highway Code - new changes

Twitter – 453 reach



March 2022

Love to Ride/Ride Anywhere Week - encouraging riders to complete their pledges including health and fitness

Platform – Facebook, Twitter, Health & Wellbeing newsletter (4,112 subscribers)

Facebook – 2,619 reach, 59 engagements, 52 clicks

Twitter – 178 reach, 2 engagements







April 2022

We Ride Campaign

Twitter – 242 reach, 3 engagements



<p>April 2022 Cycle Maps Launch – including competition, until end of August 2022 Platform – Facebook, Twitter, Health & Wellbeing newsletter (4,112 subscribers) Facebook – 6,412 reach, 170 engagements, 132 clicks Twitter – 244 reach, 2 engagements, 1 click Instagram – 300 reach</p>	
<p>April and June 2022 Braintree BMX Club – Summer Regional Races Facebook (April) – 5195 reach, 222 engagements, 167 clicks Facebook (June) – 119 reach, 837 engagements, 29 clicks Twitter (April) – 597 reach, 8 engagements Twitter (June) – 174 reach, 2 engagements</p>	
<p>May 2022 Ride London – Cycling Event Facebook – 97,920 reach, 8,747 engagements Twitter – 14,294 reach, 801 engagements Instagram – 1,522 reach, 15 engagements</p>	
<p>June 2022 National Bike Week – Cycle Videos Facebook – 18,125 reach, 1,431 engagements, 1,113 clicks Twitter – 4,123 reach, 67 engagements, 1 click Instagram – 959 reach</p>	

<p>July 2022 Cycle Map Competition</p>	
<p>August 2022 BDC Cycle Day, including Police bike marking, Dr Bike and a group cycle ride</p>	
<p>August 2022 Ride Essex – a cycle ride going through Braintree District.</p>	

Planned Campaigns:

- September 2022 – Bike to School Week
- October 2022 – Cycle Safety
- November/December 2022 – ATF Cycle Scheme Implementation

Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan 2022


Braintree District Councils Cycling Strategy 2021 sets out the key elements of a long term plan that will lead to a significant and sustained increase in cycling in the Braintree District. This is targeted towards the specific needs of Braintree residents, which will assist in tackling wider problems associated with poor health, pollution, traffic congestion and inequalities of opportunities for Braintree's youth population and people on low incomes.


The updated Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan will ensure these objectives can be achieved through a series of actions, which have been grouped into a number of themes and indicative costs as set out below and detailed in the following pages


- Create Coherent Cycle Networks (including safer cycling and maintenance)
- Transformation Funding
- Marketing and Branding
- Governance and Partnership
- Behaviour Change
- Promotion of electric and cargo bikes
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Councils Role	Indicative costs (to be calculated)
D - Deliver	£ - Low - between £0 and £25,000
E - Enable and Facilitate	££ - Medium - between £25,001 and £100,000
S - Support and Encourage	£££ - High - between £100,001 and £250,000
P - In Partnership (detail partnerships)	££££ - Very High - Over £250,001

The draft Implementation Plan has been updated for 2022, to illustrate achievements in 2021/22 and outstanding items have been subsequently moved to medium term goals.

Actions in Green are complete 

Actions in amber are in progress; and 

Actions in red are outstanding. 

Those actions moved to medium term are marked in blue.

Priority 1: Create Coherent Cycle Networks

Work with partners and stakeholders to develop strategic network development plans. Ensure Braintree District has an up to date Cycling Action Plan (CAP) and Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP).

1A. Improve Cycle Networks by providing a new BDC Cycling Action Plan that spans across the Braintree District including Town Centres and Rural locations									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	2021 Baseline	2030 Target
Planning Network Wellbeing Inclusivity	D E S P	ECC ECC/BDC BDC ECC/BDC	Review and Rewrite the ECC/BDC cycling action plan	Review and Rewrite the ECC/BDC cycling action plan Use ECC/BDC CAP to drive delivery of new and improved cycle routes	Review ECC/BDC CAP and update version	££	Number of cycling trips across the network throughout the district	2019: 4 sites measured (7 day average): 3062	Double the number of cycling trips in Braintree District from 2019 levels by 2030 at our monitored counter sites
						BDC /ECC	Length (m) of new or improved cycle infrastructure	2021: 0	Increase the length of cycle infrastructure by 2% each year.
1B. Improve Cycle Networks by providing a new BDC LCWIP that spans across the Braintree District including Town Centres and Rural locations									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term:	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target

			within 12 months						
Planning Network Inclusivity Wellbeing	D E S P	ECC ECC/BDC BDC ECC/BDC	Rewrite the ECC BDC LCWIP	Use ECC BDC LCWIP to provide strategy for Infrastructure plans	Review ECC BDC LCWIP and update version	££	Number of cycling trips across the network throughout the district	2019: 4 sites measured (7 day average): 3062	Double the number of cycling trips in Braintree District from 2019 levels by 2030 at our monitored counter sites
						BDC /ECC	Method of travel to work	2011 data: 4% (vs other forms of transport)	2% increase of trips less than 5km to work.
1C. Evaluate the impact of new development site locations at application stage to improve connectivity across the Braintree District									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Planning Networks	D E S P	ECC ECC/BDC BDC ECC/BDC	Review and Rewrite the ECC/BDC cycling action plan	Review and Rewrite the ECC/BDC cycling action plan Use CAP and LCWIP to drive delivery of new and improved cycle routes	Review CAP and LCWIP and update version	££	Number of cycling trips across the network throughout the district	4 sites measured 2019 (7 day average): 3062	Double the number of cycling trips in Braintree District from 2019 levels by 2030 at our monitored counter sites
						BDC /ECC			

1D. Develop a safer and legible cycle network for cyclist									
<i>Link To Engagement Themes</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>		<i>Short term: within 12 months</i>	<i>Medium term: 1-5 years</i>	<i>Long Term: 5 years +</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>What does success look like?</i>		
							<i>Measure</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2030 Target</i>
Networks Safety	D E S P	ECC ECC/BDC BDC ECC/BDC	Rewrite the cycling action plan and LCWIP	Rewrite the cycling action plan and LCWIP Review current maintenance schedule for accident hotspots. Review speed limit options on last mile.	Action any requirements for new/improved safety measures across the district	££££	Number of cyclists involved in reported accidents in the District.	2020: 20 reported Cycle casualties	Reduction in accidents by 5% by 2026
			Review current maintenance schedule for accident hotspots.			BDC /ECC/S106			
			Review speed limit options on last mile.						

				to drive delivery of new and improved cycle routes					
1E. Inter-urban routes and cycling									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Wellbeing	D E S P	ECC ECC/BDC BDC ECC/BDC	Review and Rewrite the ECC/BDC cycling action plan and ECC LCWIP	Review and Rewrite the ECC/BDC cycling action plan and ECC LCWIP Use CAP to identify a minimum of two inter-urban routes to take forward to feasibility	Complete feasibility and review delivery options	££	Number of feasible new routes across the district awaiting implementation	0	A minimum of two routes with a completed feasibility study
						BDC /ECC			
1F. Rural Schemes									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target

Networks Wellbeing	D E S P	ECC ECC/BDC BDC ECC/BDC/ Sustrans	Review and Rewrite the ECC/BDC cycling action plan and ECC LCWIP	Identify rural routes for prioritisation of funding through LCWIP/LHP and other funding streams.	££	Number of rural routes taken forward to funding application via LCWIP or other funding streams	0	A minimum of two rural routes taken to funding application stage in the medium term (1-5 years_). A minimum of 2 further rural routes to be taken to funding application stage in the long term (5 years+).
			Use CAP to drive delivery of new and improved cycle rural routes.					
			Work with partners to be a trial for cycling rural initiatives. Identify rural routes for prioritisation of funding through LCWIP/LHP and other funding streams.					
1G. Quiet Lanes								
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation	Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
						Measure	Baseline	2030 Target

Networks	D E S P	ECC ECC/BDC BDC ECC/BDC/ LHP	Review the Quiet Lanes that are currently awaiting funding / approval by ECC to assess those particularly advantageous for cycling.	Use CAP and LCWIP to drive delivery of new and improved cycle rural routes including increasing number of 'Quiet Lanes'	Work with partners to identify and deliver 'Quiet lanes'	£ BDC /ECC/ LHP	LCWIP trial of 5 'Quiet lanes' currently running	0	Increase number of quiet lanes across the district by 50%
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1H. Better Links to transport

Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Inclusivity	D E S P	BDC/ECC BDC BDC ECC/BDC /National Rail	Produce on-line map of current cycle	Use CAP and LCWIP to develop new map for print and on-line	Review and action any requirements with partners for new	££	Number of cycling trips across the network	2019: 4 sites measured (7 day average):	Double the number of cycling trips in Braintree District from 2019 levels

			routes with links to transport	Work with partners to grow transport links	additional routes	BDC/ECC/ Rail/Bus Links	throughout the district	3062	by 2030 at our monitored counter sites and other key routes
1J. Cycle Parking									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Regulations	D E S P	BDC/ECC BDC ECC/BDC/ Developers/Essex Police/National Rail Operator	Review of cycle parking locations, level of provision and security	Deliver on site within new developments and via S106 where possible.	Review cycle parking requirements	££	Number of cycle parking facilities provided by businesses across the district	tbc	Help to facilitate a minimum of 10 business cycle parking facilities
			Assess security of principal bicycle parks within the District				Number of bikes parked at prime town centre locations.	9 (as at 2-Sept-21)	Double the amount of bikes parked.
			Review of Cycle	Work with partners to increase security.		S106 Funding	Number of reported bike thefts in the district	2020:31	Reduce reported bike thefts by 5%

			Parking standards in new Development			ECC	Number of reported bike thefts from stations.	2020; Witham – 5 Braintree – 0	Reduce reported bike thefts by 10%
1K. New development and the local plan									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Planning	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC BDC	Reiterate cycling policy, CAP and LCWIP with planning team	Planning team to refer to new CAP.	Planning team to refer to new CAP	£	Number of linear metres of cycleway provided as part of new developments of large new housing schemes (+100 dwellings).	0	10% increase of Linear metres from 2021 to 2030.
						BDC			
							On smaller developments Number of roads designed to a max speed		

							limit of 20mph, to allow for safe cycling		
1L. Well Maintained Road and Routes									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Safety Maintenance	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ LHP	Rewrite the CAP and LCWIP to include removing street clutter and improvements to ironworks	Rewrite the CAP Use CAP to drive delivery improved cycle routes by Partnering with ECC and Essex Highways	Review and action any requirements with partners for new additional resources	££	Number of cyclists involved in reported cycling accidents in the district	2020: 20 reported Cycle casualties	Reduction in reported accidents by 5% by 2030
						ECC/LHP			
1N. Signage									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target

Safety Maintenance	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ LHP	Rewrite the CAP and LCWIP	Rewrite the CAP Use CAP to drive delivery improved cycle routes by Partnering with ECC and Essex Highways	Review and action any requirements with partners for new additional resources	££ ECC/LHP	All new traffic signs in accordance with Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD)	0	All new cycling schemes across the district to be clearly signed as specified in TSRGD
1P. Improved access for those with disabilities									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation	Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?			
						Measure	Baseline	2030 Target	
Inclusivity	D E S P	ECC/BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC	Review of best practice to be undertaken and summarised to be issued to planning team and operations	Use best practice guidance when designing new or retrofit facilities	Use best practice guidance when designing new or retrofit facilities	£ BDC/ECC	All new schemes to be safety audited by suitably qualified engineers and to meet LTN 1/20 standards for accessibility where possible	0	100% of new cycle schemes to meet required standards, where possible.

Inclusivity Safety	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ LHP		Review all cycle routes on BDC land and identify those areas requiring improvement to meet LTN 1/20 guidance	Deliver improvements on site where possible	£	LTN 1/20 standards met, where possible.	N/A	All BDC owned cycle ways meet LTN 1/20 standards, where possible.
						BDC/ECC/LHP			

Priority 2: Secure funding opportunities/Transformation Funding

For this Strategy to be successful, it is imperative that funding is provided and sustained over a number of years. With this Cycling Strategy, BDC working with Essex Highways will take a proactive, positive approach to taking advantage of funding opportunities when they arise and during the course of negotiations with developers when they are submitting planning applications.

2A. Developer Contributions								
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation	Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
						Measure	Baseline	2030 Target

Planning	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC	Reiterate existing cycling policy with planning team – Provide CPD where needed	Reiterate existing cycling policy with planning team – Provide CPD where needed Planning team to refer to new CAP	Planning team to refer to new CAP	£ BDC	Prioritisation of Cycling schemes over motorised vehicles in agreements (Overall number of schemes with cycling schemes delivered as part of the S106)	0	Increase of S106 agreements naming CAP projects
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2B. Transformational Funding

Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Planning	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC	Await CAP review to ensure bids applications are prioritised for feasible, connected schemes, including working with	Await CAP review to ensure bids applications are prioritised for feasible, connected schemes, including working with	Apply to appropriate funding streams as and where available	£ BDC	Number of funding bids submitted	0	Minimum of 4 funding applications submitted by EoFY 2026

			voluntary groups to maximise funding opportunities	voluntary groups to maximise funding opportunities Apply to appropriate funding streams as and where available					
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Priority 3: Promote cycling and cycling facilities/Marketing and Branding

The Essex Cycling Strategy sets out a number of overarching themes and methods for marketing and promoting cycling in Essex and our Strategy will use many of these methods to promote cycling. As such, in order to maximise the benefit of good quality cycle facilities, there needs to be a significant increase in the promotion of these facilities and an encouragement of cycling in general. At heart there is a need to change the image of cycling across the district to a safe, normal and enjoyable everyday activity.

3A. Mapping of Network									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks	D E S P	BDC/ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC	Work with Partners, including public transport, to review digital mapping services of existing routes	Provide digital mapping services for existing routes. Paper copies to be provided to all new developments with more than 10 houses.	Continue to review and/or update	££	Paper and electronic cycle mapping available via either BDC Website or upon request	n/a	Provision of Cycle route mapping
			Promote leisure cycling / tourism within the rural areas. Identify circular routes for cyclists on quiet lanes linking tourism.			BDC/ECC & Capital Bid			

3B. Behaviour Change Communications									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target

Networks	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC	Write a Communications Strategy to promote short trips by bike in the large towns and villages.	Marketing of existing walking and cycling routes	Continue to review and/or update	££	Provision/update of Comm's Cycling Strategy	n/a	Provision of Comm's Cycling Strategy
			Write a communications strategy to promote cycling for leisure, linking tourism in the district in all weathers.			BDC/ECC			

Priority 4: Work with partners to promote cycling / Governance and Partnership

We want to ensure that the promotion and development of cycling is embedded in everything we do as a Council. Part of the development of the Cycling Strategy will be the development of the most appropriate form of governance and this will be set up at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure that the most is made of BDC's current and future partnership arrangements.

4A. Partner with Public Health								
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation	Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term:	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
						Measure	Baseline	2030 Target

					5 years +				
Wellbeing	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/PH/ Active Essex	Consult with public health partners on Cycle Strategy and Action Plan. Consider social prescribing.	Consult with Active Essex on the CAP	Review success of group and partner working	£	Programme of engagement throughout 5 year period	n/a	25 number of contacts made with partners by EoFY 2026
						BDC			
4B. Partner with Public Transport (see 1H)									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/Rail /Bus	Consult with public transport partners on Cycle Strategy and Action Plan	Consult with Public Transport partners on CAP	Review success of group and partner working	£	Programme of engagement throughout 5 year period	n/a	8 number of contacts made with partners by EoFY 2026
						BDC	Cycle storage capacity at train stations	2021; Hat P – 36 Witham – 80 WNotley – 4 Cress – 6 Freeport – 8 Braintree – 52 Kelv - 50	Increase by 10% overall – target stations where less than 10.
4C. Partner with Parish and Town Councils									
	Lead Organisation						What does success look like?		

<i>Link To Engagement Themes</i>			<i>Short term: within 12 months</i>	<i>Medium term: 1-5 years</i>	<i>Long Term: 5 years +</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2030 Target</i>
Networks	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Parishes	Consult with Parish and Town Council partners on Cycle Strategy and Action Plan	Consult with Parish and Town Council partners on CAP	Review success of group and partner working	£ BDC	Programme of engagement throughout 5 year period	n/a	25 number of contacts made with partners by EoFY 2026
4D. Partner with Voluntary Groups									
<i>Link To Engagement Themes</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>		<i>Short term: within 12 months</i>	<i>Medium term: 1-5 years</i>	<i>Long Term: 5 years +</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>What does success look like?</i>		
							<i>Measure</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2030 Target</i>
Networks	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ EATF/	Continue working with existing EATF steering group as a partner for new CAP. Review of voluntary groups in the district.	Continue with existing group and review of additional partners	Review success of group and partner working	£ BDC	Programme of engagement throughout 5 year period	n/a	15 number of contacts made with partners by EoFY 2026
4E. Partner with District Businesses									
<i>Link To Engagement Themes</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>		<i>Short term: within 12 months</i>	<i>Medium term: 1-5 years</i>	<i>Long Term: 5 years +</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>What does success look like?</i>		
							<i>Measure</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2030 Target</i>

Networks	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Businesses/ Sustrans	Consult with local businesses on Cycle To Work Schemes and produce communications plan to support.	Continue with existing group and review of additional partners and resources.	Review success of group and partner working	£	Programme of engagement throughout 5 year period	2011 data: 4% of people travel to work by bike(vs other forms of transport)	2% increase of trips less than 5km to work.
			Review how other Councils' work with local businesses and review possible pilot business promotion plan.			BDC			

4F. Partner with External Cycle Specialists

Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Sustrans/ Retailers	Consult with Sustrans and local retailers on cycle trends and analysis.	Continue with existing group and review of additional partners and resources.	Review success of group and partner working	£ BDC	Programme of engagement throughout 5 year period	2011 data: 4% of people travel to work by bike(vs other forms of transport)	2% increase of trips less than 5km to work.

Priority 5: Encourage Behavioural Change

Evidence suggests that hard policy measures, such as changes to infrastructure, services, pricing or engineering, are not sufficient enough alone to influence mode choice. Instead, a combination of hard and soft measures is believed to be the key to bringing about a long-term shift to sustainable modes, where soft measures try to influence individual choice by means of information and persuasion (Bamberg 2008). Soft transport measures can take numerous forms: marketing campaigns, travel diaries, facilitating testing new behaviours, work travel plans etc.

5A. Behavioural Change									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Education Wellbeing	D E S P	ECC/BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Active Essex	Review of existing services as part of the Fix-Learn-Ride model including Dr. Bike sessions/School sessions/Cycle for health schemes - signpost residents via comms plan	Identify priority schemes to be taken forward for funding applications	Review progress against base line and outline further actions to improve outcomes	£	Number of secondary school pupils cycling to school	tbc	10% of all secondary school pupils cycling to school by 2026
						BDC/ECC /Active Essex	Number of cycling trips across the network throughout the district	4 sites measured 2019 (7 day average): 3062	Double the number of cycling trips in Braintree District from 2019 levels by 2030 at our monitored counter sites
5B. Bike Libraries									
	Lead Organisation						What does success look like?		

<i>Link To Engagement Themes</i>			<i>Short term: within 12 months</i>	<i>Medium term: 1-5 years</i>	<i>Long Term: 5 years +</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2030 Target</i>
Networks Education	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Sustrans	Review of scheme and funding bid needed if to be taken forward			£ Bid Required			
5C. Adult Cycle Coaching									
<i>Link To Engagement Themes</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>		<i>Short term: within 12 months</i>	<i>Medium term: 1-5 years</i>	<i>Long Term: 5 years +</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>What does success look like?</i>		
							<i>Measure</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2030 Target</i>
Networks Education Wellbeing	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Sustrans	Review of scheme and funding bid needed if to be taken forward			£ Bid Required	Proportion of adults whom cycle once per month in the District	2018/19: 13	10% increase
5D. Bikeability									
<i>Link To Engagement Themes</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>		<i>Short term: within 12 months</i>	<i>Medium term: 1-5 years</i>	<i>Long Term: 5 years +</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>What does success look like?</i>		
							<i>Measure</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2030 Target</i>
Education Wellbeing	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Sustrans	Review of scheme delivered in schools and funded by ECC			£ ECC	Number of Children achieving Level 2 before leaving	tbc	Double the proportion of primary school pupils achieving level 2 Bikeability

							primary school		before they leave school by 2026
5E. Residential and work place travel plans to be part of required planning permission for all appropriate sites									
<i>Link To Engagement Themes</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>		<i>Short term: within 12 months</i>	<i>Medium term: 1-5 years</i>	<i>Long Term: 5 years +</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>What does success look like?</i>		
							<i>Measure</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2030 Target</i>
Education Planning Wellbeing	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Sustrans	CPD for planning team if required			£	All new applications, that meet current thresholds set by ECC that require travel plans to have one submitted	0	100%
						BDC			

Priority 6: Promotion of electric & cargo bikes

Electric bikes or eBikes are an electric-assisted pedal bicycle. It is a regular bicycle with the addition of an electric motor and battery. The battery supplies power to the electric motor. The electric motor provides power assistance when the cyclist is pedalling to ease the amount of effort required and contributing to improvements in air quality.

Cargo bikes and eCargo bikes are vehicles designed and constructed specifically for transporting loads. Cargo bikes are now popular with delivery companies in dense urban environments and food vending in high foot traffic areas.

6A. Partner with E-cycle providers									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Education Planning	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Sustrans/e-bike retailers	Review of schemes available and funding bids needed if to be taken forward			££	No of e-bike users in District. Results of new proposed resident cycle survey	0	Double the number of e-cycling trips in Braintree District from 2022 levels by 2030, if survey continues.
						Bid Required			
6B. Marketing and Communications									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Education Planning	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC	Review of existing e-cycle services - signpost	Identify priority schemes to be taken	Review progress against base line and	££	No of e-bike users in District. Results of	0	Double the number of e-cycling trips in Braintree District from 2022 levels by

		BDC/ECC/ Sustrans/e- bike retailers	residents via comms plan	forward for funding applications	outline further actions to improve outcomes	Bid Required	new proposed resident cycle survey		2030, if survey continues.
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Priority 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring is intended to keep track of the delivery of measures and schemes that are being implemented and their contribution towards achieving the vision and its objectives. To understand the impact of the strategy and the extent to which the actions are being achieved a series of performance indicators and targets need to be developed.

7A. Evidence Usage Tracker									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Strategy	D E S P	Short term: within 12 months	Source existing base line levels	Review progress against base line levels annually	Review progress against base line and outline further actions to improve outcomes	£	Number of different evidence based levels.	0	Increase levels by 5%.
						ECC/Sustrans			

7B. Annual Survey									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Strategy	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/ Sustrans	Annual resident cycle survey	Annual resident cycle survey	Promote yearly and review success.	£	Delivery of cycle survey	n/a	4 years of cycle survey data
						BDC			

7C. Bikeability Monitoring for Adults and Children									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Strategy	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/	Source existing Bikeability monitoring	Request yearly	Request yearly	£	Number of Children achieving Level 2 before leaving primary school	tbc	Double the proportion of primary school pupils achieving level 2 Bikeability before they leave school by 2026
						ECC			
7D. Air Quality Monitoring									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Strategy	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/	Source existing Air Quality Monitoring	Request yearly	Request yearly	£	AQMA traffic emmissions	tbc	Reduction of emmissions
						BDC			
7E. Active Travel Plan Monitoring									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Strategy	D E	ECC BDC	Source existing			£	Number of children	Tbc	

	S P	BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/	School Active Travel Plans	Request yearly	Request yearly	BDC	cycling/ walking/ scooter to school		Increase by 5% by 2030
7F. Active People Survey Monitoring									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Strategy	D E S P	BDC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/	Promote Active People Survey via Comm's plan	Request yearly	Request yearly	£	No of people whom complete the survey.	0	Increase by 10% year on year to 2030.
						BDC			
7G. Cycle Counter Monitoring									
Link To Engagement Themes	Lead Organisation		Short term: within 12 months	Medium term: 1-5 years	Long Term: 5 years +	Funding Source	What does success look like?		
							Measure	Baseline	2030 Target
Networks Strategy	D E S P	ECC BDC BDC/ECC BDC/ECC/	Funding bid required	Review yearly	Review yearly	££	New cycle counters to measure other outcomes	0	Increase the number of cycle counters by 100%
						ECC			

Report Title: To receive the response of the Combined Scrutiny Committee into the Cost of Living Crisis 2022	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2022/41
Report Presented by: Councillor Mrs Diana Garrod, Chairman of the Combined Scrutiny Committee	
Enquiries to: Suzanne Bennett, Corporate Director (Finance) suzanne.bennett@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Combined Scrutiny Committee (comprising all Members of the Community Development and Partnership Development Committees) was established in response to a Motion that was submitted by Councillor Mrs J Beavis on the Cost of Living Crisis, which had been approved at the meeting of Full Council on 20th June 2022.

1.2 THE MOTION

“This Council recognises the Cost of Living Crisis and the impact it is having on many residents in the Braintree District.

Council also recognises that the Government has introduced a range of support measures including relief through council tax bills and new grant support, with additional specific grants to assist pensioners, people with disabilities and the poorest households. However, the Government has stated it cannot cover all impacts and therefore, given the scale of the Cost of Living Crisis, Council requires the Chairmen of the Community Development and the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committees to establish a combined committee consisting of all the Members of the respective two Scrutiny Committees. The remit of the combined committee will be to review the measures that the Council and its partners in Essex are already offering, and to recommend any further assistance that can be delivered this financial year for the residents of Braintree District.

The combined committee is to report back to the meeting of the Council to be held on Monday 10th October 2022, and to facilitate this timetable there shall be no more than two meetings of the combined committee.”

- 1.3 In line with the Motion, it was agreed that the Combined Scrutiny Committee would undertake a short-term Scrutiny Review and would meet on two separate occasions. The first meeting, which was held on 8th August 2022, was used to appoint the Chairman, Councillor Mrs D Garrod, and a Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mrs M Cunningham. The Terms of Reference (below) were noted and the first evidence gathering for the Scrutiny Review commenced. At the second meeting, held on 5th September 2022, the Committee's evidence gathering continued, final information was collated and consideration was given to the Committee's draft scrutiny report, including recommendations, with a view to presenting the final report at the meeting of Full Council on Monday 10th October 2022.

1.4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1.4.1 Review the measures that the Council and its partners in Essex are already offering the residents of the Braintree District in terms of support during the current crisis.
- 1.4.2 Recommend any further assistance that the Council could deliver during the current financial year in order to support the District's residents further.

2. Next Steps

- 2.1 For Council to receive and respond to the recommendations within the report.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. The recommendations of the Combined Scrutiny Committee form part of the Council's ongoing response to the Cost of Living crisis, and the support and advice it will continue to provide to residents within the District.
- 3.2 Where there is a recommendation for additional funding, those will be considered as part of the Councils' budget setting process for 2023/34, which has already commenced.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

5. List of Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Response from Mr T Walker (Essex County Council)

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 [Minutes and Agendas](#) of the Combined Scrutiny Committee.

COMBINED SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE 'COST OF LIVING CRISIS 2022'

FIRST EVIDENCE GATHERING SESSION (8TH AUGUST 2022)

Members received two separate presentations. The first presentation was from Mr T Walker, Executive Director at Essex County Council (ECC), and regarded issues around the Cost of Living crisis and the 'levelling up' agenda for Essex. The second presentation was provided jointly by Mrs C Elias-Stephenson, Head of Housing and Communities, Mrs T Parry, Community Services Manager, Mrs J Rigby, Revenue and Benefits Manager, Ms J Falco, Head of Environment and Mr M Wilson, Sustainability Manager (Cost of Living Officer Group). The presentation regarded the cost of living and the work being undertaken by the Council and its various partners to help mitigate the impacts for residents. Mrs S Bennett; Corporate Director (Support Services) and Mrs C Root; Corporate Director (Operational) were also in attendance.

The meeting and presentations may be viewed via the Council's YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8uq52yJ-Mg>

INPUT FROM MR T WALKER; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ECC)

Mr Walker's presentation provided a great deal of information, which included the following key points:-

- The number of households experiencing acute financial pressure has increased in all parts of Essex, with significant increases in Braintree (also Harlow and Colchester).
- Applications and successful payment for the Essential Living Fund have increased from November 2021 (lone parents account for 50% of these applications).
- Fuel poverty is driven by a mix of three elements; income, energy requirements and fuel price. Just over 60% of Braintree wards had over 10% of households likely to be in fuel poverty before the April price cap rise, and; this rises to 96% of Braintree wards when prices rise by 54%, and to all Braintree wards with a further rise of 65%.
- In Braintree, the elderly are particularly at risk of fuel poverty. This can mainly be seen amongst those with limited incomes and living alone, but also amongst those enjoying a fairly comfortable retirement up until now. Urban social renters are also particularly at risk of living in fuel poverty.
- Households will most likely find it more challenging to pay their bills, and there is a risk this could lead to some people refusing or being unable to pay council taxes. If the collection rate were to fall by just 2%, this could lead to a £16 million reduction in tax income (ECC). Alternatively, a 10% increase in Council Tax support offered by Essex Authorities could reduce the amount of tax

collected by £8 million. Reductions in funding available to ECC will cause the budget gap to grow in future years.

- Many of the levers in addressing the Cost of Living crisis are national policy levers such as tax and benefits systems, regulation, market intervention, Government support packages (i.e. energy).
- Many partners across greater Essex are already working to support residents through a range of local and national interventions. In the short-term (6-12 months) these include; hardship grants, financial advice and guidance, direct costs to residents – i.e. council tax, school holiday clubs, targeted support to families at risk of eviction and boosting free school meal take-up. Medium-term and long-term plans for support were also briefly discussed, together with 'Levelling Up – The White Paper'. However, this looked into planned support that fell outside the time span for this review.

INPUT FROM COUNCIL OFFICERS

The second presentation was divided into five sections. The first section was delivered by Mrs C Elias-Stephenson, Head of Housing and Communities, and related to the research undertaken by officers on fuel, child and food poverty throughout the District. The report (Fuel, Child and Food Poverty – dated 6th August 2021) was shared with the committee following its first meeting. In response to the actions and recommendations within the report, an internal Fuel Poverty working group was set up in order to map Council services and to support and give consideration as to how best it could work with partners and establish an internal awareness campaign entitled 'Don't Wait for Winter'. This demonstrated to the committee that an early intervention by officers to research poverty within the Braintree District following the Covid-19 pandemic was seen as a priority. This information had become helpful to consider how the Council could prepare for the Cost of Living crisis at the outset.

The second section was delivered by Mrs T Parry, Community Services Manager, and regarded holiday activities for children by Essex ActivAte, funded by ECC for those children in receipt of free school meals and those who are deemed vulnerable (e.g. in care, foster care, supported housing). There are six clubs currently in the three main towns: Braintree, Witham and Halstead. Whilst there is a focus around physical activity and emotional wellbeing, there are also specific sessions for those with special educational needs. A number of delivery partners are involved with this. Children are also provided with a breakfast and a cooked lunch.

The Committee was also advised about the Braintree Museum 'Take Over' days, together with Community 360; these were one day per week for low-income families and included arts and craft activities, as well as museum/educational information. A breakfast and a cooked lunch were also provided as part of these events.

Mrs Parry also discussed the working partnership with Community 360, Citizens Advice, the Warmer Homes Project, Essex Living Fund and Essex Family Support Service. The Essex Family Support Service is for families with school age children who are not already receiving support from specialist and statutory services such as

family solutions or social care and mental health services. It provided early intervention level support.

The Council has a partnership agreement with Citizens Advice branches in Braintree, Witham and Halstead, for which the Council provides £112,000 funding for core services and a separate agreement through which it provides £25,000 funding specifically for money advice to support any resident across the District with issues such as debt, benefits, housing and employment.

On the subject of food poverty and food banks, 5,703 people were fed in 2021/22 and 66 tonnes of food was distributed. Recent feedback indicated that the Council was seeing a substantial increase in customers using the food banks within the District.

The First Stop Centre was also discussed together with community fridges. It was reported that First Stop receive fresh produce from businesses such as Nando's, Greggs and supermarkets. People can request food on a twice-weekly basis. It is promoted with a view to stop food wastage and move away from the stigma attached to the perception that people cannot afford food. Witham Community Hub work with FareShare, a charity fighting hunger and food wastage, and Soul Food, linked to St. Andrews Church who offer freshly cooked and nutritional meals at no cost and with no qualifying criteria. The Carousel Centre in Braintree was also discussed as they were holding a pop-up, pre-loved school uniform event, where uniform could be obtained for free.

The 'Don't Wait for Winter' campaign helped to broadcast the available support streams and information more widely. The campaign was a comprehensive project that provided a different theme every week. Focus was for all; from residents to Council employees and had reached around 33,853 people via Facebook alone.

The Committee then heard from Mrs J Rigby, Revenues and Benefits Manager. It was explained that Housing and Council Tax support is a statutory function and therefore discretion is limited. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) can be provided to those in receipt of housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. Payments are usually to top up the difference between Housing Benefit and monthly or weekly rental. Mrs Rigby explained that local housing allowances, from which the benefit awards are based on, have not been increased since April 2020 and the increase in rent levels that are being charged now are increasing almost monthly. More customers are asking for support through DHP where they are struggling. 267 awards totalling £245,620 were made last year (2021/22). However, this years' budget has been reduced by 30% to £174,853. During the first quarter of this year, six awards had already been made, totalling £52,592 to those who needed help with their rent shortfall or rental arrears in order to keep them in their homes and to avoid evictions. The Council is permitted to top up the allocation by 2.5% from its own funds. Potentially, the top could be £437,132. The DHP budget for 2023/24 will not be revealed until January 2023.

The Exceptional Hardship Provision is available for those struggling to pay their Council Tax, in conjunction with Citizens Advice, who provide a statement which suggests how the Council could support the customers with their arrears. It is

possible to support them with up to 24% of their outstanding liability for that year. An award is granted as a reduction in the liability of the Council Tax, whilst having regard to the effect on other Council Taxpayers. This service was only for exceptional cases; thus far in 2021/22, the Council had supported 27 cases totalling approximately £10,000.

Every effort is made to avoid the route of a Summons or the use of Enforcement Agencies to limit further financial hardship. The Council works with customers on a one-to-one basis by signposting people to support agencies, Citizens Advice and Peabody Care and Support, who provide information and advice for people with housing related issues.

Government Energy Rebates, both mandatory and discretionary, were explained. The mandatory scheme of £150 was in respect of all bands (A-D). The discretionary scheme had a budget of £229,200 for households that are in receipt of local Council Tax Support (LCS) in properties banded 'E' to 'H;' for example, households in receipt of a means-tested benefit, where they are not in receipt of a rebate under the main scheme; households where there is a person in receipt of personal independence payment or disability living allowance; households not in receipt of a rebate under the main scheme, and; any household that is considered to be suffering financial hardship. An online application process is being used to facilitate this and once the budget is spent, no further awards will be made.

ECC have awarded £9,436,542.83 from the Household Support Fund Grant. Although the Council does not have the budget for this fund, ECC has asked the Council to administer £80 to all pension age customers who are in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support. Distribution logistics are currently under discussion.

The Council are not involved in the DWP initiatives coming up this Summer/Autumn. However, pensioners will receive an additional £300 'Cost of Living Payment' in addition to the Winter Fuel Payments (2022/23 - £300). There is also a Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 and a Cost of Living Payment of £650 going to customers who are in receipt of Income Support, Universal Credit (but not Housing Benefit).

Mr M Wilson, Fuel Poverty and Energy Sustainability Manager, discussed the current predictions of the Energy Bill Price Cap through to next year. The Committee was advised of the current schemes that the Council are involved in, which includes; the Green Homes Grant; Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which supports people on benefits; ECO Flex, which supports people whose household income is under £30,000; Warm Homes Grant; Local Authority Delivery 2 of £440,000 of Sustainable Warmth; Local Authority Delivery 3 of £1.64million of Sustainable Warmth; HUG for measures to go in to homes to improve efficiency; the free Handyman Scheme for owners, occupiers or private tenants who are over 65 or vulnerable, and Solar Together (a solar auction for residents). Mr Wilson and two other colleagues reported that they receive regular enquiries to help customers find a best-fit grant suitable to their needs and which they can qualify for.

Mr Wilson discussed the impacts of a cold winter for those who cannot put their heating on, which could potentially lead to an increase in health issues such as heart and lung related problems and a rise in hypothermia cases. Condensation and mould growth will also occur in poorly heated homes. Furthermore, there is an established link between cold homes and child educational attainment. Residents unable to pay their bills faced legal issues, an impact on their credit rating, possible evictions and defaulting on mortgage payments. Energy companies could apply to have people placed onto pre-payment meters; however, this automatically placed them onto the highest rate which was required to be paid in advance. Such meters placed those most effected by the crisis into a worse financial position which only appeared to be of benefit to the energy supplier.

Mr Wilson also advised the Committee about a positive initiative that involved a 10-acre site for a potential solar panel array in order to supply energy supply at reduced costs to the local community, with the aim of helping them to achieve greater energy independence.

Mrs C Elias-Stephenson, Head of Housing and Communities, advised the Committee about other steps that had been initiated. The first meeting of the Braintree District Cost of Living Partnership had occurred the day before. During the meeting, themes were identified under the umbrella of cost of living, including; Financial, Fuel and Energy, Housing and Health & Wellbeing, with a focus on Winter and Christmas. Partners have been asked to bring forward any data or information as soon as possible due to the crisis and to monitor any trends that are happening.

Members were also reminded that the Council had recently submitted its Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Investment Plan. The proposed focus in respect of year one was around the cost of living. Other projects related to how the Council could support community and voluntary sector organisations to help local residents, which included the possibility of 'warm rooms'. It was explained that discussions were underway with many of the Council's partners and, in particular, faith forums, around offering residents warm spaces for those in need, such as churches and village halls.

Members were sent a digital copy of a new Council booklet 'Live Well for Less,' which is a short guide on managing money, debt management and other support available.

SECOND EVIDENCE GATHERING SESSION – 5TH SEPTEMBER 2022

The second evidence gathering session of the Committee commenced on 5th September 2022; in attendance at the meeting was Mrs T Parry, Community Services Manager, Mrs C Root, Corporate Director and Ms R Fahie, Chief Officer at the Braintree, Witham and Halstead Citizens Advice (CA).

Ms Fahie provided a link to the CA's Cost of Living Data Dashboard and verbal information about poverty at local levels in the District. As the price of energy increases, the CA is starting to see people who they have not traditionally seen. It is known that large sections of the Braintree District remained off the gas grid and consideration was given as to whether to submit a question to the Government via the Council's Sustainability Team; however, it was later confirmed that the Council's

Cost of Living Joint Partnership Group already had this on their agenda for debate. Rachel also mentioned the Heat Fund, which was managed by the Field Foundation, which she praised.

It was also reported that the Government is undertaking a piece of work around data matching of people on means tested benefits against property characteristics supplied by the Valuation Office, which will be of interest to the CA. Rachel provided information about the CA's work on the Warm Homes Project, Food Bank Vouchers and associated underlying issues, the Food Bank Outreach Service, Household Support Payments (which had helped around 100 people with one-off payments), access to justice and assistance with the completion of form-filling and submission.

COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE TO EVIDENCE

With regards to the first Term of Reference; *“Review the measures that the Council and its partners in Essex are already offering the residents of the Braintree District in terms of support during the current crisis.”*

A number of committee members commented that the Council's response to the Cost of Living Crisis is pro-active, comprehensive and well structured. The Council's work continues to evolve as new cost of living issues arise. The Cost of Living Partnership was set up in a timely manner to target areas of high concern; fuel and energy poverty, general financial advice, food and essentials, housing, health and wellbeing, winter resilience encompassing Christmas, horizon scanning to map impacts and data, information and intelligence. Monthly meetings are planned from August 2022 through to January 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

With regards to the second Term of Reference; *“Recommend any further assistance that the Council could deliver during the current financial year in order to support the District's residents further.”*

Following the conclusion of the Scrutiny Review, the Committee has the following recommendations:-

Recommendation 1

The Cost of Living crisis has crept up on us more quickly than people expected and the sudden rise in costs of food, fuel and energy is of enormous concern. Being unable to pay a bill and not knowing where to turn, causes extreme anxiety. The District's residents should be advised on how to respond to a situation where they are unable to pay their energy bills. For example, through discussion of a payment plan with their energy supplier at the earliest opportunity, and/or asking for a 'holiday' from payments.

Evidence: With the projected energy price cap and anticipated rise in energy costs, it is recognised that a large number of residents will struggle to pay their energy bills for a variety of reasons (e.g. due to financial pressures, illness, unemployment, etc), and that many residents will not be aware of where they can seek advice or how to access support streams. It is noted that Citizens Advice (CA) have clear advice and

information on how to manage bills and arrears which could be distributed to residents. The Council also has a partnership agreement with CA branches in Braintree, Witham and Halstead of £112,000 for core services and a separate agreement for £25,000, specifically for money advice in order to support any resident across the District with advice relating to issues such as debt, benefits, housing and employment.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the Council discuss the issue of pre-payment meters with the LGA with a view to lobbying the Government to end this injustice by bringing pre-payment prices in line with direct debit prices.

Evidence: Pre-payment Meters, also known as 'pay-as-you-go' meters are where customers pay for energy in advance. Often these customers are already on low incomes and in fuel poverty. They may not always have access to the cheapest tariffs as prepayment meters tend to be more expensive to operate than other meters.

Recommendation 3

That an alternative form of communication to digital communications be offered to residents, such as a poster or leaflet, containing a variety of information such as that which is contained within the 'Live Well for Less' booklet.

Evidence: It is acknowledged that the use of solely digital communications will not encompass the needs of all demographics across the District, such as those who are unable to access the internet, or who lack computer skills. In recognition of this, the information, advice and support that is available for residents should be communicated as widely as possible to the District's residents, both online and via physical handouts.

Recommendation 4

Community 360 has a Winter Resilience programme. Winter packs include a guide to local support services ranging from heating schemes, clothing, basic refreshments and practical items, such as a torch, blanket, and first aid guides. These are distributed to those identified as being in need. With regards to the Winter packs, it is recommended that the Council explore ways to include items such as bed socks, which would be useful in the event of a power cut, and potentially hot water bottles or wheat bags (including directions on appropriate usage).

Evidence:-

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/keep-well-this-winter/stay-healthy-in-winter/how-to-keep-your-hands-and-feet-warm/>

An estimated 9,000 people died last winter in England and Wales as a result of living in a cold home. The University College London (UCL) study calculated that this was the highest number for 15 years. In a [BBC article](#), it was reported that a 77-year-old woman was no longer considered to be "fuel poor" in the official statistics. The woman had moved her bed into the living room because she could only afford to heat one room of her bungalow.

The charity Age UK says that our bodies react to being cold by re-directing our blood supply to our vital organs, and away from our extremities. Age UK advises people to “Use a hot-water bottle, wheat bag or an electric blanket to warm the bed, but never use a hot-water bottle and an electric blanket together,” and to “Keep toes toasty in bed; if your feet get cold in the night then go to bed wearing socks.”

Recommendation 5

For reasons mentioned in Recommendation 4, the Council should explore ways in which to work with partners for free PAT testing on electric blankets. The Committee is pleased that the Braintree District Cost of Living Partnership Group have this subject on their agenda for further discussion.

Evidence: The NHS and Age UK suggest the use of electric blankets. Free PAT testing on electric blankets would assist those residents struggling to pay their energy bills.

Recommendation 6

The Committee is pleased to see that officers have responded to a request to promote Credit Union, Holdfast, in the new booklet ‘Live Well for Less’ and would request that this also be included, where appropriate, in other communications and on the Council’s website, specifically the landing page entitled ‘Debt Management and Cost of Living.’ Furthermore, it is recommended that the Council’s customers are alerted to be aware of illegal money lenders (loan sharks) and the potential tactics that illegal lenders use to lure, capture and extort their vulnerable victims for further repayment; these “tactics” range from coercive and manipulative behaviour to intimidation and threats of violence.

Evidence: Credit unions are co-operative societies who provide financial services (primarily savings and loan facilities) to their member-owners. The Council could also work with the PFCC (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner) to highlight this as the Cost of Living crisis deepens, and it is anticipated that more people may be tempted to borrow from illegal lenders. Loan sharks can be reported online (in confidence) at (link: <https://www.gov.uk/report-loan-shark>).

Recommendation 7

The Government’s position on support is evolving, with some measures already announced. However, the reality is that for most families, this support barely covers the energy increases which have already occurred. It is recommended that the Council explore ways to work with partners, village halls and/or organisations to provide ‘warm spaces’ for people to come together, preferably with activities and the supply of food and drink. The Council could explore the possibility of an allocation from the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) during Year One and consider providing a contribution to some community assets, such as the Braintree Museum, Town Hall and leisure facilities, thereby helping them with their energy costs. It is also recommended a directory of all the places available to our residents across the public, private, health and voluntary sectors is created, so that anyone who is cold knows where they can go to get warm, stay warm and enjoy a little company and some hot refreshments.

The Committee is pleased that the Braintree District Cost of Living Partnership Group have this subject on their agenda for further discussion.

Evidence via the following links:

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/21164/Warm-Spaces>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/gateshead-council-creating-warm-spaces-winter>

Some charities already have plans in place to supply warm spaces and local authorities are looking at ways to work with partners and support organisations.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that during this episode of volatility, the costs and performance of the District's leisure centres are monitored more closely and regularly to avoid any potential unmanageable financial difficulties.

Evidence: The LGA anticipates that the rise in energy costs could see leisure centres forced to close either temporarily or permanently across the UK. Government support remains unclear at the time of writing this report. It is reported that leisure participation numbers in the District's leisure centres through to June 2022 are still, overall, at a lower rate than recorded prior to the pandemic. Average monthly attendance across the contract was 74,887 in 2019/20 against 45,212 for 2021/22. Rising inflation, energy costs and projected increases to the National Living Wage also add pressure onto the Council's budget.

Recommendation 9

In consideration of the 'Food, Child and Poverty' report and areas of poverty within the District, it is recommended that the programme 'Essex ActivAte' be distributed to some of the larger villages, such as Sible Hedingham, where the catchment could, potentially, reach smaller villages up to the most northern parts of the Braintree District.

Evidence: 'Essex ActivAte' offers children's holiday activities and was developed on behalf of the Department for Education. Additional funding is provided by Essex County Council for the scheme to extend the offer to low income families. Currently, the programme offers six clubs in the District's three main towns: Braintree, Witham and Halstead.

Recommendation 10

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

Evidence: In the Council's budget for 2021, the Council stated: "Whilst the Government has announced some financial support for local authorities to address the potential impact of Covid in 2021/22, it is proposed that a provision of £1million be set aside in a new earmarked reserve from the unallocated General Fund balance to provide additional financial support should this be needed."

The £1million from the Council's balances remains in an earmarked reserve as Government funding was used. It is recognised that there may still potentially be some unknown Covid-related costs that the Council may yet incur, and some services are still operating below pre-pandemic levels, which continues to impact on the budget position (e.g. car parking). As such, there may still be a call on part of the reserve which is yet to be determined.

It is further recognised that the Council may face unbudgeted costs in relation to this year's pay offer for Council employees which, according to the LGA, currently stands at an increase of around 10.5% for the lowest paid, currently earning £18,333 a year.

This Committee would like to draw attention to the DHP which can help support customers who are in receipt of housing benefit, or the housing element of Universal Credit. Rent levels are escalating rapidly and consequently, people are finding the shortfall increasing. The Council is experiencing an increase in requests and made 267 awards totalling £245,620 last year (2021/22). However, the budget for this year has been reduced by around 30% to £174,853. The Council will not be advised what the DHP budget for 2023/24 will be until January 2023. Quarter one this year has seen 76 awards totalling £52,592 to those who have needed help with their rent shortfall or rent arrears. It is intended to keep residents in their homes and to avoid evictions. The Council is permitted to increase the amount of DHP up to a maximum of 2.5 times the DWP allocation from its own funds making the total potential sum available of £437,132.

Recommendation 11

It is recommended that Council Tax for 2023/24 be kept to an absolute minimum, preferably no higher than 1%.

Evidence: As we are in the midst of the Cost of Living crisis, the Council should assess its investments which were intended for such difficult times and use these where possible to maintain Council services.

Recommendation 12

It is recommended that a further handyman is employed by the Council with a view to undertaking works which give priority to saving energy, such as draught insulation, foil backing, hot water tank jackets and facilitation of loft insulation. The Council should also consider including single parents who are on benefits within the Handyman Scheme entitlement.

Evidence: The Council has a Handyman Scheme which currently comprises of one handyman. This is a free service for residents aged 65 and over, or vulnerable owner occupiers and private tenants, to help customers keep safe and well. The annual cost of the scheme (2021/22) was £16,565.10 and has seen 146 visits with a variety of work completed.

Recommendation 13

It is recommended that the Council works with partners to promote advice for those who are struggling to keep their pets, therapy and/or working animals. For example, the RSPCA has introduced new guidance for worried pet owners to help them through the ongoing Cost of Living crisis. Furthermore, it is noted that most

foodbanks now offer food for pet owners and that there are a number of charities prepared to assist with this.

Evidence: There was a surge in demand for pets during COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The RSPCA has now recorded a huge increase in pets being abandoned this year as shelters report they are inundated amid the Cost of Living crisis. Exotic pets such as snakes and lizards are also proving too expensive due to their need for specialist heating and lighting. Three snakes, including an 8-foot (2.4-metre) boa constrictor, were dumped in pillow cases outside a reptile shop ([see article](#)). The RSPCA's report, the Animal Kindness Index, and the YouGov survey of more than 4,000 UK adults, revealed that the rising cost of living is a big concern to pet owners. The study found that 78% of pet owners think the cost of living will impact their animals, 68% expressed concern that the cost of care was increasing, and 19% said they were worried about how they'll afford to feed their pets.

Animal-assisted therapy is also a growing field that uses dogs or other animals to help people recover from or better cope with health problems, such as heart disease, cancer and mental health disorders and of course, animals such as those used for visually impaired people are a necessity to enable them to live actively, independently and well.

Recommendation 14

It is recognised that the Council is a Category One Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. The Council should be prepared for possible power cuts and ensure that back-up systems are checked. It should also check that its Emergency Plan is up to date for the forthcoming winter months, and that it is ready to act promptly in order to provide extra communications and advice to Parish Councils and residents, should weather forecasts indicate a cold snap.

There is a temptation for candles to be used during power cuts, which can be dangerous in times of unpreparedness. It is therefore also recommended that the Council considers how best to advise residents on the safe use of candles in this respect, and alternatives.

Evidence: From 1st September 2022, the oil and gas company, Gazprom, stopped supplying gas to Europe along the north stream line. While the UK relies on Russian energy to a lesser extent than many other European countries, it is still exposed to the disruption in energy markets due to the invasion of Ukraine. According to the Government's "reasonable worst case scenario", the UK could experience its first large-scale blackout in decades this winter if gas shortages combine with particularly cold weather. In the event of a reduction of electricity imports from Norway and France, combined with low temperatures, it would force the Government to enact emergency measures to conserve gas. Norway said in early August that it is looking at ways to limit power exports in winter to prevent domestic shortages.

Candle related fires result in around 350 casualties each year and 40% of candle fires result in injury or death. Over 1,000 home insurance claims for house fires are caused by candles each year. It may be useful to know that some insurance

companies may not pay out on claims if a fire is found to be a result of negligence, if a candle was left unattended or poorly placed for example.

Recommendation 15

The Council works with a number of excellent partners, including charities. However, it is recommended that the Council's reliance on partners, charities and other organisations be cautious in these volatile times and that the financial accounts of these organisations be appropriately scrutinised.

Evidence: Latest research from Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) shows cost pressures are affecting donations to charities. Six in 10 (58%) people plan to cut back on discretionary spending over the next six months in order to manage their bills - rising to 69% amongst 25–34-year-olds. Only a quarter of people (26%) say they won't be cutting back on anything. For charities, this has a knock-on impact. In July, only a quarter (25%) of people donated to charity. This figure is significantly lower than the usual average for the month (29%), meaning that around 2m fewer people donated to charity than usual. With many cutting back on discretionary spending, around one in 10 (12%) people reported last month that they plan to cut back on charity donations. There is anecdotal evidence that this is beginning to impact on our local charities, some of whom are under pressure from the fall -out from the complications of the Covid epidemic. Revenue is already falling as attendance at day centres for example have not returned to pre-Covid levels.

Recommendation 16

It is recommended that the Council reviews further opportunities to reduce energy consumption through savings measures for its buildings and land, and that the Council issues advice to residents and businesses on energy saving. This could include advice such as switching off appliances and equipment when not being used (I.e. not left on standby), reducing heat losses through doors and windows and switching off exterior lighting that does not need to be on (e.g. lights left on during the day and lights at night not required for access or safety reasons).

Evidence: The supply and demand balance for grid electricity this Winter is forecast to be within tolerances but could be "tight" at times according to National Grid, and there remains uncertainty over future impacts from the War in Ukraine and how that could lead to both supply problems and further price rises in the energy markets. Energy saving measures can help to reduce costs to residents and businesses, eases pressure on supply and prices and makes sense at this time of crisis in order to ensure energy is available for essential needs.

Recommendation 17

As we approach Winter and subsequently have a better understanding of the true effect of the Cost of Living Crisis, especially in respect of fuel costs, the Council should continue to monitor the means that have been put in place to date and assess whether further measures could be undertaken by the Authority and/or its partners to ease the pressures on our residents. A follow-up report should be provided at a later stage in the year, when fuel poverty may be better assessed and issues around Christmas concerns could also be addressed. The report should be presented at Full Council in order to update all Members on the situation (the "evidence" section would then remain as is).

Evidence: The Scrutiny Review has a short time span in which to be conducted, and the report must be completed and presented to Full Council on 10th October 2022. The concern is that the Cost of Living Crisis is an ongoing, uncertain and evolving issue and by completing the review before the full extent has wholly unfolded, it is feared that some/many concerns may not be addressed.

Recommendation 18

That the Council seeks a means by which it can promote and communicate the sharing of transport to common locations (such as supermarket visits) and 'friendship groups' where people can gather in homes via invitation with a view to sharing the costs associated with energy and heating and addressing social isolation.

Evidence: A suggestion made by Rachel Fahie of Citizens Advice at the meeting of the Combined Scrutiny Committee which took place on 5th September 2022.

Recommendation 19

That the Council communicate with the local Food Banks to explore ways in which assistance with pet food could be offered and raise awareness to foodbank donors.

Evidence: Various animal charities have said that pets are being abandoned due to the Cost of Living crisis, thereby placing a strain on the said charities.

Recommendation 20

Whilst the Committee is aware that the Council is promoting climate change objectives, as a priority, it should explore ways in which it can help businesses within the Braintree District with advice and support relating to the energy crisis, including ways in which they can invest in equipment in order to reduce their energy bills going forward.

Evidence: It has been announced that the Government will provide a support package to businesses (details not yet available) for six months from October 2022. This is expected to be reviewed after three months. The Prime Minister has alluded to the expectation that businesses, including the public sector and schools, etc., should find ways in which they could actively seek to lower their energy costs through investment in appropriate equipment. However, the short period of support is expected to be insufficient to offer meaningful assistance against rising energy (and other) costs as the country dips into economic recession and consumers reduce their spending in a variety of areas.

Recommendation 21

That communications be produced and distributed regarding the effects of financial crisis on mental health, with particular consideration given to business owners. The communications should also provide information on where they can go to for help.

Evidence: Many business owners have revealed that they are finding the surge in their energy costs are crippling and they are fearing for their future. This will place an intolerable strain on owners. Business owners have other significant pressures; e.g. The British Chambers of Commerce say pressures on business are reaching new heights following a quarterly economic survey and HMRC is increasing its interest rate charged on unpaid tax to 4.25%; this is a 13 year high.

Recommendation 22

The Committee has identified the below findings and recommendations in relation to the Council's website.

It is recommended that the website search engine is made more user friendly, accurate and accessible for residents.

Evidence

The input and presentations from officers indicate that they are working incredibly hard both severally and collectively with partners, to find ways to alleviate the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis for residents in the Braintree District. However, information on the Council's website is not easy to find and the search facility does not often lead to a successful outcome. For example, if you place the words "Handyman Scheme" into the search engine on the website, it reveals 62 matches, but none of these lead to the actual Handyman Scheme, which is located: "Home > Advice and Environment > Energy Efficient Homes > > Grants and Funding > Braintree District Council Handyman Scheme."

It is recommended that the Agewell Guide (the Guide) published on the Council's Website (<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/downloads/file/686/age-well-guide>) is updated to avoid confusion and anxiety for older residents and includes both the website addresses and telephone numbers of companies and/or partners promoted within. The Guide ("a guide to services and information for people in later life in the Braintree District") is dated November 2015, and it is noted that signposting for older residents to services is out of date. For example:

- The section entitled 'Affordable Warmth' offers three potential services, but for the 'Home Heat' and 'Winter Fuel' helplines, both telephone numbers are not in service.*
- The website: www.affordablewarmthgrants.co.uk (which offers no telephone number) is also no longer available.*
- 'Help with your own home – Swan Care and Repair.' The telephone number published is no longer in service.*
- The 'List of Housing Associations' promotes Greenfields Community Housing. However, the link: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/housingstatnav/partnership-project/greenfields-community-housing/1> states that "Eastlight Community Homes took over Braintree District Council's homes in November 2007." The section entitled 'Help with Meals' lists three companies. However, 'Apetito' ('Frozen Meal Suppliers' - wrongly spelt 'Appetito' in the Guide) also has a telephone number that does not connect or correspond with the one shown on their website.*

Advice in relation to customers getting help with all or part of their rent is of a concern. The Council provides information relating to Cost of Living support with links to Government's HM Treasury policy paper and Cost of Living Support factsheets. However, it is recommended that a direct link be provided to Benefits

Calculators at the top of the section as point 6. This can help customers find out if they can get benefits to help pay with their rent; income-related benefits, contribution-based benefits, Universal Credit, tax credits, Council Tax Reduction and Carer's Allowance:

- [Policy in Practice better off calculator](#)
- [entitledto benefits calculator](#)
- [Turn2us benefits calculator](#)

Also, a link so that customers may search where they might find a local benefits adviser: <https://advice.local.uk/find-an-adviser/essex>

It is recommended that the following be a consideration to be promoted on the Council's website and elsewhere in other communications, where appropriate:

- *Housing Strategies* – it is recommended that Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) information be provided regarding customers who are a homeowner on qualifying benefits, as they might be able to get help towards interest payment on their mortgage or loans they have taken out for certain repairs and improvement to their home. They can check their eligibility (link: <https://www.gov.uk/support-for-mortgage-interest>)
- *Interest Free Loan for Essentials*: it is recommended that the link to further information and to check eligibility be provided (link: <https://www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits>)
- *Debt Management and Cost of Living – Job and Career Advice*: it is recommended that information relating to discounted travel be provided. Customers could save up to a third on train journeys with a railcard (link to: <https://www.railcard.co.uk/>). And, if a customer is on Universal Credit, they may be eligible for a Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card for up to 50% off (link to: https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/jobcentre-plus-card.aspx)

In an appropriate location, it is recommended that information for customers on how to check their eligibility for free help from the NHS (e.g. for prescriptions, dental or glasses, travel costs and/or personal health budgets) be included (link: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/>).

It is widely reported that the Cost of Living Crisis is causing extreme anxiety. In an appropriate location, it is recommended that information for customers for urgent access to mental health helplines for people of all ages be provided (link: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>).

Information should also be provided for customers who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years of age, as they may be entitled to get help to buy health foods such as fruit and vegetables, milk if they are on a low income, as well as collect vitamins via the NHS 'Healthy Start' Scheme. Eligible people will be sent a Healthy Start card with monetary value attached that can then be used in

some UK shops. The benefit will be added onto the card every four weeks. (link: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>)

Information linked to the Business Debtline website should also be provided. The Debtline offers comprehensive, helpful information to the millions of households who are facing increased gas and electricity bills because of the energy price crisis. Many people are concerned about their finances and how they will keep warm and afford their energy bills. The Debtline fact sheet provides information on the support that is available and offers advice on how living costs could be made more manageable. (link: <https://www.businessdebtline.org/fact-sheet-library/dealing-high-gas-and-electricity-bills-ew/>)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

On 3rd August 2022, the Bank of England increased the Bank Rate by 0.5% to 1.75%. The market is predicting this will rise above 3% by the end of 2022 and as high as 4.25% by August 2023.

Mrs Elizabeth Truss was appointed as Prime Minister (the PM) on 6th September 2022 (one day after the final evidence gathering session). At the time of writing this report, she is set to announce a large financial package to assist people with paying their energy bills. On 8th September 2022, Mrs Truss announced that she would introduce an energy price guarantee to restrict bills to £2,500 per year for the next two years, for a typical household. As it currently stands, the cap, which is due to come into effect from October 2022, will raise the average energy bill from £1,971 to £3,549 a year. The PM also stated that the Government will set up a fund in relation to those households using heating oil and who live in park homes (the full details are not yet available).

It is noted that following the death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September 2022, Parliament was suspended whilst the Country was in a period of 10 days of national mourning. Subsequently, a mini budget is expected to be announced on 23rd September 2022 which will reveal details of the PM's plans to help households and businesses.

The Consumer Prices Index rose by 9.9% in the 12 months through to August 2022; this was a reduction from 10.1% in July. Food inflation has reached 12.8% year on year; the highest value on record since August 2008.

The Council should consider what might happen when the two years of assistance comes to an end. The sharp spike in energy costs is being driven by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Russia which is reducing the gas supply to Europe, and the impacts will continue to be felt. In conjunction with the Council's climate change objectives, it should continue to convey the need for consumers to find ways to become more energy efficient. There is a danger that the price cap could portray a sense of security and consumers might continue to use it in abundance. However, energy remains in short supply and consumers must act responsibly. Using excessive energy could jeopardise future supplies and create potential blackouts.

Response from Mr T Walker, Essex County Council (ECC)

Following the first meeting of the Committee on 8th August 2022, a series of questions were raised with Mr T Walker, Executive Director (ECC) in relation to the evidence he provided in his presentation around the Cost of Living crisis and the 'levelling up' agenda for Essex. The questions were submitted to Mr Walker on 25th August 2022 via e-mail, and a response was received on 8th September 2022. The full response is included under **Appendix 1** to the report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members of the Combined Scrutiny Committee would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the Scrutiny Review:-

- Mr Tom Walker; Executive Director (Essex County Council)
- Mrs Cherie Root; Corporate Director - Operational (Braintree District Council (BDC))
- Mr Mark Wilson; Fuel Poverty & Energy Sustainability Manager (BDC)
- Mrs Suzanne Bennett; Corporate Director – Finance (BDC)
- Mrs Caroline Elias-Stephenson; Head of Housing and Communities (BDC)
- Ms Josie Falco; Head of Environment (BDC)
- Mrs Tracey Parry; Community Services Manager (BDC)
- Ms Rachel Fahie; Chief Officer (Citizens Advice)
- Mrs Julie Rigby; Revenues and Benefits Manager (BDC)

Response from Mr T Walker – Executive Director at Essex County Council (ECC)

From: Annette Collins - Leadership Assistant <Annette.Collins@essex.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 September 2022 4:49 PM
To: Mann, Jessica <jessica.mann@braintree.gov.uk>
Cc: Wisbey, Emma <emma.wisbey@braintree.gov.uk>; Jodi Thompson - Senior Strategy Advisor <Jodi.Thompson@essex.gov.uk>; Tom Walker - Executive Director, Economy Investment & Public Health <Tom.Walker@essex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: BDC's Combined Scrutiny Committee - Scrutiny Review into Cost of Living Crisis - Following up Question from Chairman

Dear Jessica

Please see answers to questions raised below:

Slide: Levelling Up: The White Paper (What Essex is doing) 'Reducing crime in the worst affected areas.'

Question 1): Could Mr Walker please provide detailed information regarding how Essex County Council (ECC) is reducing crime in the worst affected areas?

ECC work closely with key partners to support delivery of various programmes including:

- ReRoute Project (part of the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit initiatives) – working with young people who have been arrested or in possession of carrying a knife but who are waiting to be charged.
- Youth crime prevention through sport in Basildon.
- Operation Henderson – a campaign to raise awareness of exploitation on public transport, supported by several partners including Youth Workers, Community Safety Partnerships, Community Policing Teams and Social Workers.
- School holiday activity clubs across the county include initiatives in Harlow, an area known to have some of the highest crime rates in Essex, with provision of 12 mainstream clubs, 2 SEND and 2 secondary age clubs, as well as trips to Harlow outdoor centre. The LU programme aims to address the drivers of poverty and income deprivation through improved access to education and employment opportunities, as well as focus on local regeneration and enhancing the economic potential of Harlow. Initiatives include Harlow Futures project, an electric vehicle training centre, the Essex Year of Reading and Literacy Corners projects and the ARISE Centre, supported by Anglian Ruskin University as an innovation hub for business.

Slide: Levelling Up: The White Paper (What Essex is doing) ‘ Stronger transport infrastructure.’

Question 2): Could Mr Walker please advise if any stronger transport infrastructure and is being provided in the Braintree District, and if so; further details?

- ECC is only permitted to submit only one transport bid to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF). A number of proposals were assessed for their impact and compliance with the LUF criteria and a proposal that improves access to employment from LUF category 1 areas of Tendring District to employment opportunities at Freeport East was selected as having the best alignment with the bid criteria and therefore the greatest chance of success. However, ECC have supported district bids to LUF, some of which include transport infrastructure.
- The DigiGo Bus service was introduced in Braintree by ECC following a successful LUF bid to government.
- Following on from the successful award of £4.95m funding from the Department for Transport's National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) for the Local Road Network from the Department for Transport, and with support from Highways England (£3m) and Braintree District Council (£2.5m), two new slip roads will be created on the A120 at Millennium Way to allow users to directly access the B1018 and relieve congestion further along at Galleys Corner roundabout. A LUF bid has been submitted by BDC for the funding shortfall for this project.

Slide: Levelling Up: The White Paper (What Essex is doing) ‘Reducing gaps in healthy life expectancy’

Question 3): Could Mr Walker please provide detailed information regarding how ECC is reducing gaps in healthy life expectancy and if any are in the Braintree District?

- ECC is supporting several initiatives across the county which include a physical literacy project in Canvey Island, community hubs expansion in Basildon, ParkPlay in Tendring and Harlow, Holiday Activity Clubs across the county, Beat the Street game in Tendring, Pedal Power and disability cycling in Tendring.
- A community engagement exercise is in development phase, with focus on rural Braintree to gather information to understand the perspective and experiences of unheard groups to help identify challenges and opportunities to help shape and inform interventions in rural Braintree.
- Braintree has a life expectancy at birth of 83.3 years for females and 80.2 years for males, this compares with 83.6 (females) and 80.1 (males) for Essex and 83.8 (females) and 80.2 (males) for the East of England. The inequality of life expectancy at birth for males in Braintree is 4.3 years, compared to 7.5 years for Essex and 7.9 years for the East of England and for females is 4.3 years for Braintree, 6.3 years for Essex and 6.2 years for the East of England. Data taken from the Essex Open Data [JSNA Health Outcomes](#).
- ECC is working closely with Braintree DC and other local Braintree stakeholders, including the Braintree district NHS Primary Care Networks

(PCNs) to co-ordinate a programme of work aimed at improving health and wellbeing, including healthy life expectancy. It is early days of joint working with these relatively new NHS organisations, but there is commitment across organisations to focus on cohorts of people with the worst health status and relatively poor life expectancy. Examples of specific work include referring people to the Essex Wellbeing Service where they will receive support for healthy weight behaviours, stopping smoking and reducing social isolation, all of which contribute to poor life expectancy, mapping and using assets in the community via Braintree 360 voluntary action to support healthy behaviours and a focus by the NHS in Braintree on the main areas of deprivation and main diseases which contribute to poor life expectancy, such as severe mental illness, respiratory disease and high blood pressure.

Slide: Greater Essex: Local Action - Short term (6-12 months) - Offering 'Financial advice + guidance' Mr Walker said ECC is "partnering up with HSBC"

Question 4): Could Mr Walker please provide detailed information regarding how ECC is partnering up with HSCB and the anticipated benefits to residents?

- ECC is working in partnership with HSBC to offer a series of pop-up events to residents focusing on financial literacy programmes in Essex libraries for both young people and adults. The programme will start in Colchester this autumn, offering face-to-face guidance on topics such as fraud awareness, digital banking and managing finances. The programme will then be extended out to other areas in Essex.

Slide: Greater Essex: Local Action - Short term (6-12 months) - Boost Free School Meal (FSM) take up

Question 5): Could Mr Walker please provide more detailed information about the methods used regarding how ECC is boosting FSM take up?

- The government's 'Universal Infant Free School Meals' (UIFSM) initiative has changed the national landscape on this subject in recent years, with all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 entitled to a free school meal.
- ECC has a dedicated free school meals webpage: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/free-school-meals> using which parents of children in Year 3 or above, who are in receipt of the relevant national qualifying benefits can apply for a FSM. The School Meals Service detailed on the webpage is an example of ECCs strategic approach, offering an advice and guidance service to schools, providing training to catering staff on how to manage food safely and in accordance to the standards set out by the Food Standards Agency, including providing schools with menus that they can choose to use that meet the school food standards.
- The FSM voucher scheme sees schools entitled to central government funding when they make this available to local authorities, to provide FSM vouchers during school holiday periods, where they are in receipt of benefits related FSM (not UIFSM). Schools are easily able to order vouchers and distribute those to eligible families, at set periods of time.

- It is also in the interest of schools to boost school meals take up, given the connection to Pupil Premium that schools can claim for children eligible for FSM.

Please feel free to contact Tom or Jodi Thompson (cc'd) should you have any further queries.

Kind regards

Annette

Annette Collins
Leadership Assistant
Business Support

Report Title: Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2022/38
Report Presented by: Councillor John McKee, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation	
Enquiries to: Mark Jarvis, Financial Services Manager mark.jarvis@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy prior to the commencement of the financial year; receive at least one mid-year report; and then receive an annual report after the financial year-end.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To receive and note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021/22.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 was approved by Full Council at its meeting held on 22 February 2021. A mid-year report was presented to Full Council on the 13th of December 2021. The Annual Report for 2021/22 was reviewed at the Governance and Audit Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 12th July 2022, where no changes were recommended.
- 3.2 The recommendation set out in this report will help the Council to demonstrate that it is achieving its corporate objectives of being a high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services; and is delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no new financial implications arising from this report as the budget position has already been reflected in the provisional financial outturn for 2021/22. The treasury management position reported in the annual report will form the basis for updating the capital and investment strategy for 2022/23 and developing proposals for the 2023/24 budget and update to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Council's treasury management activities are subject to regulation by the CIPFA Code. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

6. Other Implications

- 6.1 There are no other implication arising from the recommendation in this report.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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).
- 7.3 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8. List of Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 Full Council 13th December 2021 - Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2021/22

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Treasury management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code), which requires the approval of a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year and, as a minimum, a semi-annual and annual treasury outturn report. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 1.2 The Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 was approved by Full Council at its meeting held on 22 February 2021. The Authority has invested substantial sums of money and continues to hold legacy borrowing and is therefore exposed to financial risks. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the treasury management strategy.
- 1.3 The Council currently contracts with Arlingclose Limited as its treasury management adviser and receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues. However, responsibility for final decision making remains with the Council and its officers. The contract runs until 30 November 2022.

2. External Context

- 2.1 **Economic background:** The continuing economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, together with the war in Ukraine, higher inflation, and higher interest rates were major issues over the period.
- 2.2 Bank Rate was 0.1% at the beginning of the reporting period. April and May saw the economy gathering momentum as the shackles of the pandemic restrictions were eased. Despite the improving outlook, market expectations were that the Bank of England would delay rate rises until 2022. Rising, persistent inflation changed that.
- 2.3 UK CPI was 0.7% in March 2021 but thereafter began to steadily increase. Initially driven by energy price effects and by inflation in sectors such as retail and hospitality which were re-opening after the pandemic lockdowns, inflation then was believed to be temporary. Thereafter price rises slowly became more widespread, as a combination of rising global costs and strong demand was exacerbated by supply shortages and transport dislocations. The surge in wholesale gas and electricity prices led to elevated inflation expectations. CPI for February 2022 registered 6.2% year on year, up from 5.5% in the previous month and the highest reading in the National Statistic series. Core inflation, which excludes the more volatile components, rose to 5.2% year/year from 4.4%.

- 2.4 Having increased Bank Rate from 0.10% to 0.25% in December, the Bank of England hiked it further to 0.50% in February and 0.75% in March. At the meeting in February, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to start reducing the stock of its asset purchase scheme by ceasing to reinvest the proceeds from maturing bonds as well as starting a programme of selling its corporate bonds.
- 2.5 In its March interest rate announcement, the MPC noted that the invasion of Ukraine had caused further large increases in energy and other commodity prices, with the expectation that the conflict will worsen supply chain disruptions around the world and push CPI inflation to around 8% later in 2022, even higher than forecast only a month before in the February Monetary Policy Report. The Committee also noted that although GDP in January was stronger than expected with business confidence holding up and the labour market remaining robust, consumer confidence had fallen due to the squeeze in real household incomes.
- 2.6 **Financial markets:** The conflict in Ukraine added further volatility to the already uncertain inflation and interest rate outlook over the period. The Dow Jones started to decline in January but remained above its pre-pandemic level by the end of the period while the FTSE 250 and FTSE 100 also fell and ended the quarter below their pre-March 2020 levels.
- 2.7 Bond yields were similarly volatile as the tension between higher inflation and flight to quality from the war pushed and pulled yields, but with a general upward trend from higher interest rates dominating as yields generally climbed.
- 2.8 **Credit review:** In the first half of FY 2021-22 credit default swap (CDS) spreads were flat over most of period and are broadly in line with their pre-pandemic levels. In September spreads rose by a few basis points due to concerns around Chinese property developer Evergrande defaulting but then fell back. Fitch and Moody's revised upward the outlook on a number of UK banks and building societies on the Authority's counterparty to 'stable', recognising their improved capital positions compared to 2020 and better economic growth prospects in the UK.
- 2.9 Having completed its full review of its credit advice on unsecured deposits, in September Arlingclose extended the maximum duration limit for UK bank entities on its recommended lending list from 35 days to 100 days; a similar extension was advised in December for the non-UK banks on this list. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remains under constant review.

3. **Local Context**

- 3.1 On 31 March 2022, the Authority had net cash and investments of £56.0m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in the table below.

Table: Resources available for investment at 31 March 2022

		31-Mar-22
		£000
	Usable reserves	42,754
	Working capital & other balances	30,081
A	Reserves & working capital	72,835
	Borrowing Capital Financing Requirement	22,799
	Less actual external borrowing	(6,000)
B	Equals internal borrowing	16,799
a – b	Resources available for investment	56,036

- 3.2 As at the 31st March 2022, the working capital balances had increased significantly compared to last year for a number of reasons. The Council received in excess of £10m in respect of the £150 Energy Rebate scheme and the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) that are both due to be paid out to households and businesses in 2022/23.
- 3.3 Borrowing and investments were kept below their underlying levels, referred to as internal borrowing, which reduces overall risk and interest costs. The level of internal borrowing increased in the year by a net £964k, primarily due to the additional expenditure incurred in-year due on the Manor Street development.
- 3.4 The treasury management position at 31 March 2022 and the change during the year is shown in the table below.

Table: Treasury Management Summary

	31-Mar-21	2021/22	31-Mar-22
	Balance	Movement	Balance
	£000	£000	£000
Borrowing	6,000	-	6,000
Pooled Fund Investments	19,000	-	19,000
Short-Term Investments	14,000	23,000	37,000
Restricted cash	3,071	-3,071	0
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,039	-2,003	36
Total Investments¹	38,110	17,926	56,036
Net Cash & Investments	32,110	17,926	50,036
¹ Excludes changes in market value of pooled fund investments			

- 3.5 Restricted cash represents funds that were received prior to 31 March 2021 from the sale of serviced land plots at Horizon 120 and which was held in escrow pending completion of infrastructure works. The funds were released to the Authority in 2021/22.

4. Borrowing Update

- 4.1 In August 2021, HM Treasury significantly revised guidance for the PWLB lending facility with more detail and 12 examples of permitted and prohibited use of PWLB loans. Authorities that are purchasing or intending to purchase investment assets primarily for yield will not be able to access the PWLB except to refinance existing loans or externalise internal borrowing. Acceptable use of PWLB borrowing includes service delivery, housing, regeneration, preventative action, refinancing and treasury management.
- 4.2 CIPFA published its revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance and Treasury Management Code. The key changes in the two codes are around permitted reasons to borrow, knowledge and skills, and the management of non-treasury investments.
- 4.3 The principles of the Prudential Code took immediate effect although local authorities could defer introducing the revised reporting requirements until the 2023/24 financial year.
- 4.4 To comply with the Prudential Code, authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return. This Code also states that it is not prudent for local authorities to make investment or spending decision that will increase the CFR unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the authority. Existing commercial investments are not required to be sold; however, authorities with

existing commercial investments who expect to need to borrow should review the options for exiting these investments.

- 4.5 Borrowing is permitted for cashflow management, interest rate risk management, to refinance current borrowing and to adjust levels of internal borrowing. Borrowing to refinance capital expenditure primarily related to the delivery of a local authority's function but where a financial return is also expected is allowed, provided that financial return is not the primary reason for the expenditure. The changes align the CIPFA Prudential Code with the PWLB lending rules.

5. Borrowing strategy

- 5.1 Borrowing remained unchanged in the year at £6m comprising two £3m loans on Lender Option, Borrower Option (LOBO) terms, both with 20 years remaining until maturity. The average rate of interest on this borrowing is 4.70% per annum.
- 5.2 With short-term interest rates remaining much lower than long-term rates, it was considered more cost effective in the near term to use internal resources to meet the Authority's increasing borrowing requirement (as measured by the CFR).
- 5.3 The current lender of the LOBO loans did not exercise their options during the year however the opportunity to negotiate an early repayment/ refinancing of the loans took place in the last quarter and completed in early 2022.

6. Other Debt Activity

- 6.1 During the year, new finance lease arrangements amounting to £1.3m were agreed for 8 refuse vehicles, and annual repayments of finance lease liabilities were made totalling £150k. This resulted in a net increase in finance liabilities of £1.2m, with a balance outstanding of £3.1m at 31 March 2022. This amount will be paid in subsequent years.

7. Treasury Investment Activity

- 7.1 During the year significant sums were received from central government which were used to support small and medium businesses during the coronavirus pandemic. Funding for the Energy Rebate Scheme announced by government in February 2022, and to be paid to households in 2022/23 was also received in March 2022.

7.2 Investment balances ranged between £45.5m and £73.7m, with an average amount invested across the year of £60.1m. At 31 March 2022 the investment position was as shown in the table below:

Table: Investment Position 31 March 2022

	31 Mar 2021	2021/22 movement		31 Mar 2022	31 Mar 2022	31 Mar 2022
	Balance	Made	Matured	Balance	Yield	WAM ¹
	£000	£000	£000	£000	%	days
<u>Pooled Funds²:</u>						
Equity	13,000	-	-	13,000	4.37%	T+3/4d
Diversified	3,000	-	-	3,000	4.67%	T+3d
Property	3,000	-	-	3,000	3.91%	90d
Sub-total	19,000	-	-	19,000	4.34%	
<u>Short-term Investments</u>						
Other local authorities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt Management Office	-	153,500	(140,500)	13,000	-	-
MMF ³ (low volatility)	10,000	34,500	(24,500)	20,000	0.06%	On-call
MMF (variable)	4,000	-	-	4,000	0.17%	T+2d
Sub-total	14,000	188,000	(165,000)	37,000	0.08%	
Restricted cash	3,071			-		Conditional
Cash at bank	2,039			36		On-call
Total	38,110			56,036		

¹ Weighted average maturity – T+ indicates settlement days after transaction day

² Sum invested excluding any change in market values

³ Money Market Funds

7.3 By the end of the financial year, the overall amount of cash and investments had increased by over £18m from that held at 31 March 2021, which is largely a consequence of the amount of Government funding in relation to Covid and the Energy Rebate but also due to an acceleration of planned capital receipts in relation to Horizon 120.

7.4 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require funds to be invested prudently, and to have regard to security and liquidity, before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

7.5 Ultra low short-dated cash rates, which were a feature since March 2020 when Bank Rate was cut to 0.1%, prevailed for much of the 12 month reporting period. Continued downward pressure on short-dated cash rates brought net returns on money market funds (MMF) close to zero even after some managers temporarily lowered their fees and the three interest rate hikes in December 2021, and February and March 2022.

7.6 Deposit rates with the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF)

remained low for the majority of 2021/22.

- 7.7 The progression of risk and return metrics for the Authority's investments are shown in the following extracts from quarterly investment benchmarking:

Table: Investment Benchmarking

Period end	Credit Rating ¹	Bail-in exposure ¹	WAM ¹ (days)	Pooled funds volatility	Income return %	Total return ² %
31.03.21	A+	100%	1	11.8%	2.61%	14.14%
30.06.21	AA-	53%	13	9.5%	1.66%	7.45%
30.09.21	AA-	37%	20	9.3%	1.36%	7.44%
31.12.21	A+	62%	20	7.1%	1.32%	5.23%
31.03.22	AA-	62%	9	8.2%	1.83%	4.94%
Similar LAs	AA-	61%	43	3.2%	1.18%	2.38%
All clients	AA-	60%	14	4.5%	0.97%	2.10%

Source: Arlingclose quarterly benchmarking

¹ Relates to internally managed investments

² Income plus change in market value of pooled funds

- 7.8 **Externally Managed Pooled Funds:** £19m of the Authority's investments are invested in externally managed strategic pooled funds where short-term security and liquidity are lesser considerations, and the objectives instead are regular revenue income and long-term price stability. These funds generate income which is used to support services in year.

- 7.9 The Authority is invested in bond, equity, multi-asset and property funds. During 2021/22, the values in corporate bond and equity markets had regained the losses incurred due to the global pandemic and has since seen a significant increase compared to last year. As at the 31 March 2022, net unrealisable gains were just over £2.9m compared to £1.2m last year.

- 7.10 As pooled funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's medium-long-term investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down; but with the confidence that over a three-five-year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates.

- 7.11 As a consequence of the war in Ukraine, Arlingclose contacted the fund managers of our MMF, and strategic funds and confirmed no direct exposure to Russian or Belarusian assets had been identified

8. **Budgetary Performance**

- 8.1 Interest paid on borrowing amounted to £282k, with a further £106k of interest paid on finance leases. These costs were within the revenue budgets approved.
- 8.2 The following table shows the investment income generated for the year against budget:

Table: Investment Income 2021-22

	2021/22 Budget			2021/22 Actual		
	Average invested	Income	Yield	Average invested	Income	Yield
	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	%
Pooled Funds	19,000	686	3.61%	19,000	825	4.34%
Short-term investments	20,970	23	0.11%	41,073	31	0.08%
Total	39,970	709	1.77%	60,073	856	1.42%

- 8.3 The above table shows that income was higher than budget by £147k. As part of the 2021/22 budget £350k was allocated from the treasury management reserve to mitigate the expected downturn in investment income due to lower dividends being paid by corporate bodies held by pooled funds and the sharp reduction in interest rates on the Council's short term investments. The increase in income enabled a reduction in the amount required to be used from the reserve. The 2022/23 budget already assumes a £100k increase to the investment income given the improvement on the returns on pooled funds with further increases provided in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy of £120k and £30k in 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively.

9. **Compliance**

- 9.1 The Head of Finance (S151 officer) reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy.
- 9.2 Compliance with the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt is demonstrated in the table below.

Table: Compliance against debt limits

	2021/22	31-Mar-22	2021/22	2021/22	
	Maximum	Actual	Operational	Authorised	
			Boundary	Limit	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Borrowing	6.000	6.000			
Finance Lease	1.914	3,319			
Total Debt	8.180	9.319	30.000	50.000	√

- 9.3 Whilst internal resources have been used to meet the increased borrowing requirement (as measured by the CFR), had this been matched by new external borrowing instead, this would have pushed debt levels up by £16.8m and a revised total at 31 March 2022 of just over £26m, which remains within the above limits.

Table: Compliance with Investment Limits

	2021/22	31-Mar-22	2021/22	Complied
	Max	Max	Limit	
	£m	£m	£m	
Any AAA rated money market fund	5	5	5	√
Loans to any single UK local authority	3	-	5	√
Any unrated pooled fund	5	5	5	√
Aggregate unrated pooled funds	19	19	25	√

- 9.4 For the purposes of day-to-day banking the aim is to maintain a balance of no more than £1.5m on operational current accounts, subject to short-term cash flow requirements. The following table shows how the Authority performed against this objective.

Table: Day-to-day banking balance

	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	31-Mar-22
	Min	Max	Weighted	Actual
			Average	
Objective:	£m	£m	£m	£m
Aim not to have > £1.5m at any time	0.065	7.696	1.728	0.036
No of days <= £1.5m			188	
As % of days in the year			52%	

- 9.5 The number of days where the day-to-day bank balance was maintained at or below £1.5m was lower than that in 2020/21 (294 days or 81%). This reflected the significant amount of excess cash the Authority managed during the year at times when the Debt Management Office were offering negative rates.
- 9.6 Whilst limits were set on the principal sums invested for periods longer than a year to control exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of investments, no such investments were made in the year.

Report Title: Award of a contract for the provision of the MHR iTrent system – Urgent Key Decision	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2022/39
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: Kim Mayo, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer kim.mayo@braintree.go.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 9 September 2022, relating to the iTrent Human Resources and Payroll System.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 Following the announcement of the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, the Council took the decision to cancel the meeting of Cabinet scheduled to take place on 12 September 2022. All non-urgent business was held over until the next available meeting, which has since been scheduled to take place on 5th October 2022.
- 3.2 However, there was one item on the agenda which was time critical and therefore, required the Council to consider the matter in accordance with the Special Urgency provisions as set out in the Constitution.
- 3.3 The Council's current human resources and payroll system, iTrent, is provided by MHR under a contract that has been in place since March 2016. The iTrent system has facilitated the digitalisation of the Council's HR processes, including supporting self-service for staff, managers, and Members, and has delivered operational efficiencies, including through joint procurement and collaboration across partners. A significant development from sharing the iTrent system was the establishment of the shared payroll service, which is led by the Council, providing payroll services to the three original partner authorities, and more recently extended to include Brentwood Borough Council, Castle Point District Council, and Rochford District Council.

- 3.4 To ensure that a contract renewal of the existing system could demonstrate optimum value, the Partnership have been working with the Essex Procurement Hub. The contract renewal commenced on 30 September 2022 and secured the same pricing terms as the existing contract for the period up to 31st March 2023. This enabled access for the Council and Partners to the current, more favourable, pricing terms under the above frameworks which are time limited before renewal from October.
- 3.5 In accordance with paragraph 13.11, the Monitoring Officer agreed that a matter of urgency had arisen in connection with the work of the Cabinet, and that it required a decision to be taken before the next available meeting of Cabinet. Accordingly, the Vice Chairman of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee was consulted and agreed that the matter could be considered under the Special Urgency provisions. Authority to take the urgent Key Decision is invested in the Leader of the Council, Councillor Graham Butland.
- 3.6 Notice of the use of the Special Urgency Provision was published on the Council's website and at its offices.
- 3.7 Accordingly on 9 September 2022, the Leader of the Council approved the following decisions:
- 3.7.1 To approve the award of a contract to Softcat Plc for the provision of the MHR iTrent system for the period 30 September 2022 to 31 March 2027 via a direct award through the NHS SBS Digital Workplace Solutions framework with a total contract value of £395,290.59.
- 3.7.2 To give delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Support Services) to agree the Service Level Agreement covering the third party permitted agency arrangement for use of the system by other councils under the Council's contract.
- 3.8 A copy of the decision report is available on the Council's website.

4. Financial Implications

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

5. Legal Implications

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

Report Title: Council Committee Membership	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2022/48
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: Kim Mayo, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Braintree District Council (the Council) has a number of Committees and Sub-Committees whose membership is determined by the Council. This report sets out changes to the membership of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee and notes the change to the membership of the Climate Change Working Group.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the appointment of Councillor James Abbott to the Climate Change Working Group.
- 2.2 To approve the appointment of Councillor Mrs Joanne Beavis to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council is required to allocate seats on Council Committees and Sub-Committees to Political Groups on a politically proportionate basis.
- 3.2 In August 2022, Councillor Nick Unsworth left the G&I Group and became a Green Party Independent Member. In September 2022, Councillor Dean Wallace resigned from the District Council. The membership of the Council as a result is 48 seats with 1 vacancy and for the purpose of the allocation of seats, this is broken down as follows:
- 33 - Conservative Group
 - 8 - Green and Independent Group (G&I Group)
 - 4 - Halstead Residents Association
 - 2 - Labour Group
 - 1 - Independents
 - 1 - vacancy

4. Political balance requirements

- 4.1 The allocation of seats on its Council Committees must be in the same proportion as the number of Members of the Group bears to the membership of the Council as a whole. Accordingly, the Council is required to consider whether, as the result of the change in political membership, there is a material change to its committee membership.
- 4.2 The Council has a duty when allocating or reviewing the allocation of seats on Committees to give effect so far as is reasonably practicable to the following four principles:-
- (a) all the seats are not allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) the majority of the seats go to the political group in the majority on the full Council;
 - (c) subject to the above two principles, the total number of seats on the ordinary Committees of the Authority are allocated to each Political Group in the same proportion as the Group's representation on the full Council; and
 - (d) subject to the above three principles, the number of seats on each Committee are allocated to each political group in the same proportion as the Group's representation on the Council.
- 4.3 A review of the political proportions has been carried out to reflect the changes caused by the resignation of Councillor Nick Unsworth from the Green and Independent Group and Councillor Wallace from the Council. The in political balance is set out below:
- Conservative Group – 33 Seats (68.8%)
 - Green and Independent Group – 8 Seats (16.7%)
 - Halstead Residents Association – 4 Seats (8.3%)
 - Labour Group – 2 Seats (4.2%)
 - Independent Members – 1 seat (2.1%)
- 4.4 The recalculation of the political proportions following the resignation of Councillor Wallace does not change the number of seats allocated.

5. Council Committee Appointments

5.1 Performance Management Scrutiny Committee

- 5.2 Following the resignation of Councillor Unsworth from the Green and Independent Group, there is change to the membership of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee, to which a Council appointment can be made. The seat will remain allocated to the Green and Independent Party, and accordingly Councillor Nick Unsworth will step down and will be replaced by Councillor Mrs Joanne Beavis.

6. Climate Change Working Group

- 6.1 The Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Working Group were approved by Cabinet on 9 September 2019. These set out that the membership would include a member of the Green and Independent Group. Accordingly, Council is to note that Councillor Nick Unsworth will no longer be a member of that Working Group and Councillor James Abbott will be the nominated member of the Green and Independent Group.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 On the basis of the information set out in this report, Council is recommended to approve the changes. The Membership for Performance Management Scrutiny Committee are set out in Appendix A.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 None of the changes attract a Special Responsibility Allowance and therefore no financial implications would arise from the decisions within this report.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The changes are in accordance with the requirements set out within the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

10. List of Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix A - Committee Membership.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 Cabinet – 9 September 2019

Appendix A – Committee Membership

Performance Management Scrutiny Committee Membership (9):

Councillor Mrs Joanne Beavis
Councillor James Coleridge
Councillor George Courtauld
Councillor Charley Dervish
Councillor Tony Everard
Councillor Mick Radley (Chairman)
Councillor Saif Rehman
Councillor Bill Rose
Councillor Peter Schwier (Vice-Chairman)

Report Title: Cabinet's Report to Full Council	
Report to: Council	
Date: 10 th October 2022	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: N/A	

1. Introduction

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

OVERALL STRATEGY

2. Councillor Graham Butland - Leader of the Council

- 2.1 Last month, the Deputy Leader substituted for me at the meeting of Essex Leaders. Positive discussions were had about the cross-agency approach to supporting Ukrainian refugees, progress on devolution and exploring further opportunities to explore shared services to reduce the overall cost of local government. Whilst the financial challenges Braintree District Council faces are not as acute as some comparable local authorities, I am keen that the Council plays an important part in further discussions on shared services and cost savings. Our new Chief Executive will start to have conversations with his officer colleagues, and I will update on any progress at both political and officer level in the upcoming months.

Ukraine

- 2.2 The Braintree District has welcomed a number of Ukrainian guests into the district and in particular under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Ukrainian refugees were also welcomed under a visitor visa and under a family visa. We currently know of one household in the family scheme and approximately 90 households on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. To date only one placement made under the Homes for Ukraine scheme has broken down and the household was supported by the Council to find an alternative placement out of areas.
- 2.3 Braintree Community Centre continue to host monthly coffee mornings and weekly beginner's language classes for our Ukrainian guests in the district. These have been invaluable to those that attend. English to Speakers of Other

Languages (ESOL) courses run by Adult Community Learning are also available from September.

- 2.4 Officers supported the Ukrainian Independence Day event held at Braintree Town Hall. The event was organised by Ukrainian guests in the district as a way of celebrating this significant day and to thank their sponsors for all their support over the past few months. Over 45 people attended and celebrated with traditional song, dance and dress.
- 2.5 To date the Cashier's team have paid 198 payments to guests (for ninety families) from funding made available by Central Government under the Homes for Ukraine scheme amounting to £39.6k of immediate financial support.

Cost of Living

- 2.6 A Cost of Living Partnership group was established in August with a range of statutory, business, and voluntary sector partners to respond, support and tackle the effect of the national cost of living crisis on Braintree District residents focusing on the following themes:
- Fuel and energy
 - Food and essentials
 - Health & Wellbeing
 - Housing
 - Crime
 - Winter Resilience
- 2.7 The group have been collating and sharing data along with anecdotal evidence from their work with individuals and families across the district, they have also identified what support is available and how that information is communicated.
- 2.8 An example of this is the Don't Wait for Winter social media campaign provides weekly handy tips around money, energy, food and cooking.
- 2.9 Internally we have the Live Well for Less campaign which provides staff with handy tips and messaging along with social benefits available and support services that they can access.

INNOVATE ENVIRONMENT

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

Finance Service

3.1 Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates as at 31st August 2022

- **Council Tax collection** – achieved 48.2% which is a similar level of performance to that achieved last year. Amount collected £52.5m.
- **Business Rates collection** – 47.9%, which is an improvement over the last two years for the same period. Amount collected £20.7m.

COVID 19 Additional Relief Fund for Businesses (CARF)

- 3.2 At the end August relief totalling £974k had been paid under the CARF scheme to 182 business accounts. The Council has promoted the scheme extensively to encourage businesses that might be eligible to apply before the scheme expired at the end of September.

Energy Rebate Scheme

Main Scheme (Council Tax Bands A-D)

- 3.3 44,700 rebates totalling £6.7m had been paid by the end of August, with a further 5,540 or £831k being offset against taxpayers' accounts.
- 3.4 The team were continuing to apply offsets where no response had been received from customers requesting details to pay their Energy Rebate. The scheme ended on 30th September, and a final reconciliation of payments against the government grant received on account will be undertaken.

Discretionary Energy Rebate Scheme

- 3.5 The discretionary scheme has been launched with 264 customers having been paid totalling £39.6k, and a further 4 offsets against council tax accounts (£600) by the end of August.
- 3.6 Marketing and Communications are continuing to highlight the scheme to encourage those who might be eligible to apply to maximise the use of available funding before the end of November.

Business Rate Discretionary Scheme

- 3.7 We are currently in the process of inviting applications for reassessment against this discretionary scheme from charitable, non-profit making bodies, and community amateur sports clubs. The scheme currently allocates around £270k of business rate relief to 160 organisations. New applications will also be accepted against the scheme.

Statement of Accounts for 2021/22

- 3.8 The Council's draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 were approved on 31st July for publication on the Council's website and to commence the period of public inspection which ended on 12th September.

Customer Services

- 3.9 The average call answering time for August was 60 seconds. This is a lot higher than usual and reflects the current demand on the service. The Customer Service Team are receiving a higher number of calls requesting clear sacks due to the delay in the annual clear sack delivery. The summer holiday period has also seen an increase in bulky waste bookings. The team are continuing to support a number of services experiencing high demand by taking messages for the teams whilst being shorter on resources themselves due to a member of the team being seconded to the graphics team and staff on leave.
- 3.10 Despite the call answer time being high, the service continues to resolve 72% of calls at first point of contact. The team are also undertaking satisfaction surveys with customers and the overall response to waiting times is positive. Action will be taken to reduce the call answer time including more in-depth analysis of the calls to see where we can move services online. It is also

hoped that the number of calls into the CSC will reduce as the annual clear sack delivery gets underway.

- 3.11 In the month of August, the Customer Service Centre dealt with 8,895 calls, 1,479 emails, 3,784 online enquiries and 1,711 face to face enquiries.

Performance and Improvement Team

- 3.12 In August, the team received 61 FOI/EIR requests and responded to 96.67% of requests within the 20-working day timescale. Two requests were responded to over timescales.

Human Resources and OD&L

- 3.13 Following the announcement of a pay offer for council employees, the three Unions (Unison, GMB and Unite) have commenced consultation with their members. The consultations are due to end in October.
- 3.14 As part of the support package to staff during the cost of living crisis, we will be providing drop-in sessions about the discounts portal (Vine Extras) available to employees to raise awareness to all of the benefits. Promotional webinar sessions are also being arranged for September to inform and update employees about the services available from the Employment Assistance Programme.
- 3.15 Completion of the mandatory training courses has been extended until the end of September and the health and wellbeing platform is being developed with the health and safety courses being rolled out to staff shortly.

Procurement

- 3.16 There are currently 25 procurements being supported by the team across a range of categories of spend, with further projects being included on the forward plan, enabling future projects to be programmed and resource assigned in an efficient manner.
- 3.17 To coincide with updates to the Procurement Procedure Rules, procurement training is being delivered to staff across the organisation, supporting service areas to procure low value requirements independently, releasing procurement resource to deliver additional value to higher spend categories.
- 3.18 Reporting is being developed to increase visibility of procurement activity, to support the Council Management in early decision making in consideration of third party spend.
- 3.19 The Council continues to work in partnership with Essex County Council (ECC) in the management of the procurement team and across common areas including document creation and review of spend data. This data is being shared with the ECC analytics team to produce reporting which categorises spend and compares this against current contracts. This will allow the Council to identify uncontracted spend to identify possible saving opportunities. As this is being done with other authorities as well, we can identify commonality of spend, to allow benchmarking and possible shared

procurement. The Council and ECC are currently working on opportunities to deepen this partnership.

Health & Safety

- 3.20 An internal Corporate Health and Safety and Welfare Committee meeting was held on 24th August 2022.
- 3.21 Occupational Health and Safety are in the process of preparing a report for the incoming new Chief Executive around the organisational structure, management and culture of Occupational Health and Safety within the Council.

4. Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Environment

OPERATIONS

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Re-wilding/wildflower seeding

- 4.1 10 Parish Councils responded to an invitation to identify rural highway verges or Council owned land within their parish that they felt would be suitable for re-wilding or seeding with wildflowers. Half opted for re-wilding and the other half for seeding. The project team met to discuss an action plan for these sites in August and is creating an instruction pack to send out to interested parish councils, which will include the ECC licence application form for land not owned by the Council.

CEMETERIES

Memorial Bench Safety Testing

- 4.2 Safety testing of all memorial benches (owned by next of kin) within the Council's 4 cemeteries has been completed. Of the 33 benches that failed to meet the required safety standards, 21 were reinstated following the necessary works by the next of kin, and the remaining 12 were removed along with their concrete bases in the absence of any response from the next of kin.

STREET SCENE ENFORCEMENT

Number of fly-tips reported

- 4.3 I am pleased to report that the Council has seen a 12.8% reduction in the number of fly-tips in the first 4 months of this financial year compared with the same period last year.

Month	2022/23	2021/22
April	55	78
May	59	60
June	54	60

July	63	67
TOTALS	231	265

- 4.4 The information below shows the work undertaken by the Enforcement Team from 1 June to 31 July 2022.

52 - Dog barking complaints

9 - Dog fouling complaints

9 - Stray dogs detained (9 BDC / 0 UDC)

46 - Reports of anti-social behaviour

17 - Reports of littering

7 - Statutory Notices served (1 x Microchipping, 1 x provide duty of care waste transfer notes, 2 x provide information regarding waste offence, 1x Abatement notice for dog barking, 2x Community Protection Notice for cannabis odour)

7 - Fixed Penalty Notices served (general litter x 3, householder duty of care offence x1, smoking in a smoke free place x 3)

- 4.5 The Street Scene Enforcement Team has been working with the Housing Team to establish a support group where people with complex needs attend a meeting and support is put in place to assist the person/s in sustaining a tenancy. It is hoped that this will reduce ASB and its impact on others, as well as the number of evictions necessary.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Unauthorised encampments

- 4.6 The Public Health and Housing Team worked with the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit to monitor 6 unauthorised encampments so far this year. (Great Saling, Thistledown, Great Notley Country Park, Rickstones Road, (Witham), Braintree Rugby Club, Cressing Sports & Social Club). All the encampments moved on following eviction. The sites involved were checked and were found to be left in a reasonably clean condition with waste bagged and collated ready for collection

Building Control

- 4.7 The Council recently took urgent action over a damaged roof to a building in Braintree town centre following concerns over safety. The Council applied to the Magistrates Court and were granted emergency powers under Building Act 1984 to gain entry to the old Saffron Indian Cuisine in Coggeshall Road on 17th August 2022 and to make the roof structure safe and prevent it from deteriorating further and collapsing into the building. All costs incurred will be sought to be recouped from the owners of the premises.
- 4.8 Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that a building or structure in their area that is considered dangerous is made safe to protect the public from harm. Residents and businesses who live nearby have been informed and work to protect the adjacent building wall has taken place, including the help of ECC Highways, closing the footpath immediately in front of the premises.

- 4.9 Members of the Environment team attended a Briefing on the implications to Local Authorities of the newly enacted Building Safety Act on the 7th July. In attendance were representatives from the Local Authority Building Control Organisation, Fire Service and the HSE. The key message was that the HSE's new operating model for the "Building Safety Regulator", as introduced in the Building Safety Act, included multi-disciplinary teams which included both Local Authority Building Control and Environment Health Departments. These multi-disciplinary teams would be focusing on certifying all the high risk buildings (HRBs) in the UK over the next 5 years.

Climate Change

- 4.10 The Climate Change Project Manager post was filled on the 13th June 2022. An internal lead officer Climate Change Delivery Board has been established to further support the delivery of all current and future Climate Change projects.
- 4.11 A broad range of communications have been published and future comms planned to include messaging on energy saving, waste reduction, transport emission reduction and green business support. Some of this work also links with the work currently underway to support those affected by fuel poverty and cost of living issues.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging

- 4.12 An electric vehicle charging proposal for Eastern Road car park has been scoped and is to be submitted during the next funding round of grants offered by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles.
- 4.13 EV charging facilities are being expanded to include rapid and fast chargers at various locations: Newland, Victoria Square, George Yard, I Construct and the Plaza
- 4.14 ECC have launched an online portal for residents to submit contact details and expressions of interest to be recipient of an on street charger.

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/bf125da751674d3a8621cae8d1a190b5>

Energy Efficiency

- 4.15 352 Households have signed up this year so far for either the ECO or ECO Flex scheme. The ECO scheme provides an opportunity for those on an income or disability related benefit to qualify for partial or fully funded replacement of old or defective boilers or for the installation of energy efficient insulation measures. ECO Flex offers similar grants but with a broader qualifying criterion – for those on a state pension, on a low income of less than £30,000, have savings of less than £16,000, have a long term health condition or disability, have young children or for those that are currently pregnant.
- 4.16 26 new fully funded central heating installations with supporting energy efficiency measures in homes were completed via the Warm Homes scheme which ended in June.

- 4.17 Delivery of the £449K Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 Green Homes Grants is underway with 227 referrals for Braintree District. The Green Homes Grant was due to end in March 2022 but the time granted for implementation was extended by central government to the end of July 2022 which has delayed the go live date for Phase 3.
- 4.18 The Council successfully bid for and was awarded £1.65M of funding for the Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 “Sustainable Warmth” Grant scheme (LAD3). The Council have a substantial waiting list of residents who will be transferred to LAD3 when government has confirmed the go live date and the legal arrangements have been confirmed which is anticipated to be very soon.
- 4.19 Essex County Council’s Solar Together Scheme was launched on the 7th February – circa 6,000 residents registered in Essex, with 695 residents of Braintree District registering. This scheme is a reverse auction meaning that the lowest bidder sets the price for all the solar system and battery systems. All installers are pre-vetted and must comply with the criteria to guarantee the offer. Those registered receive a personal recommendation about the winning installer, a completed system cost and savings quote to consider. There was due to be a summer auction however this has been paused as the February auction proved so successful that the scheme installers/providers required more time to deal with the quotes/orders received. No date so far has been confirmed by ECC for the next auction start.

Handyman Scheme

- 4.20 The Council’s Handyman scheme is going well. The provision of Key Safe installation to allow for Hospital Discharge increased during Covid and remains very busy.

Food Team

- 4.21 The Food Team continues to focus resources on the Food Standard Agency post Covid inspection recovery plan.
- 4.22 Benchmarking with other Essex Authorities has highlighted that for 22/23 BDC has the third highest number of new food business registrations in Essex at 253 with Thurrock at 413 and Tendring at 350

GREEN HEART OF ESSEX

- 4.23 On the 16th August Councillor Wendy Schmitt attended the Cleaner Essex Group’s Love Essex launch of the latest car litter campaign at Hylands Park

5. Councillor Richard van Dulken – Cabinet Member for Operations and Commercialisation

OPERATIONS

Bulky Waste Collection Service

- 5.1 The Council reinstated an in-house (Bulky Waste) Special Collection Service over 2 years ago and since that time has seen demand for this service grow. This demonstrates that the Council is providing a valued and affordable service in a competitive market and one that helps to prevent waste from being fly-tipped. The table below shows the number of Special Collections undertaken since 1 April 2021 to 31 August 2022.

Period	Number of collections
2021-22 (12 months)	2,766
2022-23 (5 months)	1,248

Annual Sack Deliveries

- 5.2 Deliveries commenced in August and are progressing according to the revised schedule, with 50% of deliveries having been completed and the remainder due to be done by the end of November.

Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Collections

- 5.3 WEEE collections points at libraries were reinstated in June 2022 following suspension of the service during Covid. In addition, up to 4 small WEEE items are collected free of charge as part of the Bulky Waste Collection Service. The service caters for small appliances like toasters, radios, lamps, etc.

Resource & Waste Management (RWM) Exhibition

- 5.4 Cllr. Richard van Dulken was pleased to attend the RWM Exhibition on 14/15 September in Birmingham. This is the UK's leading event for waste resource and sustainability professionals and showcases the latest technologies, practices and innovations that shape the recycling, waste management and sustainability sectors. It was an opportunity for him to talk directly with suppliers, service providers and manufacturers as well as representatives of the Government and other local authorities about the challenges within the waste industry.

Visit to the Material Recycling Facility Gt. Blakenham Suffolk

- 5.5 The visit to the Biffa Material Recycling Facility (MRF) at Great Blakenham has now been re-arranged for Wednesday, 5th October 2022.

ENVIRONMENT

Licensing

Taxis

- 5.6 In order to comply with the new standards a 'National Register of Taxi and Private Hire Licence Revocations and Refusals' (NR3) Policy has been produced and will be published on the Council's Website. Councils will be able to request information on checks this Authority has enacted. The DoT are actively encouraging all Licensing Authorities to adopt the use of the NR3

Database as an assurance check when applications are received. BDC has adopted NR3 as part of our process.

Pavement Licences

- 5.7 The Government has extended the period for Fast Track Pavement Licenses to 30th September 2023. All those with pavement licenses in place have been contacted and made aware that they need to apply for an extension by the 30th September.

Policy Updates

- 5.8 Public consultation began on the 12th September for an updated Sex Establishment Policy (as approved by Licensing Committee) with the 12 week period concluding on the 4th December. The updated Council's Statement of Gambling Policy is now live after coming into effect on the 1st August 2022.

COMMERCIALISATION

- 5.9 Traded performance remains strong, which is good particularly given the wider economic context. BDC has commissioned Commercial Gov to undertake a review of our approach to commercial activities starting on 26th September. This is split in to two phases:

1 – Commercial Sprint Review – assessing current activities and performance including benchmarking and understanding of local market.

2 – Commercial Opportunity – A consideration of whether there are commercial opportunities the Council hasn't currently identified or implemented, producing a high level estimate of the scale of opportunity and ease of implementation with a prioritised list. The aim of this stage will be to identify opportunities that can impact on the budget gap in the 'easiest' possible way.

- 5.10 Key commercial projects within the Investment and Development Programme are progressing including the approach to Shared Procurement, with analysis of spend and consideration of opportunities to deliver savings currently underway.

CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACES AND PROSPERITY

6. **Councillor Tom Cunningham – Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

Rural Prosperity Funding

- 6.1 The Council has provisionally been awarded £589,191 capital money by the government from the Rural Prosperity Fund. This is acting as a capital 'top up' to Shared Prosperity Funding for rural areas. The fund is to spend in years 2023/4 and 2024/5 on supporting rural business to develop new products and facilities that will be of benefit to the wider economy, or supporting new and improved community infrastructure for the benefit of the local economy. I look forward to bringing an investment plan to the November meeting of Cabinet

for agreement before submitting to government by the deadline of the 30th November.

Plaza business support event

- 6.2 At the time of writing a business support and engagement event is planned to be held at the Plaza on the 29th September. The event aims to celebrate the official opening of the Plaza building and bring businesses in to view the new building, hear about the Council's business support offer and provide feedback on the research the Council has undertaken in order to update the Council's Economic Plan.

Witham and Halstead town centre regeneration schemes

- 6.3 Plans for improvements to Witham and Halstead High Streets have been drawn up and have been discussed with Witham and Halstead Town Councils. Comments have been received and amendments will be made prior to submission to ECC as the Highways Authority for approval for procurement. It is expected that the contractor will be appointed in February 2023 and works will begin soon afterwards, to be confirmed once the contractor has been appointed.
- 6.4 Separately, procurement is underway to investigate two more significant changes to the town centre in each location. A crossing of the upper High Street in Halstead and the removal of the turn lane into Maldon Road from Newland Street in Witham. Consultants will draw up detailed plans before each is considered by ECC as Highways Authority, to see if the plans are possible to be implemented. The contractors are expected to be appointed in March 2023 and work will begin soon afterwards, to be confirmed once the contractor has been appointed.

New Economic Plan

- 6.5 Consultants SQW facilitated a number of workshops over the summer with business and stakeholders to discuss the findings of their research into the Braintree economy and what the priorities for the Council's action might be for the future. A detailed strategy and action plan is currently being worked up based on this evidence and will be subject to engagement with businesses and stakeholders in the Autumn.

LoCase funding

- 6.6 Nine businesses in Braintree have benefited from Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE) funding to help businesses become more competitive and profitable while protecting the environment and encouraging low carbon solutions. This is the third highest number in Essex and has resulted in the creation of 5 jobs (the highest in Essex) and saving 47.09t of CO₂ (the third highest in Essex). Officers continue to work with programmes such as LoCASE to ensure that business can access a range of programmes and support packages.

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

Victoria Square/Manor Street

- 7.1 The Victoria Square scheme has achieved practical completion and all the residential areas have been handed over to Eastlight Community Homes and are fully occupied. The project has been shortlisted for the UK Housing Awards in the category of The Neighbourhood Transformation Award. The Livewell Hub is anticipated to be operational in October 2022 and work continues to secure occupiers for the restaurant and small retail units. A completion event with our development partner Kier took place on the 21st of September to celebrate the success of this project.

Horizon 120

- 7.2 Significant construction work is now evident on plots 1, 2 and 3 due to complete early next year, with the British Off-Site (Weston Homes) building due for completion later this year and occupation next year. Construction on the EOS plots (a series of smaller units suitable for grow on space), started in August 2022 and will complete in the Summer of 2023.

The Plaza enterprise and innovation centre

- 7.3 The Plaza, located at the Horizon 120 business and innovation park, has been completed successfully and was officially opened to business and the public on the 29th September in a ceremony attended by representatives of the Council, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Kier (our development partner on the scheme) and other local stakeholders. The building is now being actively managed and promoted by the Asset Management team. Over 50% of the office space has been let, the Café opened in September and several events have already been held in the conference and meeting spaces.

The Witham Community Centre

- 7.4 An expression of interest exercise has been completed, in order to secure a tenant for the new community centre in Witham. Work continues to progress on the securing of planning permission for the building and procurement activity to secure a development partner will progress in the Autumn, in anticipation of a start on site in early 2023.

Housing

Affordable Housing Delivery

- 7.5 In August 2022 there were 28 affordable housing completions. The outturn for the year to date is 141 completions. In September 2022 there is potential for up to 30 further completions on sites in Silver End, Great Yeldham, Hatfield Peverel and Cressing. The affordable housing delivery target for (2022/23) is 250

Rough Sleeper Funding

- 7.6 Braintree District Council in partnership with Essex County Council and other Essex District and Boroughs have been successful in a bid to government for over £1.65million of funding to support rough sleepers off the streets and into sustained accommodation.

8. **Councillor Mrs Gabrielle Spray – Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure**

5 year housing land supply

- 8.1 As Members will be aware, at the start of September the Council published its roll forward for the 5 year housing land supply. This roll forward showed that against a target of 4,986 homes the Council is only able to provide sufficient evidence for the delivery of 4,848 new homes. This means that the Council's housing land supply currently stands at 4.86 years. For the determination of planning applications this means that the decision maker must make a decision on the 'titled balance', where the need for new homes has significant weight and negatives of the development must significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of new housing.

The Feering Neighbourhood Plan

- 8.2 The examiner's report has been received into the Feering Neighbourhood Plan, finding the Plan is sound subject to a number of amendments. A referendum will be arranged in the coming months to allow local residents to vote as to whether they would like to adopt the Plan.

Witham Neighbourhood Plan

- 8.3 Witham Town Council have submitted a request, which has been approved by officers under delegated powers, to designate the town boundary as a neighbourhood plan area. This is the first stage in producing a neighbourhood Plan. This will be the largest neighbourhood plan in the district and we look forward to working with the Town Council and local residents on developing the Plan.

A12 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project

- 8.4 An application for a Development Consent Order was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) by National Highways on the 12th of August, for the improvement and widening scheme for the A12 between Junction 19 at the Boreham Interchange and the A120. At the time of writing PINs had not yet formally accepted the application, which will trigger the 6 month examination period. The Council will continue to represent the views of residents through the examination process

Review of the Silver End Conservation Area Appraisal

- 8.5 Place Services, who have been appointed to undertake the appraisal, have recently held a meeting with officers, local Members, the Parish Council and heritage group to discuss the review and undertake a walk around the village. The consultants have taken that information and feedback and are now

putting together the report. The draft will be shared with local Members, the Parish and heritage groups once it has been received.

Bramford to Twinstead – additional consultation

- 8.6 National Grid have looked again at their plans for the route of the undergrounding and are proposing to change the route of underground cables between Moat Lane and the Stour Valley West cable sealing end compound. In summary it will include:
- moving the route of underground cables further away from Alphamstone
 - constructing a proportion of the underground cables using trenchless construction methods
 - building a 3.5 km temporary haul road from Sudbury Road (A131) to the Stour Valley west cable sealing end compound to facilitate construction of the reinforcement.
- 8.7 The consultation launched on Thursday 8th September and will close on Wednesday 19th October. More details on the consultation and how to respond can be found at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/bramford-twinstead/our-proposals>

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

9. Councillor Peter Tattersley – Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

ICS Update

- 9.1 Braintree District Council continues to work with Health colleagues in the Integrated Care System (ICS) to try and reduce health inequalities in the district through determining what the wider issues are affecting our resident's wellbeing. The ICS comprises of two separate bodies: the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). The ICB is responsible for NHS services and funding including those previously planned by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and the ICP will cover broader issues such as public health and social care. The new integrated care systems offer an opportunity for us to influence the work of the NHS - and of each other - to really make a difference to the population health of our residents.

Dementia Choir

- 9.2 The relaunch of the dementia choir took place at Halstead Empire Theatre with 20 people living with dementia and their carers in attendance. This is an excellent example of a community activity designed to support those living with dementia and their carers.

Together in Sound

- 9.3 The Together in Sound initiative brings together professional musicians with people living with dementia. We are extremely fortunate that this project now runs our District thanks to the Braintree District Museum Trust. Braintree District Council is working to promote the role of the Dementia Action Alliance

to ensure that as many people as possible benefit from attending and know about this worthwhile project.

Braintree District and Eastlight Community Fund

- 9.4 Together with Cllr Rose I attended a meeting of the Braintree District and Eastlight Community Fund. The fund considered applications totalling £341,906 from a number of local organisations for both small, single year funding and larger multi-year funding (up to 3 years). For the larger grants this was an initial Expression of Interest stage with full applications being considered at a meeting in December. The full amount of the available budget for both is £118,264.

Leisure Services

- 9.5 Due to the increasingly popular demand for young people wanting to learn to swim, Fusion Lifestyle have opened classes on a Sunday to make swim lessons accessible 7-days per week across the 3 swimming pools in the District.
- 9.6 The number of Children learning to swim have increased as can be seen in the table below from just prior to the Pandemic to August 2022.

Site Name	Division	Feb 2020 Members	Aug 2022 Members	vs Feb 2020 (Members)
Braintree Swim & Fitness	Braintree	1097	1257	115%
Halstead Leisure Centre	Braintree	439	584	133%
Witham Leisure Centre	Braintree	809	957	118%

10. Councillor Frankie Ricci – Cabinet Member for Communities

Volunteer Awards

- 10.1 In recognition of the outstanding work of volunteers in our district Braintree District Volunteer Awards returned after a 2-year hiatus (due to the pandemic) on 11 August 2022 and was delivered in partnership with Community360 and Braintree District Council apprentices who assisted in the planning of the event. Sponsors included Braintree Village, KI Sound and Light, Beardwell Construction, Nexus and ABS Solicitors. Dignitaries who attended included Mr Nick Alston, High Sheriff of Essex, James Cleverly, MP and Cllr Jackie Pell, Mayor of Halstead. Kenneth Yap who volunteers in several roles including Community Transport driver, Chairman of the Great Notley Community Association, school governor and also helped at a vaccination centre as well as doing shopping during the pandemic was selected as the Volunteer of the Year.

Braintree Cultural Education Partnership

- 10.2 We would like to congratulate Wethersfield Primary School, who have been awarded Gold Artsmark. Artsmark is a creative quality standard for schools and education settings, accredited by Arts Council England and provides a

framework to help schools embed arts, culture and creativity across your whole curriculum, celebrating your commitment to cultural education.

Domestic Abuse Campaign

- 10.3 Braintree District Council is working with to develop a domestic abuse campaign to cover the national 16 days of action, the FIFA World Cup and Christmas throughout November and December.
- 10.4 This will include training for local businesses with a focus on night time economy businesses, raising awareness of domestic abuse to encourage reporting and services available to victims.

SOS Bus

- 10.5 The SOS bus launched on 28th July in Weavers Park, Braintree. The bus, funded through Changing Future, is supported by a range of partners including Open Road, Phoenix Futures, Peabody, EPUT, Community360, Hope House & First Stop. The bus aims to provide a one stop shop for individuals in the district that have complex needs (drugs and alcohol, mental health and homelessness) and who find it difficult to access services due to their location.

Summertime Activities

- 10.6 Three Xplorer events were held during the summer holiday period: Halstead Public Gardens had 55 participants, Witham Town Park had 25 participants and Braintree and Bocking Public Gardens had 42 participants
- 10.7 Our Community Transport Team provided transport for children and young people from St. Peters Primary School in Sible Hedingham to Halstead Leisure Centre to ensure those from more rural locations were able to access the activities.