

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

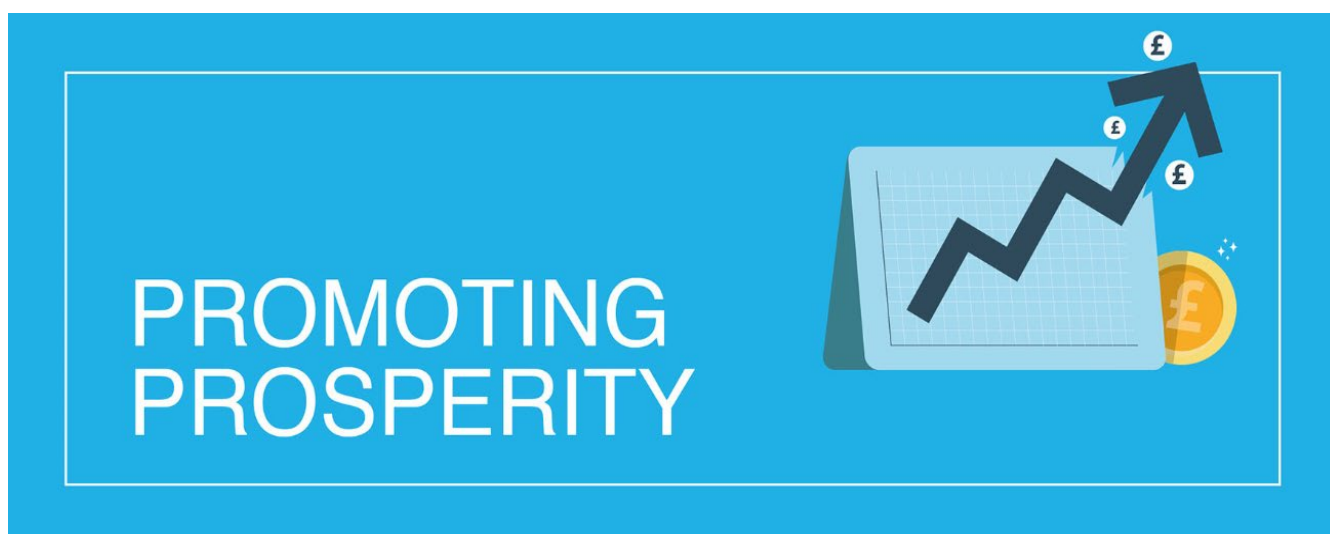
Project description and comments	Status
Improve the sport facilities at Braintree Sports and Leisure Centre, creating high quality amenities for the community to use	
The refurbishments to the athletics track at Braintree Sports and Leisure Centre are now completed. Tabor Academy were unable to provide 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	Other Expenditure	Income	Total	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'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.