

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Wednesday, 23rd March 2022 at 7.15pm

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

This meeting is open to the public and will be available to view via the Council's webcast and YouTube channel

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

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

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

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

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

A WRIGHT
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS
Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Pecuniary Interests (OPI)
or Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI).

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

Public Question Time - Registration and Speaking:

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time. Members of the public 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 Committee has discretion to amend the order in which questions/statements are presented to the Committee.

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 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.

The Council request Members of the public to use face coverings, unless an exemption's applies, as they move around the venue and when using communal areas. Once seated, face coverings can be removed. 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

1 Apologies for Absence**2 Declaration of Interests - Scrutiny Committee**

1. To declare the existence and nature of any interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.

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

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd February 2022 (copy previously circulated).

4 Public Question Time (see paragraph above)**5 Second Quarter Performance Report 2021/22 5 - 37****6 Third Quarter Performance Report 2021/22 38 - 70****7 Scrutiny Review into Commercialisation - Draft Scrutiny Report 71 - 83****8 Urgent Business - Public Session**

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

Report Title: Second Quarter Performance Report 2021/22	
Report to: Performance Management Scrutiny Committee	
Date: 23 rd March 2022	For: To inform
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Tracey Headford, Business Solutions Manager	
Enquiries to: Tracey Headford, Business Solutions Manager. tracey.headford@braintree.gov.uk ext 2442	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council provides a report to demonstrate the performance of Braintree District Council (the Council) at the end of the second quarter (July 2021 to September 2021). The performance report was presented to Cabinet on the 29th November 2021.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The report is to inform the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee of the performance of the Council following its presentation and noting at Cabinet on the 29th November 2021.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Council keeps a record of its performance which is reported to cabinet every quarter for consideration and noting.
- 3.2 In the second quarter as restrictions started to be lifted, good progress has been made in delivering the actions of the Annual Plan which comes to an end in September 2021.
- 3.3 As at the end of the September, a total of 27 projects are complete with 24 projects on track and progressing well. Two projects have an amber status due to construction delays pushing end dates back. As a new plan takes effect from October 2021 through to March 2023, for those projects that are not complete, they will either be carried over for delivery through the next plan 'Bouncing back together' or will continue to be delivered through business as usual activity.
- 3.4 Targets have not been set for all our performance indicators due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic. For the targets that remain, seven performance indicators have met or exceed target and six performance indicators have missed their target. Two have missed target by less than 5% and four missed their target by more than 5%. The areas of underperformance are in relation to the percentage of invoices paid within 30

days (<5%), the collection rate for Council Tax (<5%), recycling rates (>5%), Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter average (>5%), waiting time for disabled facility grants (>5%), average call answering time in the Customer Service Centre (>5%) and the collection rate for Business rates (>5%).

3.5 The Finance section of the report provides an updated review of the financial position for the year. It examines the latest forecast for spending on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; projected movements on the General Fund balance; and a summary of spending to date on capital projects. An update is also provided on the financial impact arising from the current COVID-19 pandemic.

3.6 The outturn financial position for the quarter is as follows:

- Taking into account the projected impact of Covid and variations to the base budget, the net budget position forecast for the year is a positive variance of £383,000.
- The estimated budget impact of the pandemic in 2021/22 is £915,000. This is expected to be offset by funding received from government currently leaving a balanced position.
- The forecast position regarding the base budget is a positive variance of £383,000.
- After taking into account other planned movements in balances, the projected change in General Fund unallocated balances is a reduction of £253,000.
- Expenditure of £15.525m on capital projects during the first half year, with spending mainly being incurred on: Horizon 120 business park infrastructure, now completed; the new Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre; I-Construct; Manor Street regeneration scheme; Town Centre improvements and the Halstead Leisure Centre artificial grass pitch.

4. Options

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

5. Next Steps

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

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The report provides an update as to the financial position as at the end of the September 2021 covering the revenue and capital outturn for this period.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 There has been some impact due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the report will include detail of the Council's response. Information is included on how we intend to support residents, communities and businesses moving forward. A summary of complaints received each quarter, analysed by outcome (justified, partially justified or not justified) is provided.
- 8.2 The Enhancing our Environment priority has a number of actions that are designed to have a positive impact on the environment and climate change.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

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

10. List of Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Second Quarter Performance Management Report 2021/22.

11. Background Papers

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

Third Quarter Performance Management Report

1st October 2021 to 31st December 2021



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Section 1: Introduction and Summary






Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the third quarter in relation to the publication of 'Bouncing Back Together', our plan for the district up to March 2023. This sets out the key activities being implemented to deliver our corporate priorities and summarises the measures in place by aligning key performance indicators to our priorities within the Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2024. Further detail is given in relation to a set of business performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, our people and health and safety.






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

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

The following table provides updates for the end of the third quarter in relation to our key activities




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Connecting People and Places	0	9	2	0	0
Enhancing our Environment	2	7	4	0	0
Supporting our Communities	0	16	1	0	0
Promoting Prosperity	0	9	2	0	0
Delivering and Innovating	0	10	1	0	0
TOTAL	2	51	10	0	0

KEY:




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

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

The following table shows the performance for the end of the third quarter in relation to key performance indicators

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Connecting People and Places	2	0	0	1
Enhancing our Environment	3	0	1	0
Supporting our Communities	0	0	1	3
Promoting Prosperity	0	0	0	3
Delivering and Innovating	3	3	0	2
TOTAL	8	3	2	9

KEY:

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

Summary Position

This is the first report reporting again the new Bouncing back together document and will reflect on the progress of the actions required to help our district recover and grow over the next few years.

As at the end of the December, a total of two projects are complete with 51 projects on track and progressing well. Ten projects have an amber status due to a number of projects experiencing delays due to supply chain issues impacting on some of our larger projects pushing back completion dates or resource issues and prioritisation of workloads.

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

We will continue to monitor our performance whilst focusing on the support required in the recovery of our district.



Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES








Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Status
Adopt the Braintree District Local Plan providing a vision for the future growth of the district	
The main modifications to Section 2 of the Local Plan alongside an updated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment were published for consultation on the 6th December 2021 for 7 weeks. Comments received during this period will be forwarded to the Inspectors for consideration in coming to their final recommendations on legal compliance and soundness of the Section 2 Local Plan before the Council can proceed to its formal adoption.	
Rejuvenate Braintree town centre by completing the Victoria Square development providing a Livewell health hub, 35 apartments, a hotel, bus interchange and public open space	
Construction of the Victoria Square development continues despite delays in the supply chain impacting on the proposed completion of the development which has been pushed back to February 2022. Negotiations in respect of the lease for the Livewell Hub are ongoing. The new bus interchange will open to passengers on the 2 nd January 2022.	
Continue to support the safe return to our town centres and help build back together from the pandemic using the Welcome Back fund and other available funding	
The Welcome Back Fund is funding pedestrianisation wayfinding maps and events in the three town centres. Funding is also being used to encourage residents to get outside and be active, including exploring equipment at the discovery centre and developing a series of geocache locations near rural businesses. A high street improvement scheme was launched in December 2021 to improve the look and feel of shopfronts on our High Streets. The grants will cover the cost of labour up to the value of £1,000 and will support practical measures such as cleaning, general exterior repairs and renovation. Expressions of interest has been very high and a number of applications are being received.	
Deliver events in Braintree town centre to increase footfall and support local retailers taking advantage of the newly pedestrianised town centre	
The Braintree Christmas Light switch on event took place on the 20th November and was hailed a festive success. This was the first big event to really make the most of the new pedestrianised area. The event filled the town centre with more than 50 market stalls for people to browse alongside live festive entertainment. Other festivities took place throughout the day. Further Christmas street markets were held on the 4th December and the 18th	

December. Dates for street markets in 2022 will be considered in the new year.	
Deliver physical improvements to the town centres of Witham and Halstead	
Work will continue in earnest in the new year to finalise the proposed improvements to the town centres of Witham and Halstead. This will involve undertaking consultation with local businesses and residents on the proposed physical improvements before appointing contractors to carry out the required works.	
Develop a new Housing Strategy setting out how the Council will support the availability of good quality homes which best meet the needs of the current and future residents	
The development of the new Housing Strategy has been delayed due to focusing resources on supporting the increased demand on the Housing Service. A new Head of Service was appointed in November following the retirement of the previous Head of Service and they will review the resources required to deliver the strategy in the new year.	

Actions carried out in partnership with others




Project description and comments	Status
Continue to work with our partners on the planning decisions of strategic highway schemes for the A12, A120 and A131 Chelmsford Bypass	
A statutory consultation on the proposed dualling of the A120 between Galleys Corner and Junction 23 south of Kelvedon took place in the summer and further changes were made to the proposals following feedback received. A further consultation was launched in November running until the 19 th December on the revised scheme. The feedback received will be reviewed and compiled into a consultation report which will form part of the planning application for a Development Consent Order due to be submitted to the Department for Transport in 2022. Elected Councillors have re-enforced their support for the proposed route during the consultation period.	
Work with partners including Essex Highways on the delivery of our Cycling Strategy and implementation plan which includes developing integrated, high quality cycle routes that are safe to use and connected across our district	
A communications plan has been developed to encourage residents and businesses to utilise cycling within the district. Cycle maps for the district including family friendly routes and tourist routes are being developed and hope to be launched in Spring 2022. Funding for businesses to invest in cycle storage facilities at their workplaces was launched in November 2021 in a bid to encourage more people to cycle to work.	
Introduce the new Digital Demand Responsive Transport service, linking Horizon 120, with a fleets of electric mini-buses, to surrounding areas and central Braintree	
The digital demand responsive transport service linking Horizon 120 with a fleet of electric minibuses is due to commence in February 2022.	
Continue to support and monitor Superfast Essex in the delivery of Superfast Broadband across the district	
The Braintree district is currently at 95% of premises able to access superfast broadband and is forecast to reach 99% coverage within 3 years. The district wide take up of superfast broadband is currently at 30%.	
Facilitate the delivery of a purpose-built medical centre in Sible Hedingham	
Council lawyers have been instructed to transfer the land which is registered to the Council to One Medical.	

ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT






Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Status
Carry out air quality reviews in known air pollution hot spots across the district to improve the knowledge of local air quality and the proposed actions to take	
Additional diffusion tubes have now been cited in Head Street, Halstead with extensive monitoring of the air quality taking place to see if it exceeds the set threshold values.	▶
The Council has drafted an invitation to quote for consultants to undertake a review of air quality in the district and this will be sent out in the new year. It is expected that a full report will be provided within four months of appointing consultants.	▶
Provide replacement litter bins along the A120 and A12 to keep laybys litter free and our district clean and tidy	
Delivery of this project has been delayed owing to issues with the supplier and availability of the bins. This is now expected to complete in March 2022.	▲
Continue to deliver campaigns and work with our communities to	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce litter, keeping our district clean and tidy • Reduce waste and increase recycling • Improve awareness and understanding of climate change 	
The Cleaner Essex Group met in the third quarter to discuss topics and dates for campaigns in 2022 around reducing litter and keeping our district clean and tidy. Litter will be a priority followed by fly-tipping	▶
During the third quarter, campaigns were launched to encourage residents to reduce waste and increase recycling through Eco-Christmas messages running from the 1st December through to the 13th January. The Campaign included 27 individual posts and four videos	▶
The Councils Climate Change Strategy was launched during COP26 week in November with videos from the Council, residents, businesses, community groups and schools on how they are tackling climate change. Additional messaging in the lead up to Christmas focussed on meal planning, real tree vs artificial trees, shop local, perfect portions, recipe tips, leftover tips and recycling.	▶
Carry out drainage works at Braintree cemetery to eliminate flooding and increase burial capacity	
Quotes for the drainage work at Braintree cemetery came back significantly more expensive than anticipated. We are now looking for a more cost effective drainage solution and the end date of the project is likely to change.	▲

Carry out refurbishments to eight play areas across the district providing improved facilities for young people to enjoy	
The contract to carry out improvements to play areas at Church Street in Bocking, Acorn Avenue in Braintree, Shaw Road in Witham and De Vere Road in Earls Colne has been awarded. Due to issues with supplies, the improvements are not expected to start until Spring 2022.	
Consult with local residents and users of our skate parks at Weavers Park in Braintree and Spa Road in Witham around replacement of facilities	
Face to face public engagement to establish preferred options has been impacted by the pandemic lockdowns during 2021 and will now take place in 2022	
Create a garden of remembrance at Bocking cemetery providing a peaceful environment for families to visit	
Following the publication in September 2021 of the concept designs for the garden of remembrance, the designs are now with the Councils procurement team to tender for the construction works.	

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Status
Deliver actions set out in our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to achieve our long term aims of being a carbon neutral district	
During COP26 in November the Council launched a number of climate change action videos demonstrating how businesses, residents, schools, community groups and individuals are working to tackle climate change across our district. In the third quarter, the council has been working on a number of projects to reduce its on carbon footprint and increase biodiversity. As reported on below, the council has involved residents and communities in tree and bulb planting and the Council has also planted more on council owned land, bringing the overall number of trees and bulbs planted to 18,700 native trees and 73,000 bulbs across the district. Ten schools across the district took part in a creative climate challenge to design art work showing how they feel about climate change. The art work can be viewed on the Councils climate change web pages and the art produced by the student will form part of a local exhibition for friends and family to see, The electric vehicle infrastructure is being completed at Horizon 120. This is an ongoing programme and as soon as new sites are constructed, the installation of additional rapid charging points will be installed in carparks. The Council is still waiting for updated government guidance in a number of areas following the Environmental Bill receiving Royal Assent in November 2021 and we continue to review our action plan to ensure it reflects the national picture and partnership working with Essex County Council	
Involve residents and communities in tree and bulb planting across the district	
A high number of applications were received for planting packages. In total, over 41,000 bulbs and nearly 5,000 tree whips were handed out to Parish and Town Councils, Schools, Colleges, Charities and local community and voluntary groups.	
Complete our trial of anti-litter signage and continue to deter people from littering along highway verges	
The trial of the anti-litter signage closed in November 2021 after a year of strategically placing signs along the highway network. During the trial, there was a reduction in the litter discarded along the highway verges and the merits of the signs were clear. The results will be discussed with Essex Highways and discussions will take place to see if the signs are to become a permanent arrangement across the district.	

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES






Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Status
Replace the artificial grass pitch at Braintree Sports and Health Club	
A funding agreement is being drafted with Tabor Academy aiming for works to be carried out in the summer holidays. The tender exercise will commence in February 2022 to procure the project management company.	▶
Carry out physical improvements to Braintree Sports and Health club and Halstead Leisure Centre	
The improvements to the sports hall and studio floor at Braintree sports and health club are subject to the agreement of capital funds being agreed by Full Council in February 2022.	▶
The replacement of the boilers and building plant management systems at Braintree sports and health club are underway and should be completed in February 2022.	▶
The refurbishment of the wet and dry changing facilities at Halstead Leisure centre are subject to the agreement of capital funds being agreed by Full Council in February 2022.	▶
Revitalise our Community Transport scheme and increase the number of volunteers	
A total of 21 volunteer drivers have been recovered across the service including one new volunteer. Passenger journeys continue to increase with a total of 6,522 passenger journeys undertaken in the third quarter providing transport to booster vaccinations, food bank parcel deliveries, appointments, shopping and social activities.	▶
Deliver the Braintree District Volunteer Awards to recognise the contribution volunteers make in our district	
The volunteer awards are due to take place in June 2022. Initial discussions have taken place with regards to organisation of the event. A social media campaign will be launched in the new year.	▶
Continue to work with communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live through the development of local neighbourhood plans	
There are five completed plans in the District at Bradwell, Hatfield Peverel and Cressing, The Salings and Coggeshall. The Kelvedon Neighbourhood Plan has completed its examination and will go to referendum in the new year. A further six Plans are underway in the District at Feering, Great Yeldham, Great Bardfield, Stisted and Toppesfield, as well as the joint plan at Bures/Bures St Mary.	▶
Set up a young people's panel to encourage more young people to have their say on things that matter to them	
A discussion sheet is being compiled to assess which topics are important to young people at the present time and to see what has changed since our last engagement. Visits into schools will commence in line with the schools protocols on visitors as some are still reluctant to have outside visitors whilst pandemic numbers are high.	▶

Continue to deliver our LiveWell programme, focussing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children and their families to have the best start in life • Supporting older people to age well • Supporting children and adults to have good mental health • Tackling obesity in adults and children • Reducing hip fractures in over 65's 	
<p>The health and wellbeing panel are reviewing the priorities of the health and wellbeing board and information is currently being collated by partners to help understand the changes required. A number of activities continue to be delivered under the Livewell programme including organised walks, fitness classes for people with health conditions, seated exercise classes, dance lessons, weight management sessions and meet up Mondays and Tuesdays. A mental health workshop took place in October with a range of partners. A comprehensive presentation was given by the Mid Essex Alliance regarding the transformation programme for adult mental health together with a presentation on Mental Health Support Teams in Schools. A Dementia Friendly Music Train organised in partnership with the Community Rail Partnership took place in December involving 40 guests travelling by train from Witham to Braintree accompanied by a musician. Each attendee received a bag of information when leaving the event about local services and the support that is available to people living with Dementia and their carers.</p> <p>A number of schools are willing to re-engage with the Livewell Child project following the pandemic and we will be looking to streamline the projects focussing on tackling factors surrounding obesity, nutrition, physical activity and mental health. Schools will be matched with a relevant project.</p>	▶

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Status
Work with Community 360 and Active Essex to provide support to children and families who need it during school holiday periods through the provision of activity sessions	
A total of 10 clubs across the district saw more than 440 children attend the clubs during the winter school holidays providing children with various activities and a nutritious meal.	▶
Continue to work with Community 360 to promote volunteering opportunities and support the voluntary sector	
Plans for a volunteering campaign have been put on hold due to the work Community 360 have been doing around vaccination sites and the need to recruit volunteers to support this.	▲
Continue to develop a range of initiatives to address social isolation and loneliness across the district	
A 'Here to Help' newsletter was distributed to over 800 residents providing information on activities and services in the area such as seated exercise, scams, useful contacts, helplines, befriending, mental health, home safety and the handyman service among many other initiatives and services. Sunday Cinema at Witham library organised by the community launched in December showing Mama Mia. Film showings will continue once a month on Sundays through to the Spring. The Braintree District Social Isolation and Loneliness Forum met in December to update their action plan. Discussions also took place regarding initiatives for Loneliness Awareness Week (13 – 17 June).	▶
Continue to work with Essex County Council on the Governments 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' on initiatives to prevent rough sleepers returning to the streets	
Work continues on two projects to provide additional accommodation for those moving off the streets and providing a pathway to independent living.	▶
Continue to raise awareness through the Community Safety Partnership of hidden harms such as exploitation and domestic abuse	
The Local Exploitation Group have identified two areas of Witham that are causing concern in relation to children & young people going missing and exploitation. The areas will be targeted through detached youth work in the areas, training and awareness for local businesses and community organisations. Braintree District Council supported #WhiteRibbonDay and	▶


#MakethePromise in November 2021 to help end violence and abuse against women and girls.	
Work with the integrated care system and Health and Wellbeing panel to understand local health inequalities and develop the role of Primary Care Networks to support and improve the health of our communities	
Officers from the Council attended the Mid Essex Alliance meeting where they advised that they are joining the Integrated Care System Population Health and Place Development Programme funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement in partnership with the Local Government Association. This programme will help the Mid Essex Alliance access action-focused, expert support to embed and accelerate the way we deliver health and wellbeing outcomes to residents in our district. As part of this we have completed two surveys, a relational audit looking at partnership working and a place diagnostic looking at current practices. The Alliance have also identified a budget to raise awareness of suicide prevention across Mid Essex, a plan will be developed in relation to this.	
Work with our leisure providers to get people back into activity improving their physical and mental health	
Meetings have taken place in December with leisure providers and officers from the Council to get more people referred into activity through various referring agents such as primary care networks and cardiac rehab. We have signed up to the 'love to ride' initiative to encourage people of all ages and abilities to get on their bike and become more active. As covid is still impacting on participation levels at our leisure centres, the focus has been on increasing outdoor activities and the capacity of sport pitches. A new park run was launched at Markshall in Coggeshall in November which has seen a high number of people attending.	
Engage with school age children and young adults through careers, jobs and apprenticeship fairs to inspire young people to raise their aspirations	
The Council are working in partnership with Essex County Council to deliver a jobs fair in March 2022. This will take place virtually via Lean Live, which will allow employers to broadcast their job vacancies and do live interviews.	

PROMOTING PROSPERITY







Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

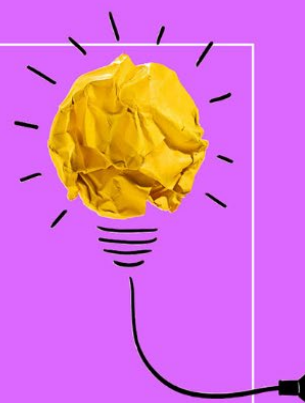
Project description and comments	Status
Continue with the development of Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park creating up to 2,000 high quality jobs	
The Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park continues to be developed with 15 acres remaining within Phase 1.	▶
Complete the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre providing space for conferences and events as well as serviced offices, café and public plaza for start-up companies and SME's	
Delays with glazing & aluminium in October were resolved in November however, this may impact on practical completion pushing this back to June 2022.	▲
Develop the Witham Enterprise Centre providing small industrial units for startup companies and SME's	
A transport consultant has been appointed and negotiations have started with Essex County Council concerning adoption of the Haul road off Hatfield Road.	▶
Complete the I-construct innovation centre supporting the development of SME's in the construction sector	
I-Construct, a £2.3 million centre of excellence for construction innovation, has opened for business. Building work finished in December, 15 months after it began. The two-storey building consist of a technology suite, exhibition space, conference facilities and informal meeting areas. It is home to a team offering one-to-one mentoring, grant schemes and advice to small and medium sized firms connected to the construction industry. The business support programme at the hub will be run by the Haven Gateway Partnership and will serve businesses across Essex, Kent and East Sussex. The programme will support over 350 businesses and create up to 130 jobs. An official ceremony to mark the opening will be held in the New Year.	▶
Refresh our Plan for Growth to identify future priorities and deliver the outcomes of the associated Action Plan	
The appointed consultant has failed to provide the primary research within the project timescale. Until the material is received and the quality is assessed the timing of the work cannot be set.	▲
Deliver campaigns to promote Braintree District as a place to invest in, live in and visit	
The #LoveBraintreeDistrict Shop Local campaign was launched in December to encourage shoppers to support independent businesses and traders in the run up to Christmas. A video was launched featuring 11 businesses from across the district. The campaign generated over 123,000 impressions, 10,000 engagements, 22,000 video views and 121 posts across social media. Feedback from businesses featured said they believed the campaign made a difference	▶

for their sales during December. The Christmas markets were promoted across social media channels and the Gingerbread trail let families explore Braintree town centre to find the 27 gingerbread characters that have been hidden in windows of shops and businesses. People were encouraged to share their photos of them completing the trail and exploring the town on social media.	
Support individuals back into employment by addressing barriers and providing tailored support and access to training	
As of the end of December we have a caseload of 63 individuals, 9 new starts with 15 social justice outcomes being achieved. A full list of contact details for all work coaches has been requested from Braintree & Witham Job centres	

Actions carried out in partnership with others






Project description and comments	Status
Rise to the economic challenges by working in partnership with members of the North Essex Economic board to provide support to businesses and create opportunities to boost growth	
The business support programmes have been contracted and are in the mobilisation phase. The digital skills work is close to entering the mobilisation phase and work to support green industries is being led by Maldon District Council and will be going out to tender in the new year. There is a small amount of funding remaining which is currently being investigated for spend on suitable projects prior to the end of March 2022.	
Continue to develop the business support offer for the construction sector as part of the I-construct innovation centre	
A pipeline of contacts for businesses in the Braintree District who are from the construction industry or the supply chain, has been provided to Haven Gateway Partnership to promote the offer of I-Construct. A promotional bag of business support information and an invite to the launch of I-construct was provided to all relevant businesses on Springwood industrial estate and officers in the Economic Development Team have worked with the Asset Management Team to agree a discount for room rentals for springwood industrial estate businesses to access I-construct.	
Continue to provide signposting to business support, advice and suitable grants	
£665,000 of additional Business Adaptations Grant funding was allocated to the Council after being advised that other local authorities had declined the funding. As such, an additional two rounds of Business Adaptations Grants have been delivered in the third quarter and the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant funding has been allocated to the Business Adaptation Grants distributing a total of £479k in time for Christmas. Any remaining applications being processed will be paid out in the first week of January.	
Ensure residents have access to the skills programmes and education they need to access employment opportunities including in new and expanding sectors	
Key research is being undertaken to identify skills gaps and education programmes. The findings will inform both the Essex Skills plan and Braintree Plan for Growth. A meeting for the Essex Skills Plan working group will take place in January 2022 with Essex County Council, skills providers and key stakeholders to discuss how we can identify and fill skills gaps within the County and identify the emerging priorities for change.	

DELIVERING AND INNOVATING




Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Status
Through our Investment and Development Programme, continue to develop and implement a pipeline of projects focussed on reducing costs, improving efficiency, generating income and becoming more commercially focussed to deliver against the £1.6m financial gap over the next four years.	
The Investment and Development Programme currently has a pipeline of £1.5m, of which £156k is captured within the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The ideas on closing the financial gap collected during 2021 continue to be reviewed. The initial ideas have been filtered to eight current ideas which are being considered through the programme. Monthly senior officer programme group meetings review the opportunities and consider how these will move forward. Monthly steering groups enable member scrutiny of the programme.	▶
Refresh our Digital Strategy and action plan to address future demand and improve the way we use technology to deliver services	
The digital strategy has been delayed due to resources being diverted to another major project. This will be picked up in the new year.	▲
Encourage residents to transact with us on line by developing our website to allow customers to make bookings, track requests and sign up to receive council tax bills electronically	
The digital services team have been working on a booking system that will work across venues where events can be held. Discussions have also taken place regarding booking sport pitches on line and this will be developed in the new year	▶
Residents who were linked to PDF Billing for their Council Tax bills have now been offered the opportunity to register for Open Portal. For anyone who has not registered, their accounts will be reverted back to paper billing. A social media campaign to sign up to Open Portal will start in the new year.	▶
Develop a plan of community engagement to better understand the needs of our local communities	
Information is being gathered along with statistical data to see if we should target specific areas for engagement. A list of events for 2022 is being compiled to see where we may be able to attend and engage with residents. The Community Engagement officer will be supporting the resident's consultation on replacement to facilities at the skate parks in Braintree and Witham.	▶
Use customer information and feedback to improve services whilst working towards retaining the accreditation for customer service excellence	








The assessment has been arranged for June 2022 and the assessor has advised of the areas of focus alongside the rolling programme of continuous improvement. Services will be contacted in the new year to gather the evidence required for the assessment.	
Review the criteria for the discretionary business rates scheme for charitable and non-profit organisations	
A notice period of one calendar year will be given with the annual bills due to be despatched at the beginning of March 2022. The new scheme for 2023 will need to be decided prior to September 2022, to allow time for businesses to apply.	
Monitor changes to various legislation to understand the impact on services including but not limited to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Environmental Bill 2020 and Planning reforms	
The Domestic Abuse Act became law in April 2021. Changes introduced by the Act include the extension of the homelessness priority need criteria to include anyone who becomes homeless as a result of domestic abuse. This will be picked up in the review of the Homelessness Strategy.	
The Environmental Bill received Royal Assent in November and we are currently awaiting the Government to formally announce the policy changes which is expected in Spring 2022 to enable the Council to understand the impact in relation to the Council's Waste Collection Service	
The Planning Policy team continue to consider the implications of the environment bill and planning reforms in particular the biodiversity net gain.	





Actions carried out in partnership with others



Project description and comments	Status
Work with Fusion to recover and develop leisure services following the pandemic ensuring the district has the right type and level of leisure provision to meet resident's needs	
The Council continues to liaise with Fusion regarding participation levels which are increasing especially in relation to swim school but remain lower than anticipated in the third quarter due to the impact of the omicron variant. We are continuing to support Fusion through the difficulties caused by the pandemic through the National Leisure Recovery Fund	

Section 3: Managing the Business

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	2021/22						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES							
Number of affordable homes delivered	91	99	111		37		
Percentage of superfast broadband coverage across the district	95%	95%	95%		n/a	n/a	
Cumulative number of homes granted planning permission (outline and full)	654	709	881		810		<i>This indicator reports cumulatively on the outline and full planning applications granted permission. Figures will fluctuate each quarter depending on the size of the applications. In the first quarter, one outline application counts towards 575 homes The breakdown between full and outline permissions since April through to the end of September are as follows: Full – 161 Outline 720</i>
ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT							
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	53.63%	54.44%	46.62%		60%		<i>The total tonnage collected in this quarter is 579 tonnes lower than in the same period in 2020-21. This reflects the start of the garden waste suspension in December and a slight reduction in Dry Recycling, (567 tonnes) partly offset by a reduction in the overall residual waste tonnage (484 tonnes).</i>
Kilograms of residual household waste collected per household	117kgs	116kgs	110kgs		117kgs		
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	7%	5%		6%		
Number and percentage of accessible non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (198)	100% (205)	100% (172)		100%		
Number of residents assisted in installing energy saving measures	Annually reported						
SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES							
Average waiting time for applicants on the Disabled Facilities Grant (calculated in days from point of	211 days	205 days	180 days		90 days		<i>The average waiting time is reducing. The DFG Team are beginning to be able to respond to work referrals as they are received since the backlog of applications caused by the lockdowns is now almost</i>

Performance Indicator	2021/22						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
referral to approval)							<i>addressed. A number of applications have been delayed in this quarter due to the applicants themselves needing to isolate or being reluctant to schedule appointments due to the risk of catching the Omicron variant. Delays in obtaining building materials are ongoing.</i>
Participation levels across all our sports centres	91,643	135,223	137,813		n/a	n/a	
Participation of adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported						
Number of customers using out Handyman scheme	25	19	60		n/a	n/a	
Number of homelessness cases prevented	64	54	67		n/a	n/a	
PROMOTING PROSPERITY							
Percentage of people in the district claiming out of work benefits rate (aged 16 – 64)	4.3%	3.7%	3.2%		n/a	n/a	
Number of new business start-ups across the district	259	217	247		n/a	n/a	
Number of businesses that have contacted us for business support	191	451	387		n/a	n/a	
DELIVERING AND INNOVATING							
Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the Customer Service Centre	73%	74%	71%		n/a	n/a	
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt (cumulative)	97.08%	95.77%	96.49%		99.25%		<i>This indicator is now reported cumulatively to provide a better understanding of the position with paying invoices. Since the start of the financial year, 272 payments out of 7743 have been paid later than 30 days of receipt of the invoice. The target is being reviewed in light of organisational changes and the emphasis on services receipting goods.</i>
Number of people transacting with us online	39,311	32,278	29,569		n/a	n/a	
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	16.48 days	14.33 days	14.85 days		20 days		
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	5.59 days	4.64 days	3.67%		6 days		
Percentage of Stage	93.51%	94.83%	91.67%		90%		

Performance Indicator	2021/22						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
1 complaints responded to within 7 working days							
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.10%	57.48%	84.70%		86.20%		<i>The target is based on the pre-Covid collection performance recorded in 2019. Against 2020/21 performance is marginally better and amongst Essex Authorities the rate being achieved is the highest for the period.</i>
Collection rate for Business Rates	25.80%	51.57%	81.77%		84.58%		<i>The target is based on the pre-Covid collection performance recorded in 2019. Performance is marginally down on 2020/21, the rebilling of accounts required due to the reduction in the expanded retail and nursery reliefs from 100% to 66% from July 2021 meant that payment plans for the remainder of the year had to be readjusted. Again, compared to other Essex Authorities the collection rate is the highest achieved for the period.</i>

Complaints

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

Complaint Category	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Q4 2021/22	TOTAL
Justified	51 (43)	67 (51)	39 (53)	(50)	(197)
Not Justified	82 (55)	68 (56)	45 (43)	(73)	(227)
Partially Justified	26 (19)	46 (22)	7 (19)	(28)	(88)
Not known	0 (0)	4 (0)	0 (0)	(1)	(1)
Total	159 (117)	185 (129)	91 (115)	(152)	(513)

Comments

There has been a substantial reduction in the number of complaints received in the third quarter of 2021/22 compared to the previous quarters.

A lower number of missed bins has positively impacted on the number of complaints received in the operations service area. The majority of complaints received in the third quarter still relate to missed collections with parked cars, contaminated waste and missed assisted collections continuing to be the main reasons.

In the third quarter of 2021/22, of the 91 complaints received:

- 84 are stage one complaints
- 4 are stage two complaints
- 3 are a stage three complaints

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

In the third quarter of 2021/22, the LGO has received one new complaint enquiry in respect of the waste collection service which they declined to investigate after making initial enquiries with the Council.

The LGO have also declined to investigate a complaint from the first quarter in relation to the discretionary test and trace support scheme as there was no injustice to the complainant.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22	Q4 21/22	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	495	492	494		+2	-
Total staff FTE	446.07	441.97	443.2		+1.23	-
Level of employee turnover	3.03%	2.24%	2.63%		+0.39%	-
Number of leavers	15	11	13		+2	-
Number of starters	11	8	15		+7	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.4 days	1.72 days	1.94 days		+ 0.22 day	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	84.8%	71.95%	60.53%		N/A Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	1365.5	1556	2594		+ 1,038	-
Number of delegates	189	169	152		-17	-
Number of apprentices **	16	14	19		+5	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	470	464	466	481	492	499

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

Health & Safety

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

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

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	(2020/21 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	8 (10)	7 (13)	9 (10)	(12)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	6 (8)	6 (11)	8 (8)	(9)	<i>The most common reported accidents in the third quarter are slips, trips, falls and manual handling</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	2 (2)	1 (2)	1 (1)	(3)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	(0)	
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	0 (0)	10 (5)	22 (18.5)	(16)	<i>The time lost relates to one incident of a broken hand as they were unable to carry out their duties</i>
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	2 (2)	1 (4)	1 (1)	(0)	
Number of near miss incidents	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	(1)	
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	2 (0)	1 (2)	3 (3)	(2)	
Number of claims settled	1 (1)	0 (1)	3 (1)	(1)	

Financial Performance

Executive Summary

- Taking into account the projected impact of Covid and variations to the base budget, **the net budget position forecast for the year is a positive variance of £699k.**
- The estimated **budget impact of the pandemic** in 2021/22 is **£868k.** This is expected to be offset by funding received from government currently leaving **a balanced position.**
- The forecast position regarding the **base budget** is a **positive variance of £699k.**
- The proposals for the 2022/23 budget included £367k of savings that are reflected in the projected outturn as these were considered to be ongoing.
- After taking into account other planned movements in balances, **the projected change in General Fund balances is an increase of £191k**
- **Expenditure of £21.8m on capital projects** up until the end of December, with spending mainly being incurred on: Horizon 120 business park infrastructure, now completed; the new Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre; I-Construct; Manor Street regeneration scheme; Town Centre improvements and the Halstead Leisure Centre artificial grass pitch

Background

The Service Budget for 2021/22 is £15.4m. This amount was to be financed from a combination of: general government grants (£0.4m); business rates (£5m); and Council Tax (£10m). During the year service budgets may be updated in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure.

General Fund Revenue Spending

The table below shows the projected outturn by service as forecast at the end of Quarter 3.

Service	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Adverse (Positive) variance against Budget				RAG Status
			Staffing £'000	Other Exp. £'000	Gross Income £'000	Total £'000	
Asset Management	(2,477)	(2,524)	31	9	(87)	(47)	G
Community and Leisure	750	1,062	(57)	128	240	311	R
Corporate Management	1,496	1,487	(33)	16	8	(9)	G
Economic Development	216	197	-	(19)	-	(19)	G
Environment	776	799	59	41	(77)	23	A
Finance	1,511	1,541	(141)	187	(16)	30	A
Governance	1,210	1,134	(7)	(39)	(30)	(76)	G
Housing Services	956	918	-	(37)	(1)	(38)	G
Human Resources	358	357	(1)	-	-	(1)	G
ICT & Facilities	1,712	1,733	23	(2)	-	21	A
Marketing and Communications	614	582	(9)	(1)	(22)	(32)	G
Operations	6,341	6,018	(161)	247	(409)	(323)	G
Strategic Investment	23	23	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,024	1,071	(82)	84	45	47	A
Service Total	14,510	14,398	(378)	614	(349)	(113)	G
Corporate Financing	1,223	1,205	-	(38)	20	(18)	G
Efficiency target	(300)	-	300	-	-	300	
Total Budget	15,433	15,603	(78)	576	(329)	169	A
Covid-19 general grant						(555)	G
Covid-19 specific grants & income compensation						(313)	G
Net Total General Fund						(699)	G

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

Changes in management structure means that Leisure Services has been transferred from Environment to Community Services and this change is reflected in the table above.

Analysis of the Total Budget Variance

Except where specific expenditure is being incurred, it is difficult to be precise about the extent to which the budget variances set out above have arisen solely as a result of the Covid pandemic, therefore judgement has been used. As the pandemic has continued and society has had to adapt, it is recognised that there will be lasting consequences which will impact on the Council's activities and finances. It is likely that there remains economic implications that have yet to be realised as government support to individuals and businesses is withdrawn.

Reason for budget variance:	Adverse/ (Positive) variance against Budget				Net of Covid-19 grants £'000
	Staffing £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Total £'000	
COVID-19	117	320	431	868	-
Base budget	(195)	256	(760)	(699)	(699)
Projected Budget Variance	(78)	576	(329)	169	(699)

In some service areas the response to Covid related requirements have been undertaken by staff reprioritising and/ or generally working increased hours. This element of the resource input to Covid is not quantified in the above analysis.

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

The budget impact from the Covid pandemic is estimated to be £868k, which is mainly as a result of the following areas:

- Increased costs and reductions in income expected to be incurred whilst providing support to the Council's leisure services to remobilise and recover following the multiple periods of national lockdown and other local restrictions. This includes putting in place measures to ensure that facilities continue to operate in accordance with the appropriate guidance and advice. The financial implications for these measures are reflected in the reported position for Community & Leisure. Partially offsetting the anticipated additional expenditure is a balance of funds that were received in 2020/21 following a successful bid to the National Leisure Recovery Fund.
- Anticipated reductions in fees and charges, primarily from off-street car parking, but also other services including Community Transport, the Town Hall Centre, and Markets. The Government committed to continue to provide compensation to local authorities at a rate of 75p in the £ for net losses across certain income streams where these exceeded 5% of the amount originally budgeted in 2020/21. At the present time the scheme is only expected to cover the period April to June, and for which a claim submitted for £108k has been included in the projections. It is inherently difficult to predict how demand and usage of facilities might continue to recover across the remainder of the year, and this aspect of the projections remain uncertain.
- Estimated reductions in non-fee income. This relates mainly to recoveries from local tax and housing benefit activities. Staff resources have continued to be prioritised towards administering Covid business rate reliefs and grants, and self-isolation payments. Recovery procedures were initially impacted by the limited capacity and availability of the courts to deal with applications for liability orders; however, recovery action has now resumed to some normality. Collection rates for both council tax and business rates remain below pre-pandemic levels, although based on information available at the end of December, collection rates were the highest amongst Essex authorities.

An additional £686k of emergency funding was allocated to the Council as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22, of which £555k has been taken into account in the projections in addition to a £131k transfer to the Covid Reserve. Additional funding has been received, including Contain Outbreak Management Funds, which are meeting the costs of various Covid-related activities that, in part, are being carried out by staff within the Environmental Services team with some back-fill arrangements in place. As indicated above, the Council has also made a claim under the Income Compensation Scheme and this has been reflected in the projections.

Taking into account the external funding received, the net position on Covid account is projected to be neutral; however, there is still a large degree of uncertainty for the last quarter of the financial year. The impact on some income streams is less than was reported at Q2, particularly car parking,

There are still some Covid related costs that might need to be recognised in future reports in relation to construction projects where contractors have indicated that claims may be submitted for increased costs due to time delays and additional expenditure caused by the pandemic and changes in government guidance on site operating procedures. The Council still holds a balance of Covid funds and if necessary will draw down on these to meet any claims agreed.

Commentary on Base Budget Variances

Staffing

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

Across all service areas staffing budgets are projected to be underspent by £378k. The budget includes a corporate efficiency target of £300k, which is normally achieved from staffing, therefore, after taking this into account, it is currently projected that staff costs will be underspend by £78k.

The projections are based on known staff changes at the end of Quarter 3 and it is likely that further changes will become evident as part of the year-end review.

The main reasons for the projected staffing underspend within services are due to current vacant posts, organisational changes, and/ or efficiency savings.

Other Service Expenditure

Excluding the additional £320k of costs estimated due to Covid, there is a net overspend projected against the base budget of £256k, which is a combination of variances across all service areas, including:

- Housing Benefits – a complex area involving significant expenditure in benefits paid to claimants but also with subsidy received from government. The level of subsidy is subject to various claim types where the rate of subsidy provided can vary. It is currently projected that there will be a net additional cost (+£190k) based on current claim data. This cost can be subject to significant change and further investigation is being carried

out to identify how much of this increased cost may be attributable to temporary factors, as opposed to those that might have a more lasting effect.

- Increased Waste Management costs arising from the additional cost and replacement of wheelie bins due to district growth and breakages (+£70k). Higher fleet costs due to a combination of fuel price increases, maintenance costs and hired vehicles over the Christmas period (£66k). Higher charges from haulage contractors due to the fuel price and HGV driver shortages (+£35k).
- Higher maintenance charges and hired vehicle costs within Street Cleansing (+£34k).
- Additional costs are being incurred in relation to planning enforcement where legal costs are being incurred (+£45k), although the service is seeking to recover some of these costs.
- Recruitment costs in relation to corporate management changes (+£23k).
- Unbudgeted fees in relation to external costs being incurred by Landscape Services (+£35k).
- Additional external audit fees (+£52k) arising, partially from a new 'Use of Resources' requirement placed on auditors by the National Audit Office, and provision for increased costs relating to the 2019/20 external audit.

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

- Payments to the Essex Pension Fund are lower than anticipated in relation to prior year discretionary benefits (-£55k).
- Recharges from Eastlight Community Housing for voids and repairs on temporary housing accommodation is projected to be lower than budgeted (-£34k), and there is a projected overall underspend on the rent support scheme used to assist people to access private rented housing (-£13k)
- Reduced operating costs at Cordons Farm including from less frequent emptying the interceptor tank as a result of improved drainage and favourable weather conditions (-£40k)
- There is an overall underspend projected within the Governance Service (-£28k), which is comprised of lower forecast expenditure on Members' allowances and expenses; and cost savings in Electoral Services, which is partially offsetting a reduction in Cabinet Office grant for Individual Electoral Registration.
- Reduction in costs in relation to services provided within Essex Libraries (-£28k).

The main changes from the overspend position reported at Q2 are higher costs within Operations, in particular Waste Management as detailed above.

External Income

A significant proportion of the Council's budget is reliant on external income. Grants and subsidies from government, alongside income from business rates are major elements. These income streams are normally fairly predictable or fluctuate in response to compensating changes in expenditure. Where uncertainty exists this is managed via earmarked reserves, e.g. the business rate retention reserve. Other income is more susceptible to changes in external factors and service demand, and the projected position at this quarter for the outturn is summarised in the following table:

Service	Updated Budget	Joint Financing & Other Reimburs.	Sales, Fees & Charges	Rents & Service Charges	Other Income	Total	RAG status
		4,467	6,212	3,156	1,460	15,295	
	£000	Adverse (Positive) Variance £000 against Budget :					
Asset Management	3,385	-	(1)	(81)	(5)	(87)	G
Community & Leisure	534	(6)	240	-	6	240	R
Corporate Management Plan	10	8	-	-	-	8	A
Economic Development	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
Environment	883	21	(78)	-	(20)	(77)	G
Finance	2,037	80	-	-	(96)	(16)	G
Governance	197	(17)	(34)	-	21	(30)	G
Housing	41	-	(6)	6	(1)	(1)	G
Human Resources	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
ICT & Facilities	2	-	-	-	-	-	G
Marketing & Communications	123	-	3	-	(25)	(22)	G
Operations	5,482	(193)	(220)	22	(18)	(409)	G
Strategic Investment	300	-	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,741	(69)	114	-	-	45	A
Service Total	14,735	(176)	18	(53)	(138)	(349)	G
Corporate Financing	560	-	-	-	20	20	A
Total Budget	15,295	(176)	18	(53)	(118)	(329)	G
Attributable to:							
Covid-19 impact		(87)	495	23	0	431	R
Base budget		(89)	(477)	(76)	(118)	(760)	G

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

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

Commentary on Base Budget income variances

The reasons for the projected overachievement of income of £760k against the base budget include:

- Higher income from the sale of mixed dry recycling material. The price paid to the Council for material is based on a basket of indices which are reviewed each quarter. The budget had assumed a basket price of £29 per tonne based on the position at that time. However, this increased at Q1 to £38 per tonne, rising to £62 for Q2, and £76 for Q3. It is anticipated that Q4 will increase further to £84 per tonne. With such sharp volatility, variances can alter significantly between quarters. Income is predicted to be £361k more than budget (up from £355k at Q2) with other recycling and disposal credits showing higher income of 55k.
- During the summer season the amount of green waste collected increased resulting in an additional £37k in compost credits for the year being predicted. The outturn position will be affected by the autumn collection tonnages and in particular March when tonnages can vary substantially according to weather conditions at that time.
- A number of administrative grants for Housing Benefits and Local Council Tax Support were not announced until after the budget was approved. The final determinations means that an additional £86k of income has been achieved.
- Whilst a number of service areas have continued to see a drop in fees and charges income, the Local Land Charges service is projecting an overachievement against budget of £33k. Demand for the service remained high during the first half of the year as

residential buyers were looking to benefit from savings on stamp duty. The demand for the service returned to pre-covid levels in quarter 3. Similarly, the Building Control service has also seen an increase in demand for services resulting in a higher level of income being predicted (+£43k), albeit some staffing difficulties means that increased costs are having to be incurred on short-term temporary staff.

- Higher forecast income from licensing of £27k from increased applications during the quarter. Given the nature of the income, consideration will need to be given to retaining this underspend in line with licensing legislation if the forecast materialises as expected.
- A higher level of occupancy within the commercial property portfolio and the effect of rent reviews, along with rental income from two properties in Halstead that were previously part of a proposed land disposal, means that income is projected to be higher than budget (+£86k)

Partially offsetting this increased income:

- A significant downturn in planning application and pre-application income was experienced in the second quarter; however, whilst there is still a projected shortfall this has reduced at Q3. In addition increase in Planning Performance Agreements of £45k compared to the previous quarter has reduced the shortfall. The revised forecast for the year is a net underachievement of income under Sustainable Development of £45k (At Q2 a shortfall of £154k was being predicted).

Treasury Management

Investment activity

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

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity to the end December		Amount Invested at end of the quarter
	New Investments	Investments Matured	
£35.5m	£154.4m	£122.6m	£67.3m
Average amount invested for the period			£59.5m
Highest amount invested			£73.7m

The amount of cash under management during the first three quarters of the year is currently higher than last year given a large amount of cash currently due to be returned to central government. It is forecast, that the amount of cash balances will reduce significantly over the next quarter as capital investment expenditure continues to be incurred whilst income from Council Tax and business rates reduces in the last two months of the year. This will ultimately lead to lower cash balances available for treasury management.

Investment income and valuations

Interest and dividends earned to the end of the quarter totalled £603k, which is equivalent to an annualised rate of return of 1.34%:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£19.0m	£594k	4.15%
Short-Term	£48.5m	£9k	0.03%
Total	£59.5m	£603k	1.34%

Investment income of £827k is projected for the year, which is £118k better than assumed in the budget. The original budget was reduced by £350k in light of the sharp falls in interest rates, expected reductions in dividends from pooled funds, and also taking into account the anticipated reduction in cash balances. This reduction in budget was to be met by using the Treasury Management earmarked reserve in 2021/22, therefore, the projected improvement in income for this year will result in less being required from the reserve.

The market value of shares and units in pooled funds at the end of December, was £21.8m, representing an unrealised gain of £2.8m over the amount originally invested.

Investment portfolio

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

- Long-term pooled fund investments £19m (allocated: £3m property fund; £13m equity funds; and £3m in diversified asset funds);
- Low volatility Money Market Funds (MMFs) £23m;
- Variable net asset value MMF £4m;
- Debt Management Office Account Facility £17m
- Non-UK banks - £3m
- Lloyds current account £1.3m.

General Fund Balances

General Fund balances are held for the following reasons:

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

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

	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2021	5,999
Addition/(deductions):	
Budgeted reduction	(320)
Funding for one-off investment	(1,139)
Pension Fund triennial payment - repayment	823
Projected outturn variance at Q3	699
Earmarked Reserve Review (proposed)	128
Estimated Balance at 31 March 2022	6,190

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

- The approved budget included an anticipated reduction in balances of £320k.

- An allocation from General Fund balances was approved by Full Council in February 2021, to meet one-off budget requirements: £1m to be set aside to deal with the potential impact of Covid on services; £75k for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme; £7k for a Noise Level meter; and a total of £58k as provision for loss of income during the redevelopment of Manor Street.
- A one-off payment was made in 2020/21 to the Essex Pension Fund covering the period April 2020 to March 2023, which was part funded from General Fund balances. A repayment back into balances is being made in 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- During 2021/22 an earmarked reserve review was undertaken as part of the MTFS process identifying a total of £128k that was no longer required for the purpose it was set aside.
- The projected outturn variance for the year at Q3 is an overall positive variance of £699k. This has been shown as an addition to the General Fund balance; however, as part of the budget proposals for 2022/23 it has been recommended that the overachievement of recycling material income is transferred to a new earmarked reserve to manage future price/ tonnage risk. The actual amount to be transferred will be determined at the end of the financial year.

Risks and Assumptions

The forecasts reflect service managers' "best estimate" of the predicted outturn for the year. Whilst the previous year outturn and trends in-year have been considered; the position continues to be uncertain due to the coronavirus pandemic. Whilst restrictions have now been lifted following the most recent Omicron variant, it will take some time to understand the lasting effects this will have on services.

Directors and service managers continue to scrutinise all expenditure commitments in light of the financial challenge required to balance the budget over the medium-term. External income is inherently difficult to predict as it is substantially demand led and impacted by external factors.

Planning application fee projections are based on the best information available regarding when developers are likely to submit planning applications for growth locations within the district. Previous experience has shown that this can change quickly and income can vary significantly. Income will be influenced by both the number and type of planning applications received.

Investment income is influenced by the overall level of cash balances held, which in turn are dependent upon the progress of the strategic investment programme and other capital projects, and the pace at which planned capital receipts are generated. Market sentiment will impact on the value of the long-term pooled fund investments; whereas general economic conditions in both the UK and globally will influence dividend returns. Whilst the Bank of England increased interest rates in December, it is still expected that they will remain at relatively low levels.

The income which is offset from costs incurred for the processing of recycling material collected from households is subject to regular review of the composition of material collected assessed across the whole of the Suffolk Waste Partnership contract, which the Council is party, and market indices for the sale of materials. As this quarter's report demonstrates, the market price for materials can fluctuate leading to significant changes to the budget position.

The original budget assumed that £478k of staffing costs can be recharged from the General Fund revenue account to capital projects. The actual amount recharged will depend on the extent to which projects progress and staff are working on activities that can properly be treated as capital under accounting rules, with any shortfall impacting the General Fund.

There are estimated amounts of income included in the projections where the final amounts will only be ascertained once grant and subsidy claims have been subject to post claim assurance reviews.

The projected outturn will be reviewed as part of the process for developing proposals for the 2022/23 budget and update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Investment

The overall planned level of spending in the Council's approved capital programme is currently £42.7m. Delivery of a number of significant projects spans a number of years, therefore, the amount profiled to be spent in 2021/22 is almost £33m.

	Profiled Spend 2021/22 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 3 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 3 % of Profile
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	3,850	3,114	81%
Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre	9,436	4,378	46%
Manor Street regeneration	13,024	9,654	74%
I-Construct Innovation Centre	1,506	1,338	89%
Town Centre improvements	1,081	1,230	114%
Industrial estate improvements	66	3	5%
Property planned maintenance	381	191	50%
Replacement vehicles and plant	269	96	36%
Information technology systems & equipment	473	50	11%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	253	61	24%
Cemetery improvements	5	-	0%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	19	11	58%
Operational equipment	187	90	48%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	445	383	86%
Climate change initiatives	98	69	70%
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	898	622	69%
Capitalised interest	413	-	0%
Capital salaries	594	471	79%
Total	32,998	21,761	66%

Profiled spend on the programme for the current year has reduced by £4.8m, mainly due to delays caused by construction supply chain problems and other pandemic related issues.

The H120 project is funded by the receipts generated by the sale of serviced land plots. It is currently forecasted that these receipts will cover the cost of the project; however, this is subject to the risk of market fluctuations.

Capital resources

The Council continues to receive interim payments in respect of the development of apartments at Victoria Square, which on completion will transfer to Eastlight Community Homes (Eastlight) and generate almost £6.6 million for the Council.

Under arrangements in place with Eastlight, 14 right-to-buy sales have been completed up to the end of the 3rd quarter generating circa £2m for the Council. Eastlight have advised that a further 33 applications are in progress and, therefore, based on past experience this would indicate

around 18 sales potentially completing this year. In total, there were 11 sales last year that raised £1.3m for the Council.

A total of £260k was generated by the VAT shelter agreement with Eastlight up to the end of the 3rd quarter.

The Council has also received £1.1m grant from the Better Care Fund, which will be used to fund expenditure on disabled facilities grants.

Staged claims are also being made to drawdown approved funding from European Regional Development Funds, which were awarded for the I-Construct project, and from the government's Getting Building Fund (via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership or SELEP) for the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre. Just over £5m has been received to date, from total grant awards of £8m.

Agenda Item: 6

Report Title: Third Quarter Performance Report 2021/22	
Report to: Performance Management Scrutiny Committee	
Date: 23 rd March 2022	For: To inform
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Tracey Headford, Business Solutions Manager	
Enquiries to: Tracey Headford, Business Solutions Manager. tracey.headford@braintree.gov.uk ext 2442	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council provides a report to demonstrate the performance of Braintree District Council (the Council) at the end of the third quarter (October 2021 to December 2021). The performance report was presented to Cabinet on the 14th March 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The report is to inform the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee of the performance of the Council following its presentation and noting at Cabinet on the 14th March 2022.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Council keeps a record of its performance which is reported to cabinet every quarter for consideration and noting.
- 3.2 This is the first report reporting again the new Bouncing back together document and will reflect on the progress of the actions required to help our district recover and grow over the next few years.
- 3.3 As at the end of the December, a total of two projects are complete with 51 projects on track and progressing well. Ten projects have an amber status due to a number of projects experiencing delays due to supply chain issues impacting on some of our larger projects pushing back completion dates or resource issues and prioritisation of workloads.
- 3.4 Targets have not been set for all our performance indicators due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic. For the targets that remain, eight performance indicators have met or exceed target and five performance indicators have missed their target. Three have missed target by less than 5% and two have missed their target by more than 5%. The areas of underperformance are in relation to the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days (<5%), the collection rate for Council Tax (<5%), the collection rate for

Business rates (<5%), recycling rates (>5%) and waiting times for disabled facility grants (>5%).

3.5 There are a number of key achievements to highlight as follows:

- A high street improvement scheme was launched in December 2021 to improve the look and feel of shopfronts on our High Streets;
- Successfully delivered the Braintree Christmas light switch on – the first big event to make the most of the new pedestrianised area;
- Launched the Councils Climate change strategy during COP26 week with a number of climate change action videos demonstrating how businesses, residents, schools, community groups and individuals are working to tackle climate change across our district;
- Worked with Parish Councils, Town Councils, Schools, Community and Voluntary groups to plant a total of 18,700 native trees and 73,000 bulbs across the district;
- Worked with Community 360, to provide activities and a nutritious meal to more than 440 children supporting their families during the winter school holidays;
- I-Construct, a £2.3 million centre of excellence for construction innovation, opened for business;
- Two additional Business Adaptations Grants funding were delivered distributing a total of £479k in time for Christmas. The Council was able to offer the additional grants as other local authorities declined the funding;
- A further 111 affordable homes were delivered in the third quarter taking the total for the year to 301.

3.6 The Finance section of the report provides an updated review of the financial position for the year. It examines the latest forecast for spending on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; projected movements on the General Fund balance; and a summary of spending to date on capital projects. An update is also provided on the financial impact arising from the current COVID-19 pandemic.

3.7 The outturn financial position for the third quarter is as follows:

- Taking into account the projected impact of Covid and variations to the base budget, the net budget position forecast for the year is a positive variance of £699k.
- The estimated budget impact of the pandemic in 2021/22 is £868k. This is expected to be offset by funding received from government currently leaving a balanced position.
- The forecast position regarding the base budget is a positive variance of £699k.
- The proposals for the 2022/23 budget included £367k of savings that are reflected in the projected outturn as these were considered to be ongoing.

- After taking into account other planned movements in balances, the projected change in General Fund balances is an increase of £191k.
- Expenditure of £21.8m on capital projects up until the end of December, with spending mainly being incurred on: Horizon 120 business park infrastructure, now completed; the new Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre; I-Construct; Manor Street regeneration scheme; Town Centre improvements and the Halstead Leisure Centre artificial grass pitch.

4. Options

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

5. Next Steps

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

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The report provides an update as to the financial position as at the end of the December 2021 covering the revenue and capital outturn for this period.

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 There has been some impact due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the report will include detail of the Council's response. Information is included on how we intend to support residents, communities and businesses moving forward. A summary of complaints received each quarter, analysed by outcome (justified, partially justified or not justified) is provided.
- 8.2 The Enhancing our Environment priority has a number of actions that are designed to have a positive impact on the environment and climate change.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

- 9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 9.3 Equalities and diversity issues are considered fully in the Council's key projects. Where appropriate, an equality impact assessment is prepared and considered for any key projects identified.

10. List of Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Third Quarter Performance Management Report 2021/22.

11. Background Papers

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

SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

1ST JULY 2021 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021

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Section 1: Introduction and Summary






Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the second quarter and the end of the financial year in relation to the publication of the 'Annual Plan 2020/21' which has been extended until September 2021. This sets out the key activities and measures used to check our performance for the year and along with the Corporate Strategy 2020-2024 sets out the priorities we are working towards. Further detail is given in relation to a set of business performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, our people and health and safety.






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

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

The following table provides updates for the end of the second quarter in relation to our key activities




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Connecting People and Places	3	5	2	0	0
Enhancing our Environment	5	4	0	0	0
Supporting our Communities	6	8	0	0	0
Promoting Prosperity	7	3	0	0	0
Delivering and Innovating	6	4	0	0	0
TOTAL	27	24	2	0	0

KEY:




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

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

The following table shows the performance for the end of the second quarter in relation to the quarterly reported Performance Indicators as defined in our Annual Plan.

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Connecting People and Places	2	0	0	1
Enhancing our Environment	2	0	2	0
Supporting our Communities	0	0	1	3
Promoting Prosperity	0	0	0	5
Delivering and Innovating	3	2	2	0
TOTAL	7	2	4	9

KEY:

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

Summary Position

In the second quarter as restrictions started to be lifted, good progress has been made in delivering the actions of the Annual Plan which comes to an end in September 2021.

As at the end of the September, a total of 27 projects are complete with 24 projects on track and progressing well. Two projects have an amber status due to construction delays pushing end dates back. As a new plan takes effect from October 2021 through to March 2023, for those projects that are not complete, they will either be carried over for delivery through the next plan 'Bouncing back together' or will continue to be delivered through business as usual activity.

Targets have not been set for all our performance indicators due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic. For the targets that remain, seven performance indicators have met or exceed target and six performance indicators have missed their target. Two have missed target by less than 5% and four missed their target by more than 5%. The areas of underperformance are in relation to the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days (<5%), the collection rate for Council Tax (<5%), recycling rates (>5%), Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter average (>5%), waiting time for disabled facility grants (>5%), average call answering time in the Customer Service Centre (>5%) and the collection rate for Business rates (>5%).

In the past 18 months, there has been a significant amount of work across all services in dealing with and responding to the pandemic such as providing advice to businesses and support to re-open, providing support in the community from delivering food parcels to assisting vulnerable people to their vaccination appointments, partnership working on setting up covid testing centres and the local test and trace system, processing numerous grant applications paying out over £55.8m to local businesses as well as administering the self-isolation payments for individuals. At the same time, we embraced new ways of working to ensure day to day service continued and key regeneration schemes moved forward with significant milestones being reached.

Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES







Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Status
Develop the Braintree District Local Plan and provide a vision for the future growth of the district	
The hearings for Section two of Local Plan took place in July. The Council are currently awaiting the views of the inspectors and any further works that may be required.	
Complete the pedestrianisation of Braintree Town Centre improving the attractiveness of the area and creating a safer and healthier environment	
The majority of construction work is now complete with the exception of the resin to Market Place where we are waiting on UKPN, who provide local electrical infrastructure, to finish their connection works before the resin is laid in this area. There are also various areas the contractor need to finalise and improve upon prior to handover. The planting of trees and installation of street furniture will take place during November/December alongside a series of new wayfinding signs and the final, permanent access gate at Bank Street and permanent bollard at the end bottom of the High Street. Information on progress can be found on our website at www.braintree.gov.uk/pedestrianisation	
Progress construction of the Victoria Square development creating a vibrant hub for the Braintree Town centre	
Work on the inside of the building has begun and completion of the project is set to be phased over the next few months. Construction delays have pushed the end date of the project back. A revised end date will be established at the next meeting of the project assurance team.	
Continue to work on the redevelopment of the entrance of Witham Town Park providing greater accessibility and improved public realm	
The redevelopment of the entrance of Witham Town Park has now been completed providing improved accessibility and public realm.	
Enable to delivery of 150 affordable homes across the district	
A total of 220 affordable homes were delivered in 2020/21. In the second quarter of the 2021/22, a further 99 affordable homes have been delivered bringing the total so far for 2021/22 to 190.	
Support our town centres to open for business safely and recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic	
Ongoing support is being provided to businesses in the town centres under our Safer Places working group. The shop local campaign is ongoing and street markets returned to	

Braintree in August and September. For national heritage day in September, venues across the district opened their doors to visitors for free providing a chance for people to see and experience places that are not normally open and take part in activities. We are currently undertaking a number of procurement exercises to fund projects to be undertaken by March 2022 from the Welcome Back fund and the remaining re-opening high streets safely fund. We have already purchased additional marquees to support the traders at the street markets.	
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Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Status
Invest in resource and connectivity to support business growth and expansion including the planning and delivery of highway schemes across the district	
This is a long term action and there are a number of highway schemes planned across the district and Braintree District Council and Essex County Council meet regularly to discuss delivery of the schemes. The scheme to extend the A120 to the A12 is included in the Governments latest Road Investment Strategy as a pipeline project that will undergo further analysis and design work for consideration for potential future investment. The proposals for improving this stretch road were initially developed by Essex County Council. This project has now been passed over to Highways England who continue to carry out a validation exercise of all the work that has been done. Once completed, the validation will establish if further work needs to be done in order to progress the scheme. In respect of the A12 widening scheme between junction 19 and junction 25 to ease congestion and cope with increasing traffic demands, Highways England are now reviewing the public consultation results on the proposed improvements on this stretch of road and the likely significant environmental effects. The responses will help to shape the proposed improvements before Highways England submit the development consent order application intended for submission in the spring/summer of 2022.	
Continue to support and monitor Superfast Essex in the delivery of Superfast Broadband across the district	
Braintree district is currently at 95% of premises able to access superfast broadband. The district wide take up of superfast broadband is currently at 30%. A communications plan has been developed to encourage residents and businesses to utilise the installed broadband to increase take up figures.	
Continue to support NHS England to improve health facilities across the district	
The Council has been working with Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and Hedingham Medical Centre to evaluate options for the medical centre at Sible Hedingham. It has been agreed that UK based One Medical Group, a specialist in the development of health care properties should take the project forward and on to the next stage. New River Retail have submitted a pre-application to the Planning Service regarding the health facilities in Witham.	
Support our residents and businesses to develop the skills needed to support the economy	
Throughout the year, we have signposted enquiries to the schemes that have been set up to support skills development including support to Essex County Council on schemes including Kickstart, apprenticeships and virtual job fairs. Following a review of the Climate Change Strategy, we will be looking to work with training providers, and further education establishments to increase skills and employment opportunities associated with this sector – green skills for green jobs. Braintree District Council is also updating the Plan for Growth using research data on the current district economy. Once revised, this may also highlight some areas of priority for supporting businesses in the green economy as well as other specific sectors.	



ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT



Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Status
Carry out improvements to our recreational open spaces including the provision of all-inclusive play facilities for young people to enjoy	
Improvements works are now complete in all four play areas: Albert Moss Recreational Gardens in Rivenhall, Braintree and Bocking public gardens in Braintree, Notley Community Hall play area in Notley Green and Bramble Road in Witham.	✓
Investigate the provision of an eco-friendly woodland alternative to traditional burials at Braintree Cemetery in London Road	
A feasibility study has been carried out which concluded that an eco-friendly woodland alternative to traditional burials is not suitable at Braintree Cemetery. However, the feasibility study has identified that there is additional capacity at the cemetery for traditional burials subject to drainage works being carried out.	✓
Create gardens of remembrance at some of our cemeteries providing peaceful environments for families to visit	
The concept design posters looking at people's needs and how to meet them has been displayed in Bocking cemetery and on our website allowing people to provide feedback. The concept design includes a children's area, a willow dome where you can tie a ribbon in memory of a loved one, a memorial feature, planting of memorial shrubs and an area for bereaved parents that is more secluded and private.	▶
Protect further areas of public open space against unauthorised encampments	
Works are now completed in all four areas identified to install protection measures against unauthorised encampments	✓
Respond to requirements from the Environment Bill in relation to waste and resources efficiency whilst supporting our climate change objectives	
The Council provided responses to recent government consultations and continues to keep a close eye on the Bill which has continued its passage through the House of Lords and now returns to the Commons in October for consideration of the Lords amendments.	▶
Research and trial alternative fuel vehicles for some of our front line services	
Quotations are being sought from UK power networks for the green infrastructure required to support electric vehicles. Further research on electric vehicles will be undertaken as part of the waste management review happening later this year.	▶
Raise awareness of duty of care and fines in relation to litter and waste offences through targeted campaigns	
The Council has continued to raise awareness through targeted campaigns on our social media channels regarding litter as people start to spend more time outside.	✓

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Status
Trial anti-littering signage along some of our strategic routes across the district to discourage roadside littering.	
The 12 month trial that commenced in November 2020 continues and is on track to evaluate towards the end of the year. The signs are being trialled in five locations and monitored by litter-picks, to see if they deter people from littering.	
Review and update the Climate Change Local Strategy for the next four years focusing on the areas below to support the delivery of our 2030 targets through the Climate Change Working Group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources - Energy Use - Planning and Development - Transport - Council Assets and Operations - Natural Environment - Adapting to climate change 	
Following analysis of the public engagement that took place between May and July 2021, a revised strategy that builds on the work Braintree District Council has already undertaken over the years to help the environment and address climate change was discussed and unanimously approved at an Extraordinary Council meeting on 20th September 2021 alongside the Cycling Strategy. The hard work now starts in delivering what has been set out in the action plan. In addition to approving the strategies, the Council launched the new community tree and bulb planting scheme enabling the planting of 18,600 native trees and 73,000 bulbs across the District.	

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES









Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

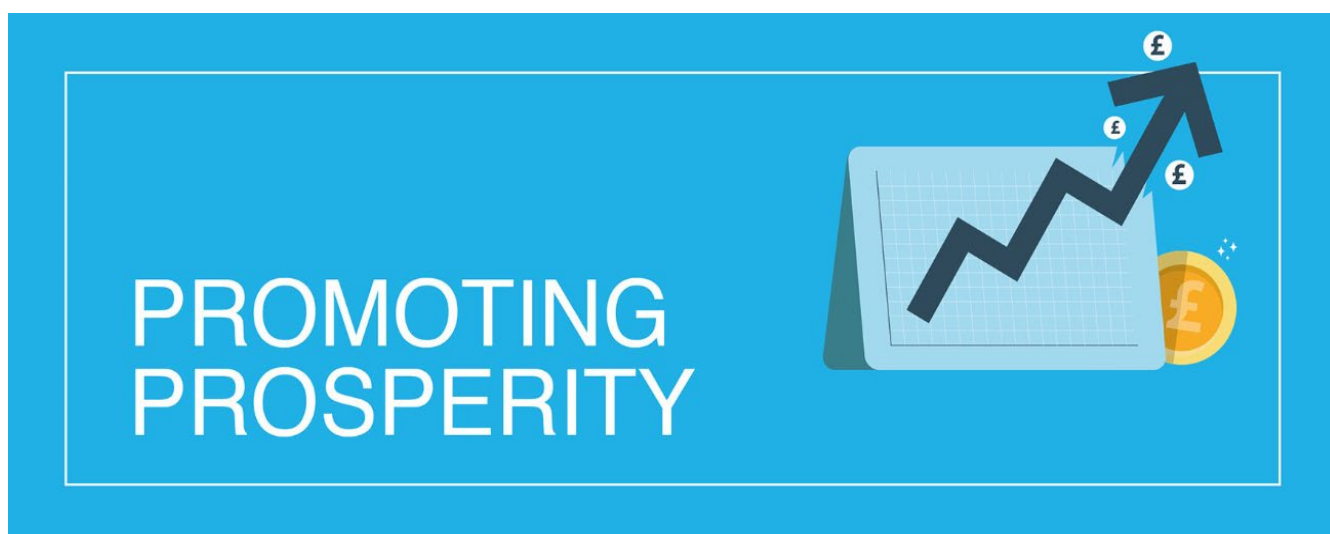
Project description and comments	Status
Improve the sport facilities at Braintree Sports and Leisure Centre, creating high quality amenities for the community to use	
The refurbishments to the athletics track at Braintree Sports and Leisure Centre are now completed. Tabor Academy were unable to provide funds towards the replacement of the artificial grass pitch this year. This part of the project will be moved to the next financial year and the works will take place in the summer holidays 2022 as the pitch is used during term time.	✓
Provide a new footpath and resurface the rear of Rivenhall village hall to improve accessibility to a much used community building	
The works to provide a new footpath and to resurface the rear of Rivenhall Village Hall are now complete.	✓
Upgrade the CCTV in Halstead and Braintree using new technology to improve the effectiveness of the systems	
Open reach have installed the new fibre optic links and the new digital cameras were installed in March 2021.	✓
Upgrade to CCTV in Braintree is being carried out as part of the pedestrianisation work which is currently ongoing. The camera in Market Square has recently been repaired.	▶
Commence development of the 3G pitch at Halstead Leisure Centre	
The artificial football pitch was completed ahead of schedule and is now open for bookings. The football pitch is not only a full sized pitch but has 9, 7 and 5 a side pitch markings. The pitch provides improved facilities for residents and local clubs and will be used by students of Ramsey Academy through a joint use agreement. Following discussions with stakeholders, it was agreed for the new pitch to be named the 'Calum Leys Memorial Pitch' in tribute to the former Ramsey Academy PE teacher, Head of School and much admired member of the Halstead Community.	✓

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Status
Continue with Livewell Child initiatives to support families to live healthier lives and become more active	
The Livewell Child project has been running a number of years now and has been successful in raising awareness of obesity in children and introducing initiatives to help	✓





children and their families lead healthy lifestyles. 10 schools across the district will be continuing with programmes such as daily mile, BlitzFitMe and Embers the Dragon. The officer team in the Council met in September to determine the direction of work for the forthcoming years which will be around supporting children and their families to have the best start in life and supporting children to have good mental health. New projects around our Livewell programme will be set up.	
Improve awareness of mental health services, identifying gaps in service provision and potential opportunities for partnership working	
During the second quarter, the Health and Wellbeing panel provided funding to secondary schools across the district to identify and deliver low level interventions for mental health using arts and culture. The recovery for growth working group continue to have discussions with partners around establishing a community garden to improve mental health as well as tackling isolation. The Braintree District Mental Health Workshop will be taking place on the 21 st October where partners will provide updates on areas of work and plans moving forward to identify areas where partners can work together. A range of events are also planned for World Mental Health Day on 10 th October 2021 including walk and talk for men, mindful art sessions and a dog walk.	
Work with communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live through the development of local neighbourhood plans	
The Coggeshall Neighbourhood Plan has now been adopted following a positive referendum and Council decision in July 2021 adding to the completed plans at Bradwell with Pattiswick, Hatfield Peverel and Cressing. A referendum for the Salings Neighbourhood Plan took place in September with 85% of those who voted being in favour of the plan for the Salings to help decide future planning applications. The plan will now go to Full Council in October for formal approval before it can be officially adopted. There are currently a further eight neighbourhood plans going through the process.	
Reduce the number of rough sleepers across the district by developing a range of support services	
Projects are progressing to provide additional supported accommodation to rough sleepers especially in relation to units available to deal with complex needs. This also includes the 'next steps accommodation programme' on further initiatives to prevent rough sleepers returning to the street. Day to day, we continue to prevent people from becoming homeless and our mental health navigator is engaging with rough sleepers with more complex needs to help them sustain a tenancy.	
Continue to develop a range of initiatives to address social isolation and loneliness across the district	
As part of the on-going community engagement events we continue to talk to people about whether they feel lonely or socially isolated and signposting them to Community 360 or other befriending services or activities that are now opening up. We are also supporting the Colne Valley Primary Care Network at their bi-weekly drop-ins held at Queens Hall, Halstead. The Meet Up Monday at Cafe in the Park, Braintree has re-started and we are in discussions with other venues regarding opening up and restarting the meet ups. The Braintree District Social Isolation and Loneliness forum met in September to discuss existing activities and to develop a plan of future partner projects and activities.	
Continue to work with Community 360 to support volunteers across the district harnessing the energy of new volunteers	
Additional volunteers have been recruited to support the covid booster sites across the district. We are currently working with Community 360 to organise social media and marketing training for voluntary and community groups which will take place in the coming months.	
Provide support and assistance to the most vulnerable people across our district in response to Covid-19 through the Community Hub	
Over the 2020/21 year the community hub dealt with 413 referrals for a variety of support including food shopping, collection and delivery of food parcels, prescription delivery, mental health calls and befriending. We made contact with 3121 individuals deemed clinically extremely vulnerable and 127 people identified as shielding. Ongoing support is	

now being provided by Community 360.	
Support our communities and local organisations to respond to issues that have emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic increasing long term strength and resilience	
We continue to provide funding to Community 360 enabling them to build on the work they have been doing in supporting vulnerable people in the district during the pandemic. During the second quarter, volunteers across the district have supported 314 people through our befriending service and food collection and delivery service referring 78 individuals on to other services or support	▶
Since the start of the financial year, the Councillor Community Grant scheme has awarded a total of 33 grants to the value of £27,058.	▶






Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Status
Commence construction of the Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park	
The main infrastructure is now complete providing two access roads from the A131 and a central spine road. The business park is also connected to power, data, water, sewage and gas systems. Landscaping is also complete with the creation of a pond and wildlife habitat shrubs, tussock grassland, wildflower meadows and 321 trees. Dark sky friendly street lighting has also been installed to reduce light pollution. Building on the commercial units is already underway.	✓
Commence the build of the I-Construct Innovation in Construction Hub at the Braintree Enterprise Centre	
Building work is nearing completion with just the glass and louvres left to be fitted. The hub is an exceptional example of a modern, environmentally friendly building benefiting from innovative construction techniques and modern materials. The hub consists of a technology suite, exhibition space, conference facilities and informal meeting areas. It will become home to a team offering business support a, grant schemes and advice to firms connected to the construction industry.	▶
Carry out restoration works to the Bocking Windmill to preserve the building for future generations to enjoy	
The sails on the windmill have been re-instated following repairs due to damage caused by storm Ciara in February 2020. In celebration of the Windmills 300 th birthday this year, there will be an open event on 10 th October allowing visitors to see the windmill up close and tour the inside.	✓

Raise the profile of the Braintree District as a place to do business	
The shop local campaign is ongoing with a high number of businesses now signed up to 'click it local'. The website provides details of local stores and Essex wide stores to support local businesses. Street Markets relaunched in the second quarter with the first market taking place in August. The markets will continue to take place on the last Saturday of each month as covid restrictions have now lifted. The Council will gradually start inviting more traders back to encourage more people back into the town centre, to spend time, socialise and help boost trade for local businesses. Plans are underway for the town centres Christmas lights switch on event which will coincide with a street market. Dates for this event will be announced in October.	
Provide business and employment support and advice for those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic	
Support has been provided to businesses and individuals throughout the year through our business newsletters, closed Facebook page, over the phone or through patrols of the town centres and interactions with businesses. This includes providing advice and information on the business grants available for those affected by the pandemic and ensuring grant payments were paid out quickly.	
Minimise the barriers to economic growth and support the needs of businesses to start up, innovate and grow.	
Over the year, the Council has provided support to businesses and signposted those looking to start or to grow to schemes to advice and support that will aid their businesses. This includes the young entrepreneur grant scheme, developing the business support offer for the construction sector as part of the new space at I-Construct and the Horizon 120 hub which will provide space for businesses to utilise.	
Continue to work with businesses to make physical improvements to industrial areas in the district	
Ten businesses across six industrial estates in the district have secured the funding needed to improve the external appearance of their premises. Grants of up to £5,000 were offered to businesses willing to match the funds.	

Actions carried out in partnership with others


Project description and comments	Status
Help to strengthen economic recovery across the district working towards the shared vision in the North Essex Economic Strategy	
Working in partnership with colleagues in other authorities, the Council has secured 1.7million pounds to spend on business support across the area up to March 2022. Discussions have taken place as to how best allocate the funds and business support has been procured. We are now awaiting the Boards approval to enable us to proceed.	
Identify education and retraining programmes and actively promote these enabling access new work opportunities	
Throughout the year, officers have actively promoted and referred people to local and national education and retraining schemes. As part of the North Essex Economic Board work, a virtual Job Fair took place in July which was viewed by more than 3000 residents Further virtual fairs are being planned providing opportunities for people to speak to local employers and find out about vacancies and further learning and retraining opportunities.	
Maximise opportunities for businesses in the district to access grant funding	
All grant funding information has been provided to businesses on a regular basis through the Braintree district business facebook page and business newsletter. Through the various business grant schemes that have been launched throughout the pandemic, the Council has processed 10.647 grants issuing more than £55,800,000 in grants.	

DELIVERING AND INNOVATING







Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Status
Address the challenges of reduced income from Government funding and as a result of Covid-19, by working collectively across the organisation to reduce costs and improve services without impacting on service delivery by being efficient, effective and commercially focussed.	
It is still expected that the majority of reduced income will be covered by support received from Central Government. The Government has provided the Council with Emergency Funding of £0.68m in 2021/22 to help meet the impact of the Covid pandemic on the Council's finances and has also confirmed the continuation of the income losses compensation scheme for the first quarter of 2021/22. The scheme provides compensation at the rate of 75p in £ for losses above a threshold of 5% against budget. Applications for this compensation are required to be submitted to the Government by no later than 22nd October 2021. The Investment and Development Programme set up to address the budget gap is now embedded within the organisation and a manager's conference held in July focussed on the £1.6m challenge. Over 120 ideas were submitted and all are being reviewed to see what can be taken forward. Commercial insights training has also been offered to staff providing the opportunity to learn more about how we can deliver our services in a more commercial way.	▶
Address the challenges and recognise the opportunities of the changing work environment as a result of Covid-19 for the whole organisation including steering staff and members through the recovery journey	
The Council are progressing with a hybrid working model of staff predominantly working from home and working in the office to meet the needs of the business in line with the offices re-opening to the public. This allows for new ways of working to be taken forward.	▶
Upgrade our website to comply with the web accessibility regulations enabling residents, visitors and businesses to transact with us easily	
The Council's website has been upgraded and the new version went live at the end of November 2020 to comply with the web accessibility regulations.	✓
Review our Asset Management Strategy to ensure Council assets are fit for purpose, managed effectively and provide a valuable income stream for the Council	
The Asset Management Strategy has been reviewed and will be incorporated into the overarching Corporate Investment and Development Strategy.	✓
Use customer information and feedback to improve services ensuring they remain customer friendly whilst working towards retaining the customer service excellence standard for the authority	
The Customer Service Excellence Assessment took place in April 2021 and the Council have successfully retained the accreditation for the sixth year in a row. The assessor	✓







applauded the Council for its approach to the pandemic and the work to ensure services continued to be delivered and meet the needs of its customers. Seven areas of the assessment were awarded compliance plus.	
Continue to develop relationships with Town and Parish Councils	
Meetings have taken place on a monthly basis with Town and Parish Clerks, and the agenda is determined by all parties based on emerging issues. In the last quarter, items discussed were play areas, procurement, employment support, governance issues and climate change including electric vehicle charging. Weekly newsletters were also provided updating on the latest district news, Covid related issues and emerging priorities.	



Actions carried out in partnership with others







Project description and comments	Status
Consider and determine the future approach of our leisure services	
At Cabinet on 6th September, they approved a 5 year extension of the leisure contract with Fusion with a 3 year break clause. We will now be working with Fusion to recover and develop leisure services following the pandemic.	
Look to develop health priorities in various localities within the district in partnership with the newly formed NHS Primary Care Networks	
Officers from the Council are working with Colne Valley Primary Care Network on a population health management development programme looking at people under 40 years old who have alcohol or substance misuse related issues and addressing their needs using a multi-service approach to help improve their quality of life. Two doctors from the Colne Valley Surgery will be presenting a low carb project to the Health and Wellbeing panel with a view to understanding how we can work closer together.	
Continue to improve health and wellbeing across the district through our work with Health and Wellbeing partners	
We continue to work with the Health and Wellbeing Panel to deliver the Covid response to residents in our District. The Health & Well-being Panel have been reviewing their terms of reference and the priorities of health and wellbeing partners in light of the Covid pandemic and a number of meetings will be taking place to understand the work required around new areas identified.	
Continue to protect local communities and tackle priority problems with the Community Safety Partnership	
The community safety hub has continued to meet on a monthly basis throughout the pandemic dealing with a range of ASB issues including closure notices and cases linked to mental health. The partnership has also provided a range of information to the community around the use of nitrous oxide, fraud and scams. A local exploitation group has been established to look at the growing number of cases of young people being exploited either on-line or in the community with a multi-agency approach around early intervention and prevention. The action plan for 21/22 is being developed with a focus on hidden harms such as exploitation and domestic abuse.	

Section 3: Managing the Business

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	2021/22						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES							
Number of affordable homes delivered	91	99			37		
Percentage of superfast broadband coverage across the district	95%	95%			n/a	n/a	
Cumulative number of homes granted planning permission (outline and full)	654	709			540		<i>This indicator reports cumulatively on the outline and full planning applications granted permission. Figures will fluctuate each quarter depending on the size of the applications. In the first quarter, one outline application counts towards 575 homes The breakdown between full and outline permissions since April through to the end of September are as follows: Full – 99 Outline 610</i>
ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT							
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	53.63%	52.57%			60%		<i>The outturn for the second quarter needs to be confirmed by ECC and may be adjusted in a future report. The target is an aspirational target set by the Essex Waste Partnership. We continue with promotional work around waste reduction and increasing recycling to encourage change in attitudes and behaviours. This includes relabelling our bring bank sites to accept mixed glass as recycling glass no longer needs to be sorted by its colour.</i>
Kilograms of residual household waste collected per household	117kgs	117kgs			117kgs		
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	7%			6%		<i>Recorded three times a year – July, November and March. The main issues with littering have been on the main roads particularly the A120 and A12 where we continue to see high deposits around slip road locations. We are liaising with Highways England to look at collaborative working on clearing this litter up and considering new methods of enforcement through Littercam</i>
Number and percentage of accessible non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (198)	100% (205)			100%		
Number of residents assisted in installing	Annually reported						

Performance Indicator	2021/22						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
energy saving measures							
SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES							
Average waiting time for applicants on the Disabled Facilities Grant (calculated in days from point of referral to approval)	211 days	205 days			90 days		The restrictions imposed during lockdowns continues to impact on the larger and more complex grants as they could not be progressed quickly during the pandemic and we are now experiencing delays with obtaining building materials. These cases remain the focus of the team and we should start to see improvements in the average waiting times over the coming quarters.
Participation levels across all our sports centres	91,643	135,223			n/a	n/a	Leisure centres across the district were able to increase capacity from the 19 th July in a phased approach to their gyms, group exercise programmes, spaces in swimming pools and swim school programmes. Some restrictions still apply.
Participation of adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported						
Number of customers using out Handyman scheme	25	19			n/a	n/a	
Number of homelessness cases prevented	64	54			n/a	n/a	
Achieve at least a 1% increase in adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported						
PROMOTING PROSPERITY							
Percentage of people in the district claiming out of work benefits rate (aged 16 – 64)	4.3%	3.7%			n/a	n/a	
Number of new business start-ups across the district	259	217			n/a	n/a	
Number of businesses that have contacted us for business support	191	451			n/a	n/a	
Number of business grants processed	1205	174			n/a	n/a	
Amount of business grants paid out	£7.5m	£583k			n/a	n/a	
DELIVERING AND INNOVATING							
Average call answer time in the Customer Service Centre	36 seconds	39 seconds			15 seconds		The CSC have handled 26,435 calls in the second quarter with 74% of these calls being resolve at first point of contact in the CSC. The call answering time has been impacted by a number of

Performance Indicator	2021/22						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
							<i>reasons: July was a particularly busy month with election letters and Council Tax summons increasing the number of enquiries into the CSC. The service continue to be busy with bulky waste calls and the team are experiencing issues in transferring calls through to services. Calls are now warm handled so call back messages can be taken for calls that are not transferred. An apprentice has been recruited and it is hoped that the call answer time will reduce when they are fully trained and taking calls.</i>
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt (cumulative)	97.08%	95.77%			99.25%		<i>This indicator is now reported cumulatively to provide a better understanding of the position with paying invoices. Since the start of the financial year, 214 payments out of 5060 are paid later than 30 days of receipt of the invoice. The new system introduced in April 2021 puts a greater emphasis on services receipting goods and this change in the process is taking time to embed across the organisation. Refresher training is being provided to all services with further measures to be implemented in the future.</i>
Number of people transacting with us online	39,311	32,278			n/a	n/a	
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	16.48 days	14.33 days			20 days		
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	5.59 days	4.64 days			6 days		
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 7 working days	93.51%	94.83%			90%		<i>165 out of 174 stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescale</i>
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.10%	57.48%			58.80%		<i>The target is based on the pre-Covid collection performance recorded in 2019. Recovery processes including the application for liability orders from the Magistrates Court started in the second quarter and it is hoped that it will enable payment plans to be agreed with those that have not made any payment against their liability. Currently Braintree has the highest collection rates amongst Essex Authorities and it is hoped that target will be achieved at the end of the year.</i>
Collection rate for Business Rates	25.80%	51.57%			57.95%		<i>The target is based on the pre-Covid collection performance recorded in 2019. Percentage down on pre-pandemic and last year. The rebilling of accounts required due to the reduction in the expanded retail and nursery reliefs from 100% to 66% from July 2021 means that payment plans for the remainder of the year had to be readjusted. It is expected that performance will correct itself as we get nearer to year-end</i>

Complaints

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

Complaint Category	Q1 2020/21	Q2 2020/21	Q3 2020/21	Q4 2020/21	TOTAL
Justified	51 (43)	67 (51)	(53)	(50)	(197)
Not Justified	82 (55)	68 (56)	(43)	(73)	(227)
Partially Justified	26 (19)	46 (22)	(19)	(28)	(88)
Not known	0 (0)	4 (0)	(0)	(1)	(1)
Total	159 (117)	185 (129)	(115)	(152)	(513)

Comments

There has been a slight increase in the number of complaints received in the second quarter compared to the first quarter.

The majority of complaints continue to be in relation to the Operations service, in particular, complaints around missed waste collections. There are various reasons for missed collections such as missing assisted collections, temporary staff not being familiar with collection points, bins being too heavy for the vehicle machinery (common in missed green bins where soil is put in the bins), vehicle breakdown, contaminated recycling bags and access issues due to parked cars and road closures.

To ensure minimal disruption to service, agency staff are used who are not as familiar with the routes and collection points. Due to staff having to self-isolate in the second quarter, it has not always been possible to put crew members with agency staff who are familiar with the collections. The majority of missed collections are collected within 48 hours of being reported to us.

All complaints are reviewed by services in team meetings to help identify improvements to processes and the service provided.

In the second quarter of 2021/22, of the 185 complaints received:

- 174 are stage one complaints
- 7 are stage two complaints
- 4 are stage three complaints

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

In the second quarter of 2021/22, the LGO has received one new complaint enquiry in respect of planning (certificate of Lawfulness). The LGO declined to investigate as there is an alternative right of appeal to the Planning Inspector.

A complaint from the previous quarter in relation to the discretionary test and trace support scheme has been allocated an investigator and we are awaiting further contact from the LGO on this matter.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22	Q4 21/22	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	495	492			- 3	-
Total staff FTE	446.07	441.97			- 4.1	-
Level of employee turnover	3.03%	2.24%			- 0.79%	-
Number of leavers	15	11			- 4	-
Number of starters	11	8			- 3	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.4 days	1.72 days			+ 0.32 day	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	84.8%	71.95%			N/A Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	1365.5	1556			190.5	-
Number of delegates	189	169			- 20	-
Number of apprentices **	16	14			- 2	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	470	464	466	481	492	499

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

Health & Safety

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

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

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	(2020/21 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	8 (10)	7 (13)	(10)	(12)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	6 (8)	6 (11)	(8)	(9)	<i>The most common reported accidents in the second quarter are injuries to hands or feet. One staff member in our Operations service broke their wrist.</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	2 (2)	1 (2)	(1)	(3)	<i>A contractor bumped their head when removing equipment from a van</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	(1)	(0)	
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	0 (0)	10 (5)	(18.5)	(16)	<i>Majority of time relates to the operative with a broken wrist as they were unable to carry out their duties</i>
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	2 (2)	1 (4)	(1)	(0)	<i>A refuse driver was verbally assaulted by a member of the public in their vehicle</i>
Number of near miss incidents	0 (0)	0 (0)	(0)	(1)	
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	2 (0)	1 (2)	(3)	(2)	
Number of claims settled	1 (1)	0 (1)	(1)	(1)	

Financial Performance

Executive Summary

- Taking into account the projected impact of Covid and variations to the base budget, **the net budget position forecast for the year is a positive variance of £383,000.**
- The estimated **budget impact of the pandemic** in 2021/22 is **£915,000.** This is expected to be offset by funding received from government currently leaving a **balanced position.**
- The forecast position regarding the **base budget** is a **positive variance of £383,000.**
- After taking into account other planned movements in balances, **the projected change in General Fund unallocated balances is a reduction of £253,000**
- **Expenditure of £15.525m on capital projects** during the first half year, with spending mainly being incurred on: Horizon 120 business park infrastructure, now completed; the new Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre; I-Construct; Manor Street regeneration scheme; Town Centre improvements and the Halstead Leisure Centre artificial grass pitch.

Background

The Service Budget for 2021/22 is £15.433m. This amount was to be financed from a combination of: general government grants (£0.362m); business rates (£4.979m); and Council Tax (£10.092m). During the year service budgets may be updated in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure.

General Fund Revenue Spending

The table below shows the projected outturn by service as forecast at the end of Quarter 2.

Service	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Adverse (Positive) variance against Budget				RAG Status
			Staffing £'000	Other Exp. £'000	Gross Income £'000	Total £'000	
Asset Management	(2,477)	(2,542)	-	(4)	(61)	(65)	G
Community Services	489	510	(4)	(17)	42	21	A
Corporate Management	1,496	1,511	(18)	23	10	15	A
Economic Development	216	216	-	-	-	-	G
Environment & Leisure	1,037	1,291	(23)	97	180	254	R
Finance	1,511	1,642	(136)	237	30	131	R
Governance	1,210	1,169	5	(30)	(16)	(41)	G
Housing Services	956	889	(33)	(32)	(2)	(67)	G
Human Resources	358	355	(1)	(2)	-	(3)	G
ICT & Facilities	1,712	1,751	51	(12)	-	39	A
Marketing and Communications	614	582	2	(9)	(25)	(32)	G
Operations	6,341	6,149	(58)	92	(226)	(192)	G
Strategic Investment	23	23	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,024	1,166	(65)	53	154	142	R
Service Total	14,510	14,712	(280)	396	86	202	A
Corporate Financing	1,223	1,253	(8)	(34)	72	30	A
Efficiency target	(300)	-	300	-	-	300	
Total Budget	15,433	15,965	12	362	158	532	A
Covid-19 general grant						(666)	G
Covid-19 specific grants & income compensation						(249)	G
Net Total General Fund						(383)	G

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

Analysis of the Total Budget Variance

Except where specific expenditure is being incurred, it is difficult to be precise about the extent to which the budget variances set out above have arisen solely as a result of the Covid pandemic, therefore judgement has been used. As the pandemic has continued and society has had to adapt, it is recognised that there will be lasting consequences which will impact on the Council's activities and finances. It is likely that there remains economic implications that have yet to be realised as government support to individuals and businesses is withdrawn.

Reason for budget variance:	Adverse/ (Positive) variance against Budget				Net of Covid-19 grants £'000
	Staffing £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Total £'000	
Covid-19	31	254	630	915	-
Base budget	(19)	108	(472)	(383)	(383)
Total Budget Variance	12	362	158	532	(383)

In some service areas the response to Covid related requirements have been undertaken by staff reprioritising and/ or generally working increased hours. This element of the resource input to Covid is not quantified in the above analysis.

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

The budget impact from the Covid pandemic is estimated to be £915,000, which is mainly as a result of the following areas:

- Increased costs and reductions in income expected to be incurred whilst providing support to the Council's leisure services to remobilise and recover following the multiple periods of national lockdown and other local restrictions. This includes putting in place measures to ensure that facilities continue to operate in accordance with the appropriate guidance and advice. The financial implications for these measures are reflected in the reported position for Environment & Leisure. Partially offsetting the anticipated additional expenditure is a balance of funds that were received in 2020/21 following a successful bid to the National Leisure Recovery Fund.
- Anticipated reductions in fees and charges, primarily from off-street car parking, but also other services including Community Transport, the Town Hall Centre, and Markets. The Government committed to continue to provide compensation to local authorities at a rate of 75p in the £ for net losses across certain income streams where these exceeded 5% of the amount originally budgeted in 2020/21. At the present time the scheme is only expected to cover the period April to June, and for which a claim submitted for £108,223 has been included in the projections. It is inherently difficult to predict how demand and usage of facilities might continue to recover across the remainder of the year, and this aspect of the projections remain uncertain.
- Estimated reductions in non-fee income. This relates mainly to recoveries from local tax and housing benefit activities. Staff resources have continued to be prioritised towards administering Covid business rate reliefs and grants, and self-isolation payments. Recovery procedures were initially impacted by the limited capacity and availability of the courts to deal with applications for liability orders; however, recovery action has now resumed to some normality. Collection rates for both council tax and business rates remain below pre-pandemic levels, although based on information available at the end of August, collection rates were the highest amongst Essex authorities. The lower collection rate does result in a projected reduction in the amount to be received from the major

preceptors under the Council Tax Sharing Agreement, albeit the position has improved from the previous quarter.

An additional £685,853 of emergency funding was allocated to the Council as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22, of which £666,000 has been taken into account in the projections. Additional funding has been received, including Contain Outbreak Management Funds, which is meeting the costs of various Covid-related activities that, in part, are being carried out by staff within the Environmental Services team with some back-fill arrangements in place. As indicated above, the Council has also made a claim under the Income Compensation Scheme and this has been reflected in the projections.

Taking into account the external funding received, the Covid account is projected to be broadly neutral. This represents an improvement from the deficit position reported at Q1 due mainly to some recovery in anticipated receipts from income generating services, particularly car parking but also from the Town Hall Centre and taxi licensing.

There are still some Covid related costs that might need to be recognised in future reports in relation to construction projects where contractors have indicated that claims may be submitted for increased costs due to time delays and additional expenditure caused by the pandemic and changes in government guidance on site operating procedures. The Council still holds a balance of Covid funds received in 2020/21 and if necessary will have to drawdown on these to meet any claims agreed.

Commentary on Base Budget Variances

Staffing

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

Across all service areas staffing budgets are projected to be underspent by £280,000, with a further saving of £8,000 under Corporate Financing. The budget includes a corporate efficiency target of £300,000, which is normally achieved from staffing, therefore, after taking this into account, it is currently projected that staff costs will be marginally over budget by £12,000.

The projections are based on known staff changes at the end of Quarter 2 and it is likely that further changes will become evident during the year which will affect the final position.

The main reasons for the projected staffing underspend within services are due to current vacant posts and/ or efficiency savings.

Other Service Expenditure

Excluding the additional £254,000 of costs estimated due to Covid, there is net overspend projected against the base budget of £108,000, which is a combination of variances across all service areas, including:

- Housing Benefits – a complex area involving significant expenditure in benefits paid to claimants but also with subsidy received from government. The level of subsidy is subject to various claim types where the rate of subsidy provided can vary. It is currently projected that there will be a net additional cost to the Council (+£208,000) based on

current claim data. This cost can be subject to significant change and further investigation is being carried out to identify how much of this increased cost may be attributable to temporary factors, as opposed to those that might have a more lasting effect.

- Increased Waste Management costs arising from fuel price increases for the operational fleet and higher charges from haulage contractors due to the fuel price and HGV driver shortages (+£35,000)
- Additional costs are being incurred in relation to planning enforcement where legal costs are being incurred (+£30,000), although there may be some recovery of these costs.
- Recruitment costs in relation to corporate management changes (+£26,000).
- Additional external audit fees (+£52,000) arising, partially from a new 'Use of Resources' requirement placed on auditors by the National Audit Office, and increased costs relating to the 2019/20 external audit (+£52,000).

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

- Payments to the Essex Pension Fund are lower than anticipated in relation to prior year discretionary benefits (-£52,500).
- Recharges from Eastlight Community Housing for voids and repairs on temporary housing accommodation is projected to be lower than budgeted (-£28,000), and there is a projected overall underspend on the rent support scheme used to assist people to access private rented housing (-£14,000)
- A trial of reducing cuts of rural highway verges is expected to result in lower expenditure in horticultural services (-£22,500), coupled with a lower forecast for expenditure on reactive maintenance spending within parks (-£27,500).
- There is an overall underspend projected within the Governance Service (-£30,000), which is comprised of lower forecast expenditure on Members' allowances and expenses; and cost savings in Electoral Services, which is partially offsetting a reduction in Cabinet Office grant for Individual Electoral Registration.

The main changes from the underspend position reported at Q1 are higher Housing Benefit payments along with increased external audit fees, higher bank charges due to increased levels of electronic payments, and recruitment costs relating to senior management.

External Income

A significant proportion of the Council's budget is reliant on external income. Grants and subsidies from government, alongside income from business rates are major elements. These income streams are normally fairly predictable or fluctuate in response to compensating changes in expenditure. Where uncertainty exists this is managed via earmarked reserves, e.g. the business rate retention reserve. Other income is more susceptible to changes in external factors and service demand, and the projected position at this quarter for the outturn is summarised in the following table:

Service	Updated Budget	Joint Financing & Other Reimburs.	Sales, Fees & Charges	Rents & Service Charges	Other Income	Total	RAG status
		4,450	6,212	3,156	1,444	15,262	
	£000	Adverse (Positive) Variance £000 against Budget :					
Asset Management	3,385	-	4	(65)	-	(61)	G
Community Services	211	(6)	42	-	6	42	A
Corporate Management Plan	10	10	-	-	-	10	A
Economic Development	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
Environment & Leisure	1,200	18	178	-	(16)	180	R
Finance	2,033	126	-	-	(96)	30	A
Governance	197	(10)	(27)	-	21	(16)	G
Housing	40	-	(6)	5	(1)	(2)	G
Human Resources	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
ICT & Facilities	2	-	-	-	-	-	G
Marketing & Communications	116	-	-	-	(25)	(25)	G
Operations	5,467	(176)	(50)	22	(22)	(226)	G
Strategic Investment	300	-	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,741	(24)	178	-	-	154	R
Service Total	14,702	(62)	319	(38)	(133)	86	A
Corporate Financing	560	52	-	-	20	72	R
Total Budget	15,262	(10)	319	(38)	(113)	158	A
Attributable to:							
Covid-19 impact		19	582	23	6	630	R
Base budget		(29)	(263)	(61)	(119)	(472)	G

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

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

Commentary on Base Budget income variances

The reasons for the projected overachievement of income of £472,000 against the base budget include:

- Higher income from the sale of mixed dry recycling material. The price paid to the Council for material is based on a basket of indices which are reviewed each quarter. The budget had assumed a basket price of £29 per tonne based on the position at that time. However, this increased at Q1 to £38 per tonne, rising to £62 for Q2, and has been agreed at the higher amount of £76 for Q3. With such sharp volatility, variances can alter significantly between quarters. Income is predicted to be £355,000 more than budget (up from £207,000 at Q1) but is subject to change when the basket price for Q4 is notified. The market for recycling material is extremely unpredictable and therefore this variance may change substantially when reviewed at Q3.
- During the summer season the amount of green waste collected increased resulting in an additional £42,000 in compost credits for the year being predicted. The outturn position will be affected by the autumn collection tonnages and in particular March when tonnages can vary substantially according to weather conditions at that time.
- A number of administrative grants for Housing Benefits and Local Council Tax Support were not announced until after the budget was approved. The final determinations means that an additional £86,000 of income is now to be received.
- Whilst a number of service areas have continued to see a drop in fees and charges income, the Local Land Charges service is projecting an overachievement against budget of £26,000. Demand for the service remained high during the first half of the year as residential buyers were looking to benefit from savings on stamp duty. Demand for the service in the second half of the year is expected to return to that which applied pre-

Covid. Similarly, the Building Control service has also seen an increase in demand for services resulting in a higher level of income being predicted (+£23,000), albeit some staffing difficulties means that increased costs are having to be incurred on short-term temporary staff.

- A higher level of occupancy within the commercial property portfolio and the effect of rent reviews, along with rental income being generated from two properties in Halstead that were previously part of a proposed land disposal, means that income is projected to be higher than budget (+£65,000)

Partially offsetting this increased income:

- A significant downturn in planning application and pre-application income was experienced in the second quarter and this has resulted in a revised forecast for the year of a net underachievement of income under Sustainable Development of £154,000 (At Q1 a £10k net overachievement was being predicted).

Treasury Management

Investment activity

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

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity to the end September		Amount Invested at end of the quarter
	New Investments	Investments Matured	
£35.47m	£119.50m	£86.54m	£68.43m
Average amount invested for the period			£55.77m
Highest amount invested			£73.48m

The amount of cash under management during the first half of the year was less than last year which had been elevated by the business grant funding that was passported through the Authority. Significant capital investment expenditure continues to be incurred and this will lead to lower cash balances available for treasury management.

Investments totalling £19million continued to be held across a range of long-term pooled funds with varying exposures to property, equities, and other financial assets. The remaining balance of investments have been held in money market funds and the Debt Management Office Account (UK Government), with liquid cash held in a current account with Lloyds Bank.

Investment income and valuations

Interest and dividends earned to the end of the Quarter totalled £428,680, which is equivalent to an annualised rate of return of 1.53%:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£19.00m	£423,539	4.45%
Short-Term	£36.77m	£5,141	0.03%
Total	£55.77m	£428,680	1.53%

Investment income of £809,000 is projected for the year, which is £100,000 better than assumed in the budget. The original budget was reduced by £350,000 in light of the sharp falls in interest

rates, expected reductions in dividends from pooled funds, and also taking into account the anticipated reduction in cash balances. This reduction in budget was to be met by using the Treasury Management earmarked reserve in 2021/22, therefore, the projected improvement in income for this year will result in less being required from the reserve.

The market value of shares and units in pooled funds at the end of September 2021, was £21.288m, representing an unrealised gain of £2.288m over the amount originally invested.

Investment portfolio

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

- Long-term pooled fund investments £19million (allocated: £3 million property fund; £13 million equity funds; and £3 million in diversified asset funds);
- Low volatility Money Market Funds (MMFs) £15m;
- Variable net asset value MMF £4 million;
- Debt Management Office Account Facility £28.5m
- Lloyds current account £1.93m.

General Fund Balances

General Fund balances are held for the following reasons:

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

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

	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2021	5,999
Addition/(deductions):	
Budgeted reduction	(320)
Funding for one-off investment	(1,139)
Pension Fund triennial payment - repayment	823
Projected outturn variance at Q2	383
Estimated Balance at 31 March 2022	5,746

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

- The approved budget included an anticipated reduction in balances of £320,165.
- An allocation from General Fund balances was approved by Full Council in February 2021, to meet one-off budget requirements: £1m to be set aside to deal with the potential impact of Covid on services; £75,000 for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme; £6,500 for a Noise Level meter; and a total of £57,500 as provision for loss of income during the redevelopment of Manor Street.
- A one-off payment was made in 2020/21 to the Essex Pension Fund covering the period April 2020 to March 2023, which was part funded from General Fund balances. A repayment back into balances is being made in 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- The projected outturn variance for the year at Q2 is an overall positive variance of £383,000.

Risks and Assumptions

The forecasts reflect service managers' "best estimate" of the predicted outturn for the year. Whilst the previous year outturn and trends in-year have been considered; the position continues to be uncertain due to the coronavirus pandemic. Whilst restrictions have now been lifted, it will take some time to understand the lasting effects this will have on services. There is also the risk that increasing infection rates during the winter months could lead to the reintroduction of measures that could impact services.

Directors and service managers continue to scrutinise all expenditure commitments in light of the financial challenge required to balance the budget over the medium-term. External income is inherently difficult to predict as it is substantially demand led and impacted by external factors.

Planning application fee projections are based on the best information available regarding when developers are likely to submit planning applications for growth locations within the district. Previous experience has shown that this can change quickly and income can vary significantly. Income will be influenced by both the number and type of planning applications received.

Investment income is influenced by the overall level of cash balances held, which in turn are dependent upon the progress of the strategic investment programme and other capital projects, and the pace at which planned capital receipts are generated. Market sentiment will impact on the value of the long-term pooled fund investments; whereas general economic conditions in both the UK and globally will influence dividend returns. Whilst there are indications that the Bank of England may increase interest rates it is still expected that they will remain at relatively low levels.

The income which is offset from costs incurred for the processing of recycling material collected from households is subject to regular review of the composition of material collected assessed across the whole of the Suffolk Waste Partnership contract, which the Council is party, and market indices for the sale of materials. As this quarter's report demonstrates, the market price for materials can fluctuate leading to significant changes to the budget position.

The original budget assumed that £478,000 of staffing costs can be recharged from the General Fund revenue account to capital projects. The actual amount recharged will depend on the extent to which projects progress and staff are working on activities that can properly be treated as capital under accounting rules, with any shortfall impacting the General Fund.

There are estimated amounts of income included in the projections where the final amounts will only be ascertained once grant and subsidy claims have been subject to post claim assurance reviews.

The projected outturn will be reviewed as part of the process for developing proposals for the 2022/23 budget and update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Investment

The overall planned level of spending in the approved capital programme is currently over £43million. Delivery of a number of significant projects spans a number of years, therefore, the amount profiled to be spent in 2021/22 is almost £38million:

	Profiled Spend 2021/22 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 2 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 2 % of Profile
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	4,250	3,012	71%
Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre	11,054	1,924	17%
Manor Street regeneration	13,024	7,068	54%
I-Construct Innovation Centre	1,506	964	64%
Town Centre improvements	1,825	978	54%
Industrial estate improvements	66	3	5%
Property planned maintenance	925	191	21%
Replacement vehicles and plant	256	96	38%
Information technology systems & equipment	513	48	9%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	518	58	11%
Cemetery improvements	100	-	0%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	159	7	4%
Operational equipment	169	39	23%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	445	383	86%
Climate change initiatives	190	48	25%
Grants to registered social landlords	100	-	0%
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	908	374	41%
Capitalised interest	1,207	-	0%
Capital salaries	678	332	49%
Total	37,893	15,525	41%

The overall programme has been reduced by £2.47million since Q1, mainly in respect of the provision made for a new healthcare facility in Sible Hedingham where the Council has now negotiated terms for this facility to be provided by a specialist third party. There has been no material change to the profiled spend anticipated for the year.

Capital resources

During the quarter the Council completed 2 further sales of serviced land plots of the Horizon 120 Business Park and also received further interim payments in respect of the development of apartments at Victoria Square, which on completion will transfer to Eastlight Community Homes (Eastlight).

Under arrangements in place with Eastlight, 10 right-to-buy sales have been completed in the first half of the year generating circa £1.370million. Eastlight have advised that a further 36 applications are in progress and, therefore, based on past experience this would indicate around 19 sales in total potentially completing this year giving a total amount of receipts for the year of circa £2million. This compares to 11 sales last year that raised £1.323million.

A total of £162,990 was generated by the VAT shelter agreement with Eastlight for the first half of the year.

The Council has also received £1,056,441 grant from the Better Care Fund, which will be used to fund expenditure on disabled facilities grants.

Staged claims are also being made to drawdown approved funding from European Regional Development Funds, which were awarded for the I-Construct Innovation Centre project, and from the government's Getting Building Fund (via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership or SELEP) for the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre.

Agenda Item: 7

Report Title: Scrutiny Review into Commercialisation – Draft Scrutiny Report	
Report to: Performance Management Scrutiny Committee	
Date: 23 rd March 2022	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Jessica Mann, Governance and Members Officer	
Enquiries to: Jessica Mann, Governance and Members Officer Jessica.mann@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To finalise the draft report for the Scrutiny Review into ‘Commercialisation’ at Braintree District Council’ prior to its submission to Cabinet and Full Council.

2. Recommendations

The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Review the draft report and finalise the content and draft recommendations to ensure that they are in keeping with the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Review and the evidence gathered.
- 2.2 Authorise the Chairman to finalise the draft report, prior to its submission to Cabinet and Full Council, and to give authority to Governance Officers to make any necessary administrative changes to the report.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 Members of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee were tasked with conducting a Scrutiny Review into the topic of ‘Commercialisation at Braintree District Council.’ The topic of ‘Commercialisation’ was originally submitted by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Schwier, under the title of *“Identifying/diversifying/selling our Council services to other District/County Councils.”* A Scrutiny Review in this respect would act as a means of identifying greater efficiencies, expertise and potential investment opportunities for organisational services, thereby providing considerable contribution back into the Authority.
- 3.2 The initial views of Management Board were that the scope of the topic would need to be redirected in order to focus on Council services that could possibly

be traded, whilst ensuring that in-house delivery was not affected. A reflection on what services are currently traded could also be included in this topic.

- 3.3 When deliberating the topic proposal, the Chairmen of the Council's four 'Scrutiny' Committees (the Scrutiny Chairmen) recognised that there could be some delays with taking this topic forward for a full Scrutiny Review with the expected reorganisation of Local Authorities and creation of further Unitary Authorities. It was therefore suggested that the focus of a Scrutiny Review be directed towards the organisation's capacity to consider the topic through examination of the Council's legal framework, identification of services with commercial sales potential, the pros and cons of increased commercialisation for the Authority, etc. It was also recognised that the Council was already exploring commercialisation opportunities, with research having been conducted around the income generated through a range of commercialisation activities previously undertaken. Opportunities for further such activities were also in the process of being identified.
- 3.4 It was therefore proposed that the scope of the Scrutiny Review encompassed the following areas: the reasons why previous attempts to sell Council services had failed; current/potential ventures; the difference between joint working and a commercial ventures; joint working and a contract for service, and; the impact of the Local Government Review and what that would mean for any contracts in place with partners.
- 3.5 Further to these considerations, the Scrutiny Chairmen jointly agreed that it would be most appropriate to allocate the topic of 'Commercialisation at Braintree District Council' to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee (then the Performance Management Board) for the purposes of Scrutiny Review.
- 3.6 The Terms of Reference for the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) are as follows:-
- Performance monitoring
 - Service performance and effective use of resources
 - Customer feedback
 - Scrutiny of the budget proposals
 - To receive call-in requests and to determine the Committee's response.
- 3.7 The first evidence gathering session of the Committee was held on 2nd June 2021 with the final session held on 6th October 2021. Mr James Sinclair, Commercialisation Manager at the Council, was appointed as the Lead Officer for the Scrutiny Review. Over the course of the Review, Mr Sinclair drew on his own extensive knowledge and experience of the topic in order to support Members with their evidence gathering and identify further lines of enquiry.

- 3.8 Once all the available evidence streams had been examined and conclusions drawn, the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee were asked to make their recommendations to Cabinet and Full Council. The recommendations of the Committee are set out in the main body of the report.

4. Options

- 4.1 There two options available for Committee to consider:

1) Agree to finalise the draft report, subject to any minor amendments before its submission to Cabinet and Full Council.

2) OR Explore the topic of 'Commercialisation' in further detail.

- 4.2 If Members are minded to proceed with Option 2, Members should have regard to the Terms of Reference and the timescale for completion of the Scrutiny Review within the current Civic Year.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 To review the draft report and make any final amendments to the contents before it is finalised and submitted to Cabinet and Full Council.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Any financial implications arising from the recommendations to Cabinet will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 There are no matters arising out of this report.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;

(c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

9.3 Equalities and diversity issues are considered fully in the Council's key projects. Where appropriate, an equality impact assessment is prepared and considered for any key projects identified. There are no adverse impacts identified within the contents of the report.

10. List of Appendices

10.1 There are none attached to the main report.

11. Background Papers

11.1 Minutes and Agendas of Committee Meetings

[10th March 2021](#)

[2nd June 2021](#)

[14th July 2021](#)

[6th October 2021](#)

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO 'COMMERCIALISATION AT BRAINTREE DISTRICT
COUNCIL' 2021/22 (DRAFT SCRUTINY REPORT)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) has now received its third evidence gathering session as part of its Scrutiny Review into the subject of 'Commercialisation' at Braintree District Council (the Council).

For reference, the Committee consists of the following Members:-

Councillor J Coleridge	Councillor S Rehman
Councillor G Courtauld	Councillor B Rose
Councillor Mrs C Dervish	Councillor P Schwier (Vice Chairman)
Councillor T Everard	Councillor N Unsworth
Councillor M Radley (Chairman)	

Throughout the Committee's evidence gathering process, officers have presented various aspects of commercialisation which Members have had the opportunity to scrutinise. In particular, the Committee is very grateful to Mr James Sinclair who, in his role as Commercialisation Manager, has shared his knowledge and experience to help Members better understand the scope and activities carried out by the Council in respect of commercialisation.

To some extent, the Council's Investment and Development Programme and the "£1.6million" initiative (recently launched in response to the budget shortfall) has overtaken and raised the bar to drive forward commercialisation and other cost savings within the Council. Over the course of the Scrutiny Review, the Committee were fully briefed by the Cabinet on this comprehensive initiative which puts in place a structure and organisation focused upon delivering financial benefits.

The Committee began its Scrutiny Review into 'Commercialisation' at a challenging time for the Council when performance was significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This made it difficult to objectively assess the financial performance and draw definitive conclusions from the recent commercialisation performance.

The main focus of the Committee's Scrutiny Review was therefore upon the structure, organisation and DNA of commercialisation within the Council. Members of the Committee wished to express their sincere gratitude to Mr Sinclair for all of his support over the course of the Review and for admirably steering Members through the wide-ranging facets of commercialisation.

One first thinks of commercialisation as the incremental selling of services using existing or new skills and facilities for a net financial benefit. However, the application of a commercial approach to challenging costs and delivering value in all aspects of Council operations is equally important to delivering value for money to taxpayers.

The Council currently employs a Commercial Manager with one support officer, whose role was to work across all functions and aspects of Council business in order

to drive forward a commercial approach. It was clearly demonstrated to the Committee during evidence gathering session that this role was delivering benefits. The Committee was in full support of this approach and considered it to be a vital component in bolstering efficiency within the organisation, both at the current time and in future.

The Committee were briefed by the Cabinet and the Commercialisation Manager on the structure, organisation and processes implemented to drive through improvements to address the £1.6million budget shortfall through the Investment and Development Plan. These plans are comprehensive, focused and measured and seek to involve all members of the organisation to play their part in the commercial approach of delivering the results. Cabinet and officers were to be commended for taking this proactive, commercial approach.

The Committee were made aware of a range of specific commercial initiatives that have been recently executed, as well as others that were in progress. There were clearly strong links with other Authorities and organisations which seek to understand best practice and share resources as opportunities arise. A good example of this is the Shared Payroll Service, where the Council had undertaken an effective lead.

Over the course of its Scrutiny Review, the Committee reviewed the current range of the Council's Traded Services and identified areas which delivered good benefits, as well as areas where the benefits were marginal and required further work.

The overall findings of the Committee were that the Council's approach to commercialisation was positive and successful across the organisation. The Council should build on this approach and seek opportunities to further strengthen this in the future, particularly in terms of seeking new partnerships with other Authorities and organisations. The Committee is confident that this approach will deliver value for money to taxpayers whilst maintaining and improving services.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Key questions for Scrutiny Review:

- What joint working/commercial arrangements does the Council already have in place (e.g. with the voluntary sector, housing associations, County Council etc)?
- Identify what commercial services are provided by other Local Authorities. How does Braintree District Council compare (e.g. Colchester BC, Chelmsford CC, etc)?
- Are there any services within the Council, which could develop a commercial limb/income generation? If so, what barriers are there in taking this forward?
- What are benefits of increased commercialisation, and what are the potential impacts of this on Council services? (e.g. look current climate vs. historic services, cost of delivery vs income generated, reputation vs ambition, and

what cost savings can be identified through third party savings and efficient working practices).

- Does the Council need a policy/plan to set out and support the Councils ambition for future commercialisation?

RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE GATHERING

The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee were first introduced to Mr Sinclair as the Council's Commercialisation Manager in March 2021, at which point he explained his role within the organisation and offered his help and support to the Committee over the course of their Scrutiny Review into the 'Commercialisation' topic.

First Evidence Gathering Session – 2nd June 2021 – Overview of Commercialisation

In this first evidence gathering meeting, the Committee received a presentation from Mr Sinclair which provided Members with an overview of the current commercialisation activities at the Council and some of the relationships and programmes that were currently in place.

It was clear that in addition to the more tangible commercial activities, Mr Sinclair was a key player in driving a commercial approach across all functions of the organisation who frequently works with and encourages others to think commercially and adopt such an approach in their work.

It was demonstrated that the Council participates with other organisations in understanding best practice and seeking ways of working together for mutual benefit. Some examples of this are:-

- A) The National Cross Council Revenue Group
- B) Essex Commercial Network
- C) LGA and EELGA
- D) New Local

An example of partnership working by the Council with other Local Authorities was that of the Shared Payroll Services, which was created in 2019 with Braintree, Colchester and Epping Forest. Members were informed that the Council now provided Payroll Services to three further Authorities (Brentwood, Castlepoint and Rochford) thus creating circa £23k savings for the organisation and improving the resilience of the function. Other examples of shared services at the Council included a Shared Procurement Service via the Essex Procurement Hub, and a Stray Dog Service with Uttlesford District Council.

There was also an awareness of the commercial approach taken by Colchester Borough Council (CBC) in implementing trading companies as a means of generating benefits. It was highlighted that CBC had successfully been awarded the "Best Commercial Council" by Municipal Journal (MJ) in 2020; this demonstrated an

awareness and involvement for the Council in regard to understanding best practices and ways of working collaboratively with other organisations.

Second Evidence Gathering Session – 14th July 2021 – Investment and Development Programme

The Committee received a presentation by the Cabinet on the Investment and Development Programme (the Programme) which was launched earlier in the year. The Programme encompassed four key work streams, which were as follows:-

- Strategic Investment – capital build projects that can make revenue income
- Asset Management – using our existing portfolio of assets, and potentially new ones, to make more income
- Commercial – grow our income and identify any additional savings
- Treasury Management – using our cash reserves to grow more income

Although each work stream had its own specific objectives and deliverables, as a programme, the Programme will:

- Deliver income and savings projects to mitigate the £1.6million budget gap over the next 4 years;
- Adopt a portfolio approach through a mix of income/ savings to deliver a balanced budget by 2025;
- Ensure a collective understanding of the capital position and the availability of funds to generate return;
- Develop a robust approach to future capital/borrowing, in light of government changes to PWLB;
- Agree a net income assessment approach in considering business cases and monitoring delivery;
- Develop the existing investment tool to enable effective consideration of investment activities, ensuring clarity on financial viability but also taking in to account other impacts and opportunities, and;
- Embed an approach to resource planning which spans the organisation and provides that resource where it will make the biggest impact.

The potential pipeline is currently **£1,863,107**, remaining stable for July with work stream leads indicating delivery by year, as follows:

Confidence -	High	Medium	Low
Year 1 – 2021/22	£106,582	£0	£0
Year 2 – 2022/23	£150,750	£173,720	£352,000
Year 3 – 2023/24	£72,250	£92,000	£375,000
Year 4 – 2024/25	£99,805	£66,000	£375,000

At the time of the evidence gathering session, the Investment and Development Programme (the Programme) had **41 projects** being delivered or scheduled to start, ranging from significant capital investment schemes to small scale, contractual changes. It was demonstrated that there is a clear structure in place to manage this process, which will involve all levels of the organisation.

The Committee expressed their support for the Programme and complimented all of those involved with establishing and managing this process, which it felt should be an ongoing feature of the Council's organisation, rather than one that only addresses the current financial shortfalls.

Subsequent to this evidence gathering session, the Cabinet presented an update on the status of the programme at the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5th January 2022.

Third Evidence Gathering Session – 6th October 2021 – Review of Traded Services

In this evidence gathering session, the Committee received an update that focused on the Council's current Traded Services activities in order to give Members a clearer understanding of how they worked and to scrutinise performance. Local Authority accounting caused some difficulty in identifying net income positions, especially given the crossover of staff and equipment to deliver both Council and paid for services.

Given the impact of Covid-19 upon services over the past few years, it was difficult to evaluate this with much precision; however, there were some conclusions that could be drawn.

The following table lists the performance of most of the Traded Service areas within the organisation:

Traded Service	2020/21 Actual			2021/22 Forecast		
	Income	Direct Cost	Gross Benefit	Income	Direct Cost	Gross Benefit
Pest control	45,195	51,737	-6,542	42,670	53,330	-10,660
Trade waste	942,082	909,495	32,587	1,030,700	929,980	100,720
Horticultural services	178,826	167,460	11,366	191,350	174,710	16,640
Enterprise Centre Conf	5,485	8,401	2,916	17,100	12,670	4,430
Sponsorship & advert	38,266	3,778	34,488	55,750	3,590	52,160
Reprographics	19,356	0	19,356	26,470	0	26,470
Graphic design & printing	18,688	0	18,688	26,250	0	26,250
UDC street arisings	20,732	14,711	6,021	18,600	13,170	5,430
Payroll shared services	TBC	TBC	13,000	TBC	TBC	13,000
Total	1,268,630	1,155,582	126,048	1,408,890	1,187,450	234,440

It should be noted that the costs are the direct costs associated with the activity, and not the full costs. These costs exclude any allocation of shared costs, such as indirect staff and other overheads; however, it does give a good indication of the financial benefits to each of the following service areas:-

Pest control – this is showing a consistent loss and requires review;

Trade waste – although by far the biggest income, the direct costs are high thus only yielding around a 9.8% benefit – this should be reviewed;

Horticultural services – similar to trade waste the yield is on around 8.7% and should therefore be reviewed, and;

All other areas are delivering good benefits, although it is expected that there are some shared costs not identified.

This group of traded services do collectively deliver positive incremental benefits, although further benefits could be obtained by a performance review of those areas with low performance, and growth of those areas with high performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee would like to make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recognises the essential nature of the role of Commercialisation Manager within the organisation in driving forward future efficiency savings and increased income generation. It is therefore recommended that the Council continues with its appointment of a permanent full-time post of Commercialisation Manager.

Commercialisation was linked in with the Council's Investment and Development Programme and the need to address the budgetary challenges that lay ahead for the Authority. In order to meet these challenges, the need to identify further opportunities for trade was highlighted, in addition to enhancing the Council's current traded services (e.g. Car Parking, Pest Control, etc). The Council currently employs a 'Commercial Manager' with one support officer, whose role was to work across all functions and aspects of Council business in order to identify efficiency savings across the organisation's services, support income generation, support the Council's contracts, and identify opportunities to make savings through third-party expenditure. It was apparent from the evidence gathered that Mr Sinclair was a key player in driving forward a commercially minded outlook across all areas of the organisation, which included working frequently with and encouraging others to adopt, where it was advantageous to do so, a commercial approach within their services. The Committee fully supports the current staffing approach within the Commercialisation Team approach and considers it a vital component in driving forward efficiency throughout the organisation.

Recommendation 2

Further opportunities are explored for collaborative working with other Local Authorities in order to build upon the success of the Shared Payroll Services initiative.

The Council maintained networks with other Councils in order to identify examples of best practices and, where possible, opportunities to share services between Authorities in order to increase resilience and reduce costs. An example of such a “best practice” was that of the Council’s own Shared Payroll Service, which was established in 2019 and involved the creation of a shared Payroll service between Braintree, Colchester and Epping Forest. The service had since grown by 30% with the addition of three further, smaller ‘Payrolls’ in 2021 – these were Brentwood, Castlepoint and Rochford, creating circa £23k savings for the organisation and improving the resilience of the Payroll function. The Committee recognised the benefits of collaborative working in this respect for the organisation and would encourage the current function and relationships to be expanded upon, as well as new opportunities to be identified.

Recommendation 3

The costs and income across all traded services at the Council are examined in order to improve the net financial benefit to the organisation, especially where profit levels are low, and reviewed on a regular basis going forward to ensure that performance is .

The Committee acknowledges that, in services such as Pest Control, the Council is working to increase income in order to offset the net losses through methods such as greater advertising and a successful bid with the ‘Eastlight Framework.’ However, the overall income streams generated by the Traded Services of Pest Control and Trade Waste were relatively low when compared with other Traded Services. For example, the Reprographics service generated higher levels of commercial income which could perhaps be expanded upon if new growth opportunities were identified.

Recommendation 4

Further opportunities are explored to build upon the higher performance Traded Services areas and to add any new services that deliver similar benefits.

During the evidence gathering session of the Committee on 6th October 2021, Members agreed that, overall, Traded Services did collectively deliver positive incremental benefits, although further benefits could be obtained by a performance review of those areas with lower performance (e.g. Trade Waste), and growth of those areas with high performance (e.g. Shared Payroll Service). For example, with reference to the table on Page 5, this appeared to be a ‘cherry picking’ approach which built on areas like that of advertising and graphic design, which were higher performing, but not on other areas, such as pest control, which were lower performing.

Recommendation 5

Council endorses the excellent approach taken by the Council with the Investment and Development Programme (the Programme) and makes this a permanent management process going forward in order to ensure there is future value for money and optimisation of financial and service performance.

Although each of the work streams that comprised the Programme had their own specific objectives and deliverables, each would play an equal role in terms of advancing the Programme and generating income for the Authority, and the Committee feels confident that this Programme will maximise benefits for both the Council and taxpayers. The programme also encompasses a wider approach to commercialisation which is welcomed.

Recommendation 6

As part a more strategic approach, the Council should consider exploring any opportunities for more radical approaches to commercialisation, such as partnerships and/or setting up commercial operations.

The Committee acknowledges the Council's success in respect of its current commercial activities, as exemplified by projects such as the development of the Horizon 120 site in Braintree, and the Shared Payroll Service. Similar services were generally offered at neighbouring Local Authorities, although there were some differences due to factors such as the availability of local assets. The Committee therefore recognises the value of learning from the projects and activities undertaken by other Local Authorities (e.g. via the Essex Commercial Network, which was established by Braintree District Council, the National Cross Council Revenue Group, LGA, etc) in order to amplify its own activities and identify new potential opportunities for generating further income. For example, the Council might examine in greater detail the success of the commercial approach undertaken by Colchester Borough Council in implementing trading companies as a means of generating benefits, or the procurement functions of other Local Authorities in order to identify best practices.

Recommendation 7

The Committee receives an annual update on the progress of the Investment and Development Programme (the Programme) to allow it to scrutinise the performance of the organisation in this area. It would be of benefit to receive the update line with the Council's budget setting process (i.e. September).

During its evidence gathering session on 14th July 2021, the Committee was advised that the key to the success of the Programme was in building a strong project pipeline in order to engender confidence that there is sufficient income and saving opportunities available to meet with the £1.6m budget gap challenge. The Programme, through engagement with staff and Members, would focus on implementing this pipeline over the next six month phase of the four year programme. The Committee felt it a prudent and effective approach to scrutinising the progress of the Programme, and its impacts on the organisations over the course of its four-year duration was to receive regular updates from the Cabinet/staff involved going forward. However, it was recognised that commercialisation in this way and its impacts/benefits to the Authority could take time to embed within the organisation; as such, the Committee did not feel that an update received on a more frequent basis than once a year would add any further value to the exercise.

MINUTES AND AGENDAS OF MEETINGS

[10th March 2021](#)

[2nd June 2021](#)

[14th July 2021](#)

[6th October 2021](#)

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- Councillor Kevin Bowers, Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Skills (BDC)
- Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council (BDC)
- Councillor John McKee, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation (BDC)
- Mrs Emma Wisbey, Governance and Members Manager (BDC)
- Miss Jessica Mann, Governance and Members Officer (BDC)