

First Quarter Performance Management Report

1st April 2022 to 30th June 2022



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Section 1: Introduction and Summary






Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the first quarter of 2022/23 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 first quarter

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




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Connecting People and Places	2	8	1	0	0
Enhancing our Environment	5	7	1	0	0
Supporting our Communities	1	15	0	0	1
Promoting Prosperity	1	9	1	0	0
Delivering and Innovating	1	12	0	0	0
TOTAL	10	51	3	0	1

KEY:




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

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

The following table shows the performance for the end of the first 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	2	0	1	0
Supporting our Communities	0	0	1	3
Promoting Prosperity	0	0	0	3
Delivering and Innovating	5	0	1	2
TOTAL	9	0	3	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

As at the end of the first quarter, ten projects now complete and 51 projects on track and progressing well. Three projects have an amber status. The closed project will be reconsidered as part of the budget preparations for a future year.

Targets have not been set for all our performance indicators this year due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and the need to revisit baseline targets. For the targets that remain, nine performance indicators have met or exceed target and three performance indicators have missed their target by more than 5%. The areas of underperformance are in relation to recycling rates (>5%), average waiting time for disabled facility grants (>5%) and the time taken to process housing benefit claim changes (>5%).

Some key areas of the business are experiencing an increase in demand on their services and we need to ensure that we continue to monitor our performance and focus our resources to deliver and achieve our corporate objectives.


Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES








Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Adopt the Braintree District Local Plan providing a vision for the future growth of the district		
The Planning Inspector has now examined section 2 of Braintree's Local Plan and has found this to be legally sound. The Local Plan will now be presented to the Local Plan Sub-Committee on the 5 th July 2022 and if approved, the Plan will be recommended to Full Council on the 25 th July for final adoption.	August 2022	▶
Rejuvenate Braintree town centre by completing the Victoria Square development providing a Livewell health hub, 35 apartments, a hotel, bus interchange and public open space		
The Victoria Square development is nearing completion with the Travelodge hotel opening in April creating 20 new jobs within the community. The hotel includes a restaurant and on-site car park. Eastlight Community Homes have also taken ownership of 23 new homes for shared ownership in the town centre. The landscaping of the public gardens is underway and negotiations for the lease of the Livewell Hub are ongoing. The end date has been amended to the end of August to reflect this.	August 2022	▶
Continue to support the safe return to our town centres and help build back together from the pandemic using the Welcome Back fund and other available funding		
Braintree District Council were allocated £268,835 of Welcome Back funding and the completed spend amounted to £268,811.50. One of the main projects delivered is in respect of the High Street Improvement Fund. This has been a hugely successful intervention, with positive engagement and feedback from businesses. 37 businesses successfully achieved improvements consisting of labour to improve the aesthetics of the retail/hospitality premises to create a safe and welcoming environment.	March 2022	✓
Deliver events in Braintree town centre to increase footfall and support local retailers taking advantage of the newly pedestrianised town centre		
The monthly street markets continue to be a huge success and are now looking to grow and evolve by bringing a range of new traders to the market to offer unique products that are not already available, providing shoppers with the best possible range of items.	March 2023	▶

Deliver physical improvements to the town centres of Witham and Halstead		
The improvements to the town centres include the refurbishment of street furniture and street lighting, new cycle parking, road signage, as well as replacement or maintenance of litter bins, benches and bollards to create a more attractive and functional environment. The works required have been designed and approval of the final designs will be sought from stakeholders, the Town Councils and Essex County Council in August with a view to going out to procurement in September.	March 2023	
Develop a new Housing Strategy setting out how the Council will support the availability of good quality homes which best meet the needs of the current and future residents		
Additional resource required to deliver the Strategy will be starting with the Housing Service in August. In the meantime, research is being carried out and the evidence base gathered to support the development of the new Strategy.	March 2023	





Actions carried out in partnership with others







Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue to work with our partners on the planning decisions of strategic highway schemes for the A12, A120 and A131 Chelmsford Bypass		
A development consent order is due to be submitted to the Department for Transport in July 2022 in respect of the A12 widening scheme. Surveys and ground investigations to provide technical information (ahead of the next phase of more details scheme design) continue by National Highways along this stretch of the A12 and will continue through to October. In respect of the A120 upgrade, we are awaiting further details from National Highways on the current position of the project.	March 2023	
Work with partners including Essex Highways on the delivery of our Cycling Strategy and implementation plan which includes developing integrated, high quality cycle routes that are safe to use and connected across our district		
The communications plan to encourage residents and businesses to utilise cycling within the district is ongoing with a video launched to encourage behaviour change during National Bike Week in June. The video will be used again for Bike to Work week in August and Bike to School week in October. The Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan for Braintree Town Centre and Witham Town are being procured with the aim to start in the Autumn of 2022. The recommendations from scrutiny reviews of the Cycling Strategy and into cycling and walking in the Braintree district have been undertaken will be presented to Cabinet in September 2022.	March 2023	
Introduce the new Digital Demand Responsive Transport service, linking Horizon 120, with a fleet of electric mini-buses, to surrounding areas and central Braintree		
The new digital demand responsive transport Service has been launched and the first live outing was on the 1st April 2022. The service is called DigiGo and is a fully electric shared public transport service which offers on-demand or pre-bookable travel in parts of Essex including linking Horizon 120 to surrounding areas and central Braintree. There are no fixed routes or timetable and is booked through the 'Travel Essex' journey planning app and operates 7 days a week from 7am until 10pm.	March 2022	
Continue to support and monitor Superfast Essex in the delivery of Superfast Broadband across the district		
The Braintree district is currently at 95% of premises able to access superfast broadband and is forecast to reach 99% coverage within 3 years. The district wide take up of superfast broadband is currently at 30%. Final reach figures will be available by mid 2022 following assurance and approval by BDUK.	March 2023	

Facilitate the delivery of a purpose-built medical centre in Sible Hedingham		
Planning permission has been granted. The land transfer continues to be delayed. As a result of contracts not exchanging within the anticipated time, the end date of the project has been amended to the 30th September 2022	September 2022	






Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Carry out air quality reviews in known air pollution hot spots across the district to improve the knowledge of local air quality and the proposed actions to take		
The results of the air quality monitoring in Halstead have shown that no measures need to be put in place. The information from the monitoring in Halstead will be included in the overall air quality review of the district being carried out by external consultants.	May 2022	
The Council has appointed consultants to undertake a review of air quality in the district. The first draft of their review has been received and is being reviewed by officers. It is expected that a full report will be taken to Management Board by the end of the summer.	December 2022	
Provide replacement litter bins along the A120 and A12 to keep laybys litter free and our district clean and tidy		
The Council has installed a total of 57 new brightly coloured litter bins along the strategic network within its district, at various lay-bys located on the A12, A120 and A131. The new bins have been match funded by WRAP, allowing the council to invest a total of £30k to give the locations a brand new look. The Council is also trialling seven customised bins that have a large single opening allowing people to dispose of litter without having to leave their vehicle.	March 2022	
Continue to deliver campaigns and work with our communities to		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce litter, keeping our district clean and tidy • Reduce waste and increase recycling • Improve awareness and understanding of climate change 		
The Cleaner Essex Group will be launching a 6 week campaign in August 2022 to remind people what roads should be used for with the slogan 'It's for driving on, not	March 2023	

<i>littering on'</i> highlighting the fixed penalty fines for anyone caught throwing litter from their vehicle. Local business partners will be supporting the campaign.		
Contaminated garden waste and promotion of discounted compost bins to encourage home composting have been a focus in the first quarter. A new campaign is being finalised aimed at reducing contamination in recycling by encouraging residents to recycle the right things as well as addressing any misunderstandings of what can be accepted in BDC's collections and what cannot.	March 2023	
The Council has actively promoted cycling in the district for Bike Week sharing videos on social media and promoting cycling routes. The artwork from the schools involved in the climate change challenge saw their artwork displayed at Gridserve and were awarded certificates. The council launched a 'Don't wait for winter campaign' to provide energy saving tips which will also save money. The Chairman and ward councillor also visited Ecolnes Refillery, a zero-waste refill shop that offers a range of consciously created and packaged products, encouraging shoppers to refill, reuse and reduce single-use plastic and local firm Imperial Thermal Engineering featured in the Business e-newsletter who are innovatively tackling climate change and reducing greenhouse gases.	March 2023	
Carry out drainage works at Braintree cemetery to eliminate flooding and increase burial capacity		
Plans for the drainage work have been agreed. A topographical survey is being carried out following which the Environment Agency will issue a licence to proceed with the work.	July 2022	
Carry out refurbishments to eight play areas across the district providing improved facilities for young people to enjoy		
Refurbishments to the play areas at Church Street in Bocking, Acorn Avenue in Braintree, Shaw Road in Witham and De Vere Road in Earls Colne are now complete providing improved facilities.	May 2022	
Consult with local residents and users of our skate parks at Weavers Park in Braintree and Spa Road in Witham around replacement of facilities		
A public consultation with local residents and users of the park has been designed and will be launched on the Councils website in the Summer in line with the school holidays to maximise the number of responses. The end date of the project has been extended accordingly.	September 2022	
Create a garden of remembrance at Bocking cemetery providing a peaceful environment for families to visit		
The contract for this project is to be re-tendered due to the withdrawal of the previous contractor. This will impact on the end date of the project and a revised date will be set in the second quarter.	July 2022	






Actions carried out in partnership with others





Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Deliver actions set out in our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to achieve our long term aims of being a carbon neutral district		
The Council is still waiting for updated government guidance in several areas following the Environmental Bill receiving Royal Assent in November 2021. A report will be taken to Full Council in July to approve the recommended monitoring and reporting methodology and targets for the Climate Change Action Plan.	March 2023	
Involve residents and communities in tree and bulb planting across the district		
A high number of applications were received for planting packages. In total, 41,600 bulbs and 4,850 tree whips were handed out to Parish and Town Councils, Schools, Colleges, Charities and local community and voluntary groups. Success stories of planting across the district can be seen on our climate change pages of our website at https://www.braintree.gov.uk/advice-environment/climate-change/6 as well as	December 2021	

encouraging everyone who has planted trees to plot their location on the Queens Green Canopy Map.		
Complete our trial of anti-litter signage and continue to deter people from littering along highway verges		
The trial of the anti-litter signage closed in November 2021 after a year of strategically placing signs along the highway network. During the trial, there was a reduction in the litter discarded along the highway verges and the merits of the signs were clear. The results will be discussed with Essex Highways and discussions will take place to see if the signs are to become a permanent arrangement across the district.	November 2021	











Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Replace the artificial grass pitch at Braintree Sports and Health Club		
The pitch design has been approved and agreed with Tabor Academy and Fusion in consultation with the Essex County Football Association. The tender document for the works has gone out for procurement via a framework. The contract and spend will be agreed at Cabinet in July 2022.	September 2022	
Carry out physical improvements to Braintree Sports and Health club and Halstead Leisure Centre		
The improvements to the sports hall and studio floor at Braintree sports and health club have been postponed for future budget consideration. This project has been closed and will be considered as part of the budget preparations for a future year.	March 2023	
The replacement of the boilers and building plant management systems at Braintree sports and health club were completed in February 2022.	March 2022	
A Changing Places bid towards the cost of the hoist system as part of the refurbishments to the wet and dry changing facilities at Halstead Leisure Centre has been successful. Detailed designs are now being drawn up.	March 2023	
Revitalise our Community Transport scheme and increase the number of volunteers		
The service currently has 21 volunteer drivers shared between the social car scheme and minibus hire scheme. The volunteers offer various time commitment ranging from a couple of hours a week to most days. In the first quarter of the year, the Community Transport team provided 7,636 journeys. Demand for the service post pandemic is starting to increase.	March 2023	

Deliver the Braintree District Volunteer Awards to recognise the contribution volunteers make in our district		
Nominations are being received and planning is well underway for the presentation evening. The decision has been made to move the venue to the iConstruct building due to completion of The Plaza being delayed. All appropriate people have been informed. The deadline for nominations is the 14th July after which arrangements will be made to bring judging panels together to select winners and highly commended.	August 2022	
Continue to work with communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live through the development of local neighbourhood plans		
A number of plans are underway across the district supported by the Planning Policy Team. Plans are underway at Kelvedon, Feering, Earls Coine, Gosfield, Steeple Bumpstead, Great Yeldham, Great Bardfield, Stisted and Toppesfield as well as a joint plan for Bures/Bures St Mary.	March 2023	
Set up a young people's panel to encourage more young people to have their say on things that matter to them		
Assemblies have delivered to years 7, 8, 9 and 10 on exploitation, how to protect yourself and what to do if they find themselves in a situation. This also covered indecent images and the consequences of these. Further engagement will take place when schools return after the summer holidays and to set up the young people's panel with young people from schools and youth centres.	March 2023	
Continue to deliver our LiveWell programme, focussing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children and their families to have the best start in life • Supporting older people to age well • Supporting children and adults to have good mental health • Tackling obesity in adults and children • Reducing hip fractures in over 65's 		
The health and wellbeing panel are reviewing the priorities of the health and wellbeing board. A number of activities continue to be delivered under the Livewell programme including numerous organised walks, fitness classes for people with health conditions and the over 60's, seated exercise classes, dance lessons and weight management sessions. Officers at the Council are also working with the Children's Society on their Active Families Together project to link in with the walking activities. Holiday clubs are being arranged for the summer holiday period with vouchers provided to parents of children who receive free meals to book onto funded places at an Essex Activate Club free of charge. Dementia friends training sessions are being arranged for staff in George Yard shopping centre.	March 2023	

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Work with Community 360 and Active Essex to provide support to children and families who need it during school holiday periods through the provision of activity sessions		
We continue to work with Active Essex and Community 360 to provide activities and a nutritious meal through the school holiday periods. Six sites across the district offered a variety of activities during the Easter and Whitsun holiday periods. We are currently awaiting details from Active Essex of the number of children supported. Plans are underway to continue supporting families during the 6 weeks summer holiday period.	March 2023	
Continue to work with Community 360 to promote volunteering opportunities and support the voluntary sector		
A volunteering day was held in May in Braintree by Community 360 to promote volunteering and recruit additional volunteers. Community 360 now lead on the promotion, recruitment and allocation of volunteering across the district.	March 2023	


Continue to develop a range of initiatives to address social isolation and loneliness across the district		
Loneliness Awareness Week (13th - 17th June) was marked with four separate activities driven by the Braintree District Social Isolation & Loneliness Forum. Pop up lounges in the three towns created a sitting room for anyone to have a seat, a cup of tea and a chat. The Salvation Army Donation Centre very kindly supplied, delivered and collected the living room set up (Settee, arm chair, standard lamp, side table, rug, mugs and books) and have expressed a wish to be involved in more pop up lounges. Community jigsaws were placed in 7 venues and every library across the district with the jigsaws continuing in a number of venues over the summer. Open coffee mornings were held in village halls and faith buildings courtesy of Cuppa and Co and Community 360 led a rural tour around parishes. The next meeting of the Braintree District Social Isolation and Loneliness Forum is taking place in July 2022.	March 2023	
Continue to work with Essex County Council on the Governments 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' on initiatives to prevent rough sleepers returning to the streets		
The Next Steps accommodation programme provides stable accommodation and tailored support to prevent people returning to rough sleeping and begin to rebuild their lives. All six units of accommodation are now occupied by individuals referred by the Council and a recent successful partnership bid led by Essex County Council has secured funding to help towards the cost of an additional staff member to provide support to the occupants.	March 2023	
Lead on the co-ordination of the Community Safety Partnership work focusing on protecting the vulnerable, promoting healthy relationships, keeping safe online, building community resilience and promoting safety in our communities		
Partners on the Local Exploitation Group continue to identify hotspots and individual young people who are going missing and/or potentially being exploited. Detached Youth Service sessions are being planned in places where young people choose to meet, away from traditional youth work venues. Working with Essex Police and the Children's Society, visits to exploitation hotspots have taken place to engage with the public and young people to raise awareness.	March 2023	
Work with the integrated care system and Health and Wellbeing panel to understand local health inequalities and develop the role of Primary Care Networks to support and improve the health of our communities		
A second PCN workshop was held on 19th May with a focus on partnerships including what we need to focus on in the coming year that would build on the strengths of the partnership, how we want to work together in the future and what should be our focus. The Essex Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy has been agreed by the Essex Health & Wellbeing Board.	March 2023	
Work with our leisure providers to get people back into activity improving their physical and mental health		
There are numerous activities across the district with growing participation as people get back into activity. These include Sport for Confidence, Cardiac Rehab, My Weight Matters and various walks. A 5k run was organised to celebrate the queen's jubilee along the Flitch Way to encourage people who would not normally exercise to do so.	March 2023	
Engage with school age children and young adults through careers, jobs and apprenticeship fairs to inspire young people to raise their aspirations		
The Council supported Alec Hunter Secondary school with funding for the costs of transport to a Careers fair being held for all Braintree District secondary schools. Apprentices from the Council will represent BDC at the careers fair in September. Work is also being planned to deliver a jobs fair in March 2023.	March 2023	

PROMOTING PROSPERITY







Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue with the development of Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park creating up to 2,000 high quality jobs		
The Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park continues to be developed. The offer for improved access rights to an adjoining 9 acre plot will be considered by Cabinet in July 2022.	March 2023	▶
Complete the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre (The Plaza) providing space for conferences and events as well as serviced offices, café and public plaza for start-up companies and SMEs		
Practical completion of The Plaza is set for mid-July at which time the management of the building will be transferred to the Asset Management and Events teams.	July 2022	▶
Develop the Witham Enterprise Centre providing small industrial units for start-up companies and SMEs		
The new architects for the project have been appointed and the site layout is being finalised.	March 2024	▶
Complete the I-construct innovation centre supporting the development of SMEs in the construction sector		
I-Construct, a £2.3 million centre of excellence for construction innovation, has opened for business. Building work finished in December, 15 months after it began. The two-storey building consist of a technology suite, exhibition space, conference facilities and informal meeting areas. It is home to a team offering one-to-one mentoring, grant schemes and advice to small and medium sized firms connected to the construction industry. The business support programme at the hub will be run by the Haven Gateway Partnership and will serve businesses across Essex, Kent and East Sussex. The programme will support over 350 businesses and create up to 130 jobs. I-Construct was officially opened by Chairman Councillor Sue Wilson in a ribbon cutting ceremony in February 2022.	December 2021	✔
Refresh our Plan for Growth to identify future priorities and deliver the outcomes of the associated Action Plan		
Consultants are working on the first stage of the project which is to provide research on the current economic position of Braintree and compare against similar authorities. A workshop with staff has also been provided.	March 2023	▶
Deliver campaigns to promote Braintree District as a place to invest in, live in and visit		
Numerous campaigns have taken place in the first quarter to promote I-construct innovation Hub and the Plaza as well as the DigiGo bus and courses funded by	March 2023	▶

North Essex Economic Board to support businesses. The Chairman and Deputy Leader are visiting a number of local small businesses with additional social media promotion provided as well as focusing the street markets on local traders. A street party guide was provided on how to plan a street party for the Jubilee celebrations together with promotion of local activities and events that took place across the district. Family friendly cycling routes across the district have been promoted through a video shared on social media for bike week.		
Support individuals back into employment by addressing barriers and providing tailored support and access to training		
As of the end of June we have a caseload of 81 individuals, 6 new starts with 10 social justice outcomes being achieved. One individual gained employment.	March 2023	

Actions carried out in partnership with others





Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Rise to the economic challenges by working in partnership with members of the North Essex Economic board to provide support to businesses and create opportunities to boost growth		
The programme is being delivered with monthly update meetings with all suppliers being held and KPIs reported against. Most projects are doing very well, but some of the skills providers in particular are struggling to identify suitable candidates and the NEEB steering group will be considering whether the funds can be reallocated to other projects.	March 2023	
Continue to develop the business support offer for the construction sector as part of the I-construct innovation centre		
A revised pipeline of contacts for businesses in the Braintree District who are from the construction industry or the supply chain to, is provided regularly to Haven Gateway Partnership to contact directly and promote the offer of I-Construct. A new marketing campaign is being drafted to encourage Springwood Industrial Estate businesses to sign up.	March 2023	
Continue to provide signposting to business support, advice and suitable grants		
The Economic Development Team continue to signpost businesses to support, advice and information on grants. The Council has been working on an investment plan stating how any allocation of monies from the Shared Prosperity Fund will be spent including how they will support business to start, grow and expand. This will be presented to Cabinet in July 2022.	March 2023	
Ensure residents have access to the skills programmes and education they need to access employment opportunities including in new and expanding sectors		
With the current skills landscape, it has been decided that the skills plan shall commence in 6 months time, this is due to multiple factors, including the impacts of COVID on qualifications and skills levels, current status of the SELEP and funding, changes to current businesses that may have been on the skills board. We are currently also reviewing the UKSPF and how this will be utilised for skills and education.	March 2023	

DELIVERING AND INNOVATING






Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Through our Investment and Development Programme, continue to develop and implement a pipeline of projects focussed on reducing costs, improving efficiency, generating income and becoming more commercially focussed to deliver against the £1.6m financial gap over the next four years.		
There are a number of projects being progressed under the Investment and Development programme of works. Monthly senior officer and member meetings continue to review and track progress of the programme.	March 2023	▶
Refresh our Digital Strategy and action plan to address future demand and improve the way we use technology to deliver services		
Work has commenced on reviewing and refreshing the Digital Strategy. An initial draft is expected to be ready for review by Management Board and Members in September 2022.	December 2022	▶
Encourage residents to transact with us on line by developing our website to allow customers to make bookings, track requests and sign up to receive council tax bills electronically		
A sports pitch booking form is currently with the service for final sign off before creating the online booking system due to go live in the Summer 2022. The Plaza Meeting Rooms and Hatchery spaces will be added to the Braintree Venues website in readiness for the opening of the Plaza building in July.	July 2022	▶
Residents are now able to sign up to receive their council tax bills electronically and promotion of this will be ongoing.	March 2022	✔
Develop a plan of community engagement to better understand the needs of our local communities		
Dates have been set for the Community Catch Up events in partnership with Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service aimed at informing residents on the services, support and activities available in the district. The first event was held in Braintree in May and hailed a success. Events will run in Halstead in July and Witham in October. Community events were also held in June to provide support for our Ukrainian guests and sponsors enabling them to meet, talk to others, learn about the local services available to them and allowing the council to understand the support required moving forward.	March 2023	▶
Use customer information and feedback to improve services whilst working towards retaining the accreditation for customer service excellence		
The assessment will be taking place in September 2022. All work in preparation for the assessment is going well.	September 2022	▶







Review the criteria for the discretionary business rates scheme for charitable and non-profit organisations		
The current scheme addressed a number of ambiguities previously identified, therefore, no change to the criteria for the scheme is being made. Current recipients will shortly be invited to apply for reassessment to confirm their continued eligibility and level of award. Applications will be assessed during the Autumn. The relief scheme is to be publicised to businesses so that any potential new applicants also have opportunity to apply. Businesses will be advised of their entitlement ahead of 2023/24 billing.	March 2023	
Monitor changes to various legislation to understand the impact on services including but not limited to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Environmental Bill 2020 and Planning reforms		
A new Domestic Abuse specialist has been appointed and will start in July. They will be providing specialist homelessness support to housing officers around domestic abuse and ensure all aspects of casework are carried out in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance	March 2023	
The Council is waiting for the Government to formally announce the policy changes (expected Summer 2022) within the Environment Act. This will enable the Council to understand the impact of the Act in relation to its waste collection service.	March 2023	
The Council continues to work on implementing biodiversity net gain whilst waiting to hear an update from the Government in regard to the Environment Act to enable to council to consider and develop actions from any amendments to national policy. The Planning White Paper has combined into a Levelling Up White Paper and we are waiting to see how other projects in the Levelling Up bill will be implemented.	March 2023	



Actions carried out in partnership with others





Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Work with Fusion to recover and develop leisure services following the pandemic ensuring the district has the right type and level of leisure provision to meet resident's needs		
Fusion are continuing to see an increase in participation levels with all restrictions now lifted. Fusion have reviewed their membership options to swim only and gym only options providing more flexible packages. Targets for participation levels were removed during the pandemic and the Council will start to look at baseline figures to re-set targets for 2023.	March 2023	
Review and adopt a new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex and enhance the value of joint working through the waste management partnership		
As part of the project to review the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy, we have agreed the baseline data for our waste management service and six collection methodology options. External consultants are currently modelling the options to assess the impact on our waste collection service.	March 2023	
Look at how the Greater Essex system will work together for the benefit of our residents in response to Levelling Up		
The Council is working with Essex County Council on its own levelling up agenda which includes 20 commitments divided into 4 key areas: economy, environment, health and family. Essex has identified rural Braintree as a pilot area to consider the particular issues which are faced by more rural communities and Braintree District Council will be working in partnership with the County to deliver improvement schemes. In addition to the work with Essex County Council, following the launch of the Shared Prosperity Fund in April 2022 where each Authority is allocated a specific amount of funding over a three-year period, the Council has been working on its own investment plan setting out how they will spend the funding. This will be reported to Cabinet in July 2022 before submitting the investment plan to Government by the 1st August 2022.	March 2025	

Section 3: Managing the Business

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	2022/23						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	90				37		
Percentage of superfast broadband coverage across the district	95%				n/a	n/a	
Cumulative number of homes granted planning permission (outline and full)	148				100		<i>The breakdown between full and outline permissions are as follows: Full – 138 Outline - 10</i>
ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT							
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	50.13%				60%		<i>The recycling target is an aspirational target set by the Essex Waste Partnership. At the time of writing, the outturn figure is awaiting validation by ECC. The warm dry spring has resulted in a lower amount of garden waste for composting. Officers continue with promotional work around waste reduction and increasing recycling to encourage change in attitudes and behaviours.</i>
Kilograms of residual household waste collected per household	117kgs				117kgs		
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a				6%	n/a	<i>Recorded three times a year – July, November and March.</i>
Number and percentage of accessible non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (168)				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 referral to approval)	153 days				90 days		<i>In the first quarter, the service received 52 new grant referrals (4 of which were critical) and approved 30 cases (7 of which were critical). Critical cases approved in the quarter were dealt with on average in 63 days, with the quickest of those completed in 13 days. The remaining caseload at the end of the quarter is 99 which includes more</i>

Performance Indicator	2022/23						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
							<i>complicated cases. The team have seen an increase in referrals for high needs individuals requiring substantial home alternations. In these situations, it can take time to finalise a scheme, determine funding arrangements, planning consent and/or Building Regulations approval all of which need to be completed in order to grant approval. Builders quotes are also taking longer to turn around due to the demands in the industry and the current difficulties with the supply of materials. The reluctance of the elderly and vulnerable to let people into their homes following the pandemic to allow for assessments of works is improving. The team work closely with partners to resolve any issues around complex cases whilst managing the workload of substantial and critical applications.</i>
Participation levels across all our sports centres	167,599				n/a	n/a	
Participation of adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported						
Number of customers using out Handyman scheme	49				n/a	n/a	
Number of homelessness cases prevented	60				n/a	n/a	
PROMOTING PROSPERITY							
Percentage of people in the district claiming out of work benefits rate (aged 16 – 64)	2.5%				n/a	n/a	<i>The national average at the end of June 2022 is 3.8%</i>
Number of new business start-ups across the district	239				n/a	n/a	
Number of businesses that have contacted us for business support	116				n/a	n/a	
DELIVERING AND INNOVATING							
Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the Customer Service Centre	73%				n/a	n/a	
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	97.83%				97%		
Number of people transacting with us online	41,016				n/a	n/a	
Time taken to process housing	18.3 days				20 days		

Performance Indicator	2022/23						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
benefit/council tax benefit new claims							
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	10.93 days				6 days		<i>The outturn has been impacted by the Universal Credit daily updates coming through from DWP. We had 4,500 changes to process in the first quarter which are being cleared by staff working evenings and weekends. Performance since the quarter end has improved and is currently within target.</i>
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 7 working days	95.83%				90%		<i>Represents 115 out of 120 stage one complaints responded to within timescale.</i>
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.01%				30.01%		<i>Whilst collection for the first quarter is in line with target there is an increased risk to future collection performance as households are impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.</i>
Collection rate for Business Rates	31.26%				25.80%		

Complaints

The quarterly complaints analysis for the first quarter of 2022/23 is detailed below. This is compared with 2021/22 figures shown in brackets. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

Complaint Category	Q1 2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	TOTAL
Justified	40 (51)	(67)	(39)	(49)	(206)
Not Justified	61 (82)	(68)	(49)	(60)	(259)
Partially Justified	27 (26)	(46)	(7)	(18)	(97)
Not known	0 (0)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(1)
Total	128 (159)	(185)	(91)	(128)	(563)

Comments

The number of complaints received by the Council is the same as the previous quarter but lower in number when compared to the same quarter last year.

It remains that the majority of complaints received are in our Operations service area in respect of missed waste collections with access issues, contaminated waste and missed assisted collections continuing to be the main reasons. A number of customers missed their collections due to the changes in collection dates around the Jubilee bank holiday weekend. We increased the messaging to customers and promoted the text messaging service to notify customers of changes in collections to ensure customers put their bins out on time when collection days are moved.

In the first quarter of 2022/23, of the 128 complaints received:

- 120 are stage one complaints

- 3 are stage two complaints
- 5 are stage three complaints

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

In the first quarter of 2022/23, the LGO received five new complaint enquiries which they are looking into.

In respect of other complaints already being dealt with by the LGO, initial enquiries are ongoing into complaints around Housing, Council Tax and Planning. A final decision has been issued in the first quarter where the LGO declined to investigate a Planning complaint as the complainant has the right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate and two other complaints were determined without enquiries as one was a premature complaint as the process has not yet been completed and the other complaint the LGO declined to investigate as there was no evidence of fault by the Council.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	487				- 5	-
Total staff FTE	440.71				- 3.09	-
Level of employee turnover	2.87%				+0.02%	-
Number of leavers	14				0	-
Number of starters	9				- 3	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.61 days				- 0.51 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	79.01%				N/A Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	9,540				+ 9,380	-
Number of delegates	45				- 38	-
Number of apprentices **	18				- 1	-

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

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

Health & Safety

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

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

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	(2021/22 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	13 (8)	(7)	(9)	(15)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	12 (6)	(6)	(8)	(11)	<i>Slips, trips and falls make up the majority of the accidents</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	0 (2)	(1)	(1)	(0)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	1 (0)	(0)	(0)	(4)	<i>A customer was taken ill in reception and taken to hospital</i>
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	37 (0)	(10)	(22)	(26)	<i>The time lost in days is for five members of staff in our Operations service area. A Street Scene Operative twisted their knee descending from the back of their vehicle resulting in 14 days off. A Waste Operative slipped off a high curb spraining his ankle and was off for 10 days. Two officers were off for 6 days each for a twisted ankle and a back injury and a waste officer was off for 1 day after hurting their arm and leg.</i>
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	3 (2)	(1)	(1)	(1)	
Number of near miss incidents	1 (0)	(0)	(0)	(2)	
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	2 (2)	(1)	(3)	(3)	
Number of claims settled	4 (1)	(0)	(3)	(2)	

Financial Performance

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

Executive Summary

- The net budget position forecast for the year at Q1 is an adverse variance of £721k, after providing for the National Employers' pay award offer which, if agreed, will be effective from 1st April 2022. As a result of the forecast, managers have been reviewing their service budgets and have identified a significant amount of savings and potential additional income that addresses the projected revenue gap, and which will be reflected in an updated projection at Q2.
- The projected change in General Fund unallocated balances is currently a reduction of £358k.
- Expenditure of £2.8m on capital projects during the quarter, with spend mainly being incurred on the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre ('the Plaza') and the Manor Street regeneration scheme.

Background

Full Council agreed a budget of £13.5m, net of a £2.7m drawdown from the business rate retention reserve to offset a deficit on the Collection Fund. Therefore, an adjusted budget figure of £16.2m is used for the purposes of financial monitoring.

During the year 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 Q1.

Business Plan Service	Updated Budget £'000	Forecast Spend for the year £'000	Est. Impact of Proposed Pay Award £'000	Total forecast Spend £'000	Current Forecast Variance £'000	Forecast RAG Status	RAG Status
Asset Management	(2,262)	(1,836)	8	(1,828)	434	R	19%
Community & Leisure	682	672	32	704	22	A	3%
Corporate Management Plan	1,635	1,627	39	1,666	31	A	2%
Economic Development	223	223	9	232	9	A	4%
Environment & Leisure	802	741	50	791	(11)	G	-1%
Finance	1,323	949	88	1,037	(286)	G	-22%
Governance	1,262	1,255	32	1,287	25	A	1%
Housing Services	812	772	46	818	6	A	1%
Human Resources	855	844	8	852	(3)	G	0%
ICT & Facilities	1,850	1,827	32	1,859	9	A	0%
Marketing & Communications	605	594	16	610	5	A	1%
Operations	6,491	6,275	341	6,616	125	R	2%
Strategic Investment ¹	20	20		20			
Sustainable Development	1,277	1,321	70	1,391	114	R	9%
Service Total	15,575	15,284	771	16,055	480	A	3%
Corporate Financing	966	907	0	907	(59)	G	-6%
Efficiency	(300)	0	0	0	300		
Net Total	16,241	16,191	771	16,962	721	R	4%

Key assumptions reflected in the above:

- Staff Pay Award – Projections reflect the latest National Employers offer of a flat rate £1,925 per FTE in response to the Unions' pay claims.
- Manor Street/ the Plaza – no budget variance is assumed at this stage whilst the ongoing revenue costs/ income are being reviewed.
- Staffing projections are based on known changes at the end of Q1 and it is likely that further changes will impact subsequent reviews.

The table below breakdowns the forecast variance:

Business Plan Service	Forecast £'000	Staffing £'000	Pay Award £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000
Asset Management	434	107	8	3	316
Community & Leisure	22	(27)	32	(3)	20
Corporate Management Plan	31	(35)	39	17	10
Economic Development	9	0	9	0	0
Environment	(11)	100	50	(1)	(160)
Finance	(286)	(91)	88	62	(345)
Governance	25	20	32	(22)	(5)
Housing Services	6	0	46	42	(82)
Human Resources	(3)	(5)	8	(6)	0
ICT & Facilities	9	2	32	(25)	0
Marketing & Communications	5	18	16	1	(30)
Operations	125	(62)	341	453	(607)
Strategic Investment					
Sustainable Development	114	(97)	70	17	124
Service Total	480	(70)	771	538	(759)
Corporate Financing	(59)	0	0	(11)	(48)
Efficiency	300	300	0	0	0
Net Total	721	230	771	527	(807)

Addressing the Deficit Position.

- Given the reported adverse variance, managers were tasked with identifying measures to address the revenue gap and/ or to review forecasts taking into account more recent budgetary information. This review has identified significant progress towards closing the forecast revenue gap at Q1 and which will be reflected in an updated forecast at Q2.

Commentary on Main Service Variances reported at Q1

Asset Management

- Net overspends on staffing due to interim arrangements and the need for additional resources to deal with the transition of strategic projects to operational assets (+£107k)
- Loss of rent (+£134k) and service charges (+£157k) due to areas of Causeway House being vacant – **currently assumed for the full year (+£291k).**

Environment

- Building Control additional agency staff costs due to difficulties in recruitment combined with an increase in service demand (+£113k), partially offset by increased income (-£66k).
- Licensing increased number of applications/ income (-£63k). As a ringfenced account the variance may need to be transferred to reserve subject to a review of licensing costs.

Finance

- Staffing efficiencies (-£74k)
- Housing Benefits net cost of benefits paid (+£68k) – Note this is additional to £100k of extra costs which are being funded from reserve. Expenditure is demand led and subject to subsidy limitations on certain types of benefit payments.
- Treasury Management – short-term investment income due to higher interest rates/ balances (-£300k)

Operations

- Staffing underspends predominately due to vacancies within the service (-£62k).
- Increased vehicle operating costs predominately due to the market price of diesel (+£144k); and spot hire and maintenance of an aging fleet (+£146k).
- Provision of wheelie bins and kitchen caddies for new properties and lifecycle replacements (+£60k).
- Increased cost of recycling due to higher haulage costs and processing costs (combination of increased tonnage / cost per tonne) (+£64k).
- Increase in income from mixed recyclate (-£616k) due to a higher average basket price (based on price agreed for Q1 and Q2) of £99/ tonne against the budgeted £49/ tonne.
- Recycling sack contract – average price taking into account inventory brought forward (+£45k)
- Glass recycling income (-£54k) (price/ tonnage) and ECC recycling credits (-£48k).
- Car parking income from pay and display has still not recovered to levels pre-pandemic (+£210k).

Sustainable Development

- Majority of the staffing variance due to current vacancies within the service (including new enforcement roles/ landscape services for which recruitment processes are underway).
- The planning application income forecast reflects the lower income in Q1 (+£127k) with the assumption that the budget is achieved in subsequent quarters; however, actual income will be subject to demand/ mix of applications (e.g. major).

Corporate Financing

- Council Tax Sharing Agreement – share-back from preceptors based on local tax collection performance is higher than budget (-£80k)
- Reduction in the amount of staffing costs chargeable to capital projects (+£40k)

Strategic Investment Team (SIT)

- Forecast total cost £570k of which £276k has been estimated will be charged to capital works, leaving residual cost of £294k, funded: £20k base budget; £96k residual balance of SIT reserve; leaving an estimated shortfall of £178k. The service is proposing that this is met from the uncommitted balance of the Feasibility reserve, subject to approval.

Capital Programme

Current capital programme totals £18m of which £12m profiled into 2022/23:

	Profiled Spend 2022/23 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 1 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 1 % of Profile
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	879	138	16%
Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre	4,341	1,573	36%
Manor Street regeneration	734	628	86%
I-Construct Innovation Centre	140	23	16%
Maltings Lane Community Facility	170	-	0%
Town Centre improvements	268	-	0%
Industrial estate improvements	60	2	3%
Property planned maintenance	1,124	-	0%
Information technology systems & equipment	1,239	27	2%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	758	98	13%
Cemetery improvements	89	-	0%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	188	2	1%
Operational equipment	131	5	4%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	255	-	0%
Climate change initiatives	127	-	0%
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	1,056	125	12%
Capital salaries	476	143	30%
Total	12,035	2,764	23%

Changes to programme since last report

- Addition of the Maltings Lane Community Facility (£4m) although the majority of project expenditure is profiled into 2023/24.

Programme risks/ opportunities

- Manor Street regeneration – final account to be confirmed.
- Pedestrianisation – projected overspend of £230k – to be met from a proposed virement.
- I-Construct – awaiting final cost which is required to confirm the final claim for European Funding.
- Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre ('The Plaza') – final account to be confirmed
- Horizon 120 shortfall on serviced land sales leading to a potential requirement to allocate additional capital resources.

Capital resources generated

- Sale of serviced land plots at Horizon 120 (£3.9m)
- Interim payments (£109k) from Eastlight in respect of the apartments at Victoria Square.
- Eastlight agreements: Right-to-Buy sales – number of completed sales 5, generating c£827k. A further 30 applications are in progress suggesting forecast total for year c£2m-£2.5m (2021/22 19 sales completed in the year generating £2.7m); and VAT shelter £110k Q1.
- Better Care Funding received £1.056m which is used to fund expenditure on disabled facilities grants.

Treasury Management

Investment activity

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

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity to the end June		Amount Invested at end of the quarter
	New Investments	Investments Matured	
£56.8m	£83.6m	£77.0m	£63.4m
Average amount invested for the period			£66.6m
Highest amount invested			£72.1m

Investments totalling £19m were maintained 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 short-term investments comprising: money market funds; Debt Management Office Account (UK Government); bank deposits; and 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 £354,775, which is equivalent to an annualised rate of return of 2.14%:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£19.0m	£262,401	5.54%
Short-Term	£47.6m	£92,374	0.78%
Total	£66.6m	£354,775	2.14%

Dividend income from long-term pooled funds will vary quarter on quarter and therefore the annualised return will be expected to reduce over subsequent quarters.

The projected investment income for the year is £1.1m, which is £300k better than budget. The MTFS already assumes increases in income reverting to nearer pre Covid levels. Significant risks exist given the current economic outlook and the position is being monitored given the fluctuations in global markets.

The market value of shares and units in pooled funds at the end of the quarter was £21.4m, representing an unrealised gain of £2.4m 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) £20m
- Variable net asset value MMF £4m
- Debt Management Office Account Facility £16m

- Short Term Fixed Deposit £3m
- Lloyds current account £1.4m

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:

Balance at 1 April 2022	£'000
	6,056
Addition/(deductions):	
Budgeted reduction	(89)
Funding for one-off investment	(371)
Pension Fund triennial payment – repayment	823
Projected outturn variance at Q1	(721)
Estimated Balance at 31 March 2023	5,698

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

- The approved budget included an anticipated reduction in balances of £460k. One-off investment included £310k drawdown in respect of the initial operating costs of the Plaza at H120 and £61k for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme
- 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 2022/23.
- The projected outturn variance for the year at Q1 is an overall adverse variance of £721k – this will be reviewed at Q2 and will take into account the savings and additional income identified by managers along with any further updates to the Council's financial position for the year.