



Fourth Quarter Performance Management Report

1st January 2019 to 31st March 2019

And Annual Performance Report

2018/19

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Section 1: Introduction and Summary

Purpose of the Report






The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the fourth quarter and the end of the year in relation to the publication of the 'Annual Plan 2018/19'. This sets out the key activities and measures used to check our performance for the year and along with the Corporate Strategy 2016-20 sets out the priorities we are working towards.

This year we signed up to 'The Future of Essex' which is a vision shared by more than 100 partners, all dedicated to improving the county over the next 18 years. The projects that are supporting this vision are marked with **(E)**. 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 local and national indicators used to measure the outcomes are available upon request.

Summary of the Corporate Projects current position for the end of the year

The following table provides updates for the end of the year in relation to the key activities in the 'Annual Plan 2018/19'




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Environment and Place	8	2	0	0	0
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure	1	6	2	0	0
Economic Development	7	4	0	0	0
Health and Communities	9	4	0	0	1
Finance and Performance	10	3	0	0	0
Overall Strategy and Direction	9	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	44	19	2	0	1

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 year

The following table shows the performance for the end of the year in relation to the quarterly and annually reported Performance Indicators that have targets set as defined in the 'Annual Plan 2018/19'.

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Environment and Place	3	0	2	0
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure	2	0	0	0
Health and Communities	2	0	1	0
Finance and Performance	5	2	0	0
TOTAL	12	2	3	0

KEY:

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

Summary Position

The Council has performed well throughout the year with 44 projects completed and a further 19 on track and progressing well. Two projects have an amber status and one project was cancelled during the year. Twelve performance indicators have met or exceeded their target and five performance indicators have missed their target.

It has been a challenging year due to financial pressures, increased expectations and demands on services. Despite this, we have agreed a £100 million investment plan to make sure we have the right foundations in place to support the growth of the district by providing better health care facilities, better homes, improving the way we get around the district and providing more jobs. We have also revamped a number of our parks and open spaces including outdoor gyms and protected our open spaces against illegal encampments.








Our commitment to working with partners to empower residents to get active and live well through a number of campaigns and activities has seen the greatest reduction in the number of inactive residents in the whole of Essex over the last three years and our Livewell campaign has now been adopted by all local authorities across Essex including Essex County Council. Success has also been seen in the schools signed up to the Livewell child project to get kids active and living well with a reduction in the number of overweight children.




We have continued to engage and work with communities on developments to improve the areas in which they live, providing grant funding to support projects to improve health and increase opportunities and we have recognised the number of volunteers and groups who make a positive difference to the lives of others in the district.

The above only touches on some of our achievements throughout the year and with some of our more ambitious projects continuing into next year, we will strive to deliver better services to our customers and succeed in achieving our corporate objectives.






Environment and Place

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue to support the Essex Waste Management Partnership to reduce waste, increase recycling and participate in countywide campaigns		
A number of waste minimisation and recycling roadshows have taken place over the year together with educational presentations to various organisations. The Government's new Resources and Waste Strategy was launched in early December and the Essex Waste Officers Delivery Group have met to review the consultations and discuss the impact and implications on the future collection and disposal arrangements for each Council.	March 2019	
(E) Work with other Essex Councils and the University of Essex to better understand people's attitudes towards waste and recycling		
Braintree District Council worked with Essex County Council and the University of Essex to pilot initiatives to increase recycling and reduce waste. Two versions of the waste calendar were delivered to Households featuring different recycling messages with the aim to encourage residents to recycle more. The University of Essex delivered feedback from focus groups providing insight into recycling habits relevant in understanding how we can deploy interventions and recycling campaigns in the future.	March 2019	
Offer our commercial customers a more tailored refuse and recycling service that will help them reduce, reuse and recycle their waste		
A new quotation process and procedure has been introduced for our commercial customers providing a more efficient service. Weekly visits have taken place with businesses around the district to ensure the service they are receiving meets their needs.	March 2019	
Continue to protect our larger open spaces from illegal encampments by installing perimeter fencing and lockable bollards to prevent disruption and inconvenience to local residents		
All larger open spaces in the district are now protected from illegal encampments following the installation of perimeter fencing and lockable bollards.	June 2018	
Develop an improved low tariff energy switching scheme for both residents and businesses in the District, improving the customer experience and offering additional benefits and improved rates for residents on pre-paid meters		
A new low tariff energy switching scheme has been introduced that will be taking an active role in engaging with residents. The first auction took place in August and a scheme for discounted solar installations was introduced in the Autumn.	September 2018	
Increase the electric car charging infrastructure by installing chargers at the three leisure centres across the District		
A change control has been processed to extend the end date of this project until August 2019 due to the chargers not being installed by the original end date of the project. The business case to install the chargers has been agreed and installation will be carried out in May/June at the three leisure centres across the district.	August 2019	
Upgrade the lighting in our car parks with new energy efficient LED lights to reduce costs and benefit the environment		
The lighting in our car parks has now been upgraded with new energy efficient LED lights.	March 2019	

Trial the use of compaction bins in Braintree Town Centre to see if they offer better value for money for the taxpayer		
The project has been extended until the end of July due to corruption of the data from the compaction bins. The bins have been reprogrammed and the data collection will restart from April 2019 and continue for a three month period. A change control has been processed to amend the end date of the project.	July 2019	
Continue to maintain a focus on investigating and enforcing littering, dog fouling and fly tipping to help keep the District looking clean and tidy		
Since April 2018, a total of 86 fixed penalty notices have been served by the Street Scene Protection Team and 13 people prosecuted for various littering and fly tipping offences.	March 2019	
Run a car litter campaign to reduce litter and raise awareness of the increase in fines		
Results of the car litter campaign in partnership with McDonalds and KFC, aimed at reducing car litter and to raise awareness of the increase in fines, has shown a 54% improvement in the amount of branded and unbranded fast food packaging littering the roadsides in the Braintree district.	March 2019	



Strategic Growth and Infrastructure








Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
(E) Complete the examination and adoption of the Local Plan		
The examination is currently suspended whilst additional work is carried out on providing the required evidence around the plans for Garden Communities. The authorities involved in the Local Plan have written back to the Inspector setting out the proposed way forward including a revised timetable with the revised examination of the joint section one of the Local Plan now taking place in the Autumn of 2019 and the Section 2 examination undertaken in early/mid 2020. It is critical that the evidence base being produced is comprehensive and thorough and that sufficient time is built into the programme to allow for local engagement and for consideration of any findings.	June 2020	
(E) Continue to work on the development of Garden Communities to provide housing, employment and supporting infrastructure to address our long term housing and community needs		
The Council is currently considering the future role of the Garden Communities in the Local Plan and work has been paused on the West of Braintree Garden Community. The submission of a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document is dependent on the production of the Local Plan and the delay to the Local Plan means a consequential change to the dates of this project. A change control has been processed to amend the end date accordingly.	September 2021	
The council is currently considering the future role of the Garden Communities in the Local Plan and work has been paused on the West of Colchester Garden Community whilst the required additional work on the Local Plan is concluded. The submission of a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document is dependent on the production of the Local Plan and the delay to the Local Plan means a consequential change to the dates of this project. A change control has been processed and the end date amended to December 2021.	December 2021	



(E) Set up a Housing Development Company to deliver new mixed-tenure homes across the District.		
A project director will be appointed in April to work fully on the development of the business case for the Housing Development Company for approval at Cabinet in July 2019.	March 2022	▶
(E) Secure planning consent to deliver new homes in Braintree Town Centre as part of the Manor Street Regeneration Project		
Planning permission has been granted on the Manor Street regeneration project securing the delivery of 35 residential units.	March 2019	✔
(E) Continue to work with partner agencies to drive forward improvements to the Braintree and Witham rail link		
Network Rail were asked to produce a specification and cost for a Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) 2 study. Work has currently halted as progressing beyond the current GRIP stage is unaffordable as £1.3m is needed for GRIP2. A decision is required on whether to proceed given that Network Rail have indicated that they will not contribute to the study or delivery costs and improvements on the branch line will not be effective until improvements on the main line are delivered.	March 2019	⚠
(E) Continue to work with Essex County Council to deliver an improvement scheme at Springwood Drive roundabout and Panfield Lane to reduce congestion		
This project will continue into next year to enable Essex County Council to progress the design for the larger scale improvement schemes for capacity improvements including increased entry capacity on all arms as well as increased circulatory, using S106 contributions to fund this.	March 2019	▶
This project will continue into next year as the employment site is dependent on provision of the Spine Road to Panfield Lane. The planning application is progressing through the planning process including S106 heads of terms which are currently being determined.	March 2019	▶
(E) Progress the delivery of new slip roads linking the A120 to Millennium way to alleviate the congestion at Galleys corner		
We are continuing our partnership working with Essex County Council and Highways England as the project moves into the design phase. Essex County Council will lead the project and a project team has been established.	March 2021	▶



Economic Development




Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
(E) Complete the acquisition of strategic employment land at Great Notley providing additional sites to support business growth		
Contracts were exchanged in October 2018 and completion achieved in December 2018	March 2019	✔
Complete the construction of four new high quality grow-on units at the Braintree Enterprise Centre		
Construction of four new high quality grow-on units and a car-park has completed and handover took place on 17th September 2018.	July 2018	✔








Develop our business engagement service, supporting businesses to grow and develop		
A Business Engagement and Support Strategy together with an action plan was agreed at Cabinet in November 2018. There are five key priorities around Business Engagement, Business Support, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Strategic Partnerships and Business Intelligence. Where the Council have previously sign posted businesses to support, we are now suggesting our own programme of support, bridging the gap on areas of weaker support and focusing on high growth sectors for maximum economic impact and value for money. In the last couple of years, the district has seen over 1,000 businesses locating in the district and over £2 million of grant funding has been allocated to district businesses	March 2019	
(E) Work in partnership with Essex County Council and the Haven Gateway to secure grant funding to support the delivery of a Construction Innovation Centre		
Braintree District Council has agreed to further invest in the delivery of a Construction Innovation Hub following the withdrawal of Essex County Council to commit funds to the project. Work is currently ongoing with the architects to develop the designs of the building.	March 2019	
(E) Work with the Braintree Education and Skills board to broker stronger engagement between education providers and businesses to provide a workforce that meets employers' needs		
The Board has supported several projects over the year to encourage participation in further education and priority sectors. Through a number of events, over 2,000 students in the district have had the opportunity to meet local and national employers to ensure they are able to make informed decisions about their career paths, this includes a focus on apprenticeships. Work will continue to recruit new members to the Board and encourage schools to engage proactively and take up opportunities available to them.	March 2019	
(E) Commence work on the regeneration of Braintree Town Centre enhancing the appeal of the town to residents and visitors		
Planning permission has been granted for the regeneration of Braintree Town Centre to provide a Livewell Hub, 70 bed hotel, restaurant/café, commercial unit, 35 residential units, bus interchange, car park and enhanced public realm. Discussions are due to take place with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to ascertain a tenant for the Livewell Hub.	March 2020	
(E) Continue to work in partnership with key community partners to deliver the regeneration schemes in Witham and Halstead		
This is an ongoing project and will continue into next year. The spatial plans for improvements to Halstead Town Centre have been discussed with the Highways Authority who have provided some advice on parts of the schemes. Work on decluttering, improving the street furniture and wayfinding will progress in April with a site visit scheduled with relevant officers from Essex County Council. Braintree District Council have also supported Halstead Town Council in the production of an events leaflet for residents.	March 2019	
Improvements to a shopping precinct in Witham are now complete providing better lighting, an attractive courtyard and additional parking. More local independent traders will be joining the weekly markets in Witham to help rejuvenate the markets and increase footfall. Officers from Essex County Council will also be visiting the area in early May to continue the work on decluttering and improve wayfinding and further regeneration work will be continuing into next year.	March 2019	
(E) Support businesses and increase tourism by launching the 'Visit Braintree' website to highlight key events and attractions across the District		
Meetings have been held with the proposed developer of the 'visit Braintree' website and with Visit Essex to discuss the possibility of a partnership discount. Visit Essex have not yet confirmed whether they will migrate to the new platform so we are progressing without them. The website is expected to	March 2020	





be commissioned in May 2019 and should be up and running by the end of the summer. A change control has been processed to amend the end date of the project.		
(E) Create an event that celebrates the 90 year anniversary of the opening of the Braintree Town Hall which will enhance the heritage and commercial offer of the Town Hall		
Braintree District residents who share their 90th birthday with Braintree Town Hall were invited to help celebrate the local landmark as part of a special celebration that took place in May 2018. A talk was provided by Julien Courtauld and residents were able to watch a screening of the opening of the town hall with a piece of birthday cake and a cup of tea.	May 2018	
(E) Promote high speed and reliable broadband across the District through the support of phase 4 of the Superfast Essex rollout		
At a Cabinet meeting in May 2018, it was agreed that Braintree District Council will invest £356,000 into the Superfast Essex Phase 4 rollout, run by Essex County Council, to enable an additional 1,668 premises to receive superfast broadband by end of 2020. The £356,000 funding from Braintree District Council will be match-funded by The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport grant. The funding will support the district to reach 99% superfast broadband coverage by end of 2020, which is above the county's average coverage.	June 2018	



Health and Communities

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Ensure the football pitches on the Deanery Gardens sports ground and the rugby pitch on King George V playing field are in year round good condition through the installation of a piped drainage system		
The contracts have been awarded and works are due to start in May 2019. A change control has been processed to amend the end date of the project to August 2019.	August 2019	
Continue to invest in our recreational open spaces by enhancing the play equipment at Meadowside and Twelve Acres, Braintree		
The upgrade to the play equipment at Meadowside and Twelve Acres in Braintree has been completed and the outdoors gym equipment has been upgraded at Spa Road in Witham.	December 2018	
(E) Continue to deliver the Livewell child project, working with families and young children providing support and advice on nutrition and healthy activities		
Community 360 have facilitated a new initiative linking Braintree Livewell child primary schools with nearby care homes to pursue activities that will benefit both generations. The first campaigns for year 3 of the project will focus around mealtimes and nutritious snacks and how schools can assist in promoting healthier mealtimes. Recent results of the Livewell child project are showing that over the past year, there has been a reduction in the number of overweight children in schools signed up to the Livewell child project.	March 2020	









Introduce a new programme to encourage junior school children to be more healthy, looking at fitness and eating in a fun and informative way		
Active Essex have delivered the Fitbods programme in to Livewell schools across the District. This is an Essex County Council initiative where children participate in team games to promote fitness, team skills and healthy competition with children receiving a reward and certificate for the number of sessions they take part in. Teachers received training at the start of the new academic year to deliver the Fitbods programme.	March 2019	
Provide children and parents with activities which gets them to explore the green areas in our three main towns whilst increasing their activity levels during the school holidays		
All the Xplorer events planned for the school holidays have been successfully completed with a total of 421 participants across Braintree, Halstead and Witham.	November 2018	
Improve the outdoor playing experience at Halstead Leisure Centre by installing a new 3G surface		
An additional £50,000 has been approved towards the cost of a new 3G surface at Halstead Leisure Centre. Planning permission was submitted in January 2019 and subsequently granted to install the new 3G surface. A change control has been processed to amend the end date of the project to allow for the construction of the pitch which will take place over the next year.	March 2020	
(E) Understand the range of services available to improve mental health and support early interventions for those residents with mental health issues, identifying any areas for improvement		
The third mental health workshop took place in March with around 40 people from local services, organisations and commissioners in attendance. The agenda included presentations on the new care navigation and Braintree's mental health data and discussions on referral pathway and criteria, awareness raising, children and young people, data mapping and the Livewell website. A questionnaire has also been sent to all attendees of the workshop to capture what the need is for creating mental health hubs and to ask what would be suitable for the area. Visits have also taking place in Tendring to learn from their success at setting up a mental health hub. The first Braintree Community Tree network meeting also took place in March to create awareness of organisations and the work happening within the Braintree District to increase the knowledge of those partners. These meetings to be arranged for every 4 months. This project will be continuing into next year and the end date of the project has been amended accordingly.	March 2020	
(E) Implement a winter warmth campaign providing advice on improving energy efficiency, helping vulnerable residents stay warm during the winter months		
A booklet providing information to help residents combat fuel poverty and to stay healthy during the winter months has been published.	November 2018	
(E) Improve the handyperson scheme by expanding the service to help disabled and frail residents lead more independent lives		
The handyperson scheme was launched in July 2018 to support vulnerable residents. The service provides a contractor to undertake safety improvements to prevent trips or falls, install energy efficiency measures, security devices and to provide dementia support. Since its launch, over 115 requests have been received for the service.	July 2018	
(E) Raise awareness of child exploitation amongst the business community and licensed trades through the use of the 'Spot-it, Stop-it' campaign		
A conference was held in the last quarter to raise awareness of child exploitation and the services available to professionals. 75 people attended from schools, housing associations, police, children and families services, amongst others. Training has also been delivered to 26 sports clubs, 13 publicans & 4 taxi drivers and the 'Spot It, Stop It' has been adopted by 4 other local authority areas. We will continue to raise awareness through the	March 2019	

<p>'Spot-it, Stop-it' campaign into next year. A program is being developed to deliver further training and awareness to the night time economy including licensed premises via Pub watch and taxi drivers.</p>		
<p>(E) Work with Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group to see how Braintree District Council can be part of the Home First Programme which ensures residents recuperate in the best environment after receiving hospital treatment</p>		
<p>Following meetings with the Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group it has been decided to increase the scope of the project and look at a County wide 'home from hospital' fast track scheme aimed at ensuring the transition from hospital to home runs smoothly, providing additional support where required. This project has therefore been cancelled and will be replaced with a new project next year.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	
<p>(E) Identify and provide opportunities that would benefit those with dementia and their carers through the Braintree District Dementia Alliance and engagement with those living with dementia and their carers</p>		
<p>There have been a range of activities delivered throughout the year for those living with dementia and their carers. There are now three walks, one in each town led by Essex Fire & Rescue Service on a monthly basis. The Empire Theatre in Halstead has established a Dementia Cinema, showing monthly screenings since June 2018 and has had approximately 500 people attend to date. Dementia tea dances are held on a monthly basis and dementia friendly swimming sessions take place at Witham Leisure Centre. Slow shopping has also been trialled in Braintree town centre providing a more welcome and safe environment for anyone who may find shopping stressful or challenging. It is anticipated that the slow shopping initiative will be rolled out across the district.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	
<p>(E) Support community groups to deliver local projects and activities through the Councillors' Community Grant scheme</p>		
<p>A total of 96 grants have been awarded during the year across the district for various projects totalling £67,369.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	
<p>(E) Work with partners across the community to raise awareness and reduce the impact of social isolation and loneliness</p>		
<p>Essex County Council commissioned the young foundation to work with the community to carry out research into social isolation and loneliness through a number of workshops and events held in Halstead. A 'Taking Action' event took place to discuss ideas to address social isolation and loneliness and the feedback from this and other events will be fed into a report. The young foundation provided feedback to the community at an event in September to allow the community to identify follow up activities. Further projects will be set up once the next steps have been agreed.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>	









Finance and Performance




Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Review our waste service, identifying ways to manage the impact of District growth on the future cost of the service		
<p>There are a number of projects and actions being carried out already reported on under 'Environment and Place' in this report. Additional areas of work completed include bringing the vehicle maintenance contract back in house to improve performance and efficiency and joining Suffolk County Council's contract for dry mixed recycling to improve the sustainability and resilience and better value for money for the reprocessing of its recyclates.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>✓</p>
Review options to secure a sustainable future for our Community Transport service		
<p>The Commercial Manager has been working with the Community Transport team to look at alternative models of delivery for the service including meeting with private and social enterprise organisations. The options have been reviewed and a paper will be presented at a future cabinet meeting.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>✓</p>
Ensure that our Housing service is resilient to respond to the new demands placed on it through the Homelessness Reduction Act		
<p>The Commercial Manager has been working with the Housing service to identify improvements and address resilience following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, the duty to refer which comes into effect in October 2018 and the increasing number of applicants joining the housing register. A new triage function has been implemented which will act as a first line of support for new applicants allowing the Housing Officers to focus on their case work. New staff will be recruited within the Housing service to accommodate this function and increase resilience of the team. The supply of temporary accommodation has also been increased by three units.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>✓</p>
Develop our commercial programme to generate income that can be reinvested in front line services		
<p>Over the last year, the Council has developed a commercial programme with four elements around increasing income, getting maximum value against third party spend, generating service efficiencies and contract and supplier management. Income has been generated and savings made through creating a shared payroll service between Braintree, Colchester and Epping Forest, joining the Suffolk Waste Partnership to ensure a cost effective, future proofed Materials Recycling Facility, reviewed our third party spend delivering tactical procurement savings and created proposals which will be considered next year, appointed a Commercial Sales Executive to drive income targets and developed an Essex Commercial Network to look at future opportunities to work together to deliver commercial benefits to the organisation.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>✓</p>
Identify and progress investment opportunities that support us to deliver our corporate strategy whilst providing a return on investment to strengthen our financial independence		
<p>The Council have taken back possession of the Braintree Enterprise Centre and continues to issue new leases and let vacant units, collecting rent and service charge payments. This provides a significant unbudgeted income for the Council. Investments opportunities identified and reported on elsewhere in the report are being progressed and the Council has recently completed on the purchase of a strategic employment site at Great Notley</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>✓</p>

Ensure the 2017/18 accounts are produced, audited and published by the 31st July 2018		
The external auditors audit results report for the 2017/18 accounts was presented at Governance Committee and published on the 26 th July 2018.	July 2018	
Improve customer focused services by delivering a programme of continuous improvement to achieve the Customer Service Excellence Standard		
The Customer Service Excellence Standard assessment took place in November 2018 and the Council were successful in retaining the accreditation for the fourth year in a row, demonstrating compliance plus in 13 areas of the assessment.	December 2018	
Prepare the organisation for the changes in data protection legislation due to commence 25th May 2018		
A number of areas of work are now completed to ensure the Council is in a good position following the implementation of the General Data Protection regulations and the Data Protect Act 2018. Privacy notices have been added to our website and forms that collate personal data amended accordingly. All staff received data protection training to ensure they are fully aware of the requirements placed on them regarding processing personal data.	May 2018	
Develop our online booking and payment systems enabling residents to book and pay for more services through our website		
The new pest control booking system has gone live in the customer service centre and will be available on line once the issues with the payment system have been resolved. This project will continue into next year as further online booking systems are in development.	March 2020	
The payment system to integrate with the new booking system is ready for live implementation. However, technical issues with migration have been identified and solutions tried so far have not been successful. The issues have now been escalated and the end date of the project has been amended in line with the project to develop our online booking system.	March 2020	
Improve our mobile working technology to allow our staff to be more flexible and customer focused		
A working group has been formed who have identified five different work-styles. These are classic office based, tele-worker, mobile worker, flexible worker and hot-desker. The equipment that would typically be used by each of these type of work-styles has also been defined together with the equipment needed to support each workstyle. The project will continue into next year to address barriers in allowing staff to be more flexible.	March 2019	
Continue to respond to emerging cyber security threats, protecting our network and information by regularly reviewing our approach and training		
A new firewall has being built as part of the network improvement and emails are now up to GCSX standard. All ICT security and usage procedures have been reviewed and updated. The Local Government Association recently carried out a stocktake of all Councils and Braintree were assessed as amber-green which is a satisfactory mark and Braintree compares well against other Essex Authorities. They have also provided £5k for Cyber Essential certification uplift and discussions are underway with consultants on providing the expertise needed.	March 2019	
Introduce in-cab technology into our street scene vehicles to improve the efficiency of the service		
In-cab technology has now been installed in all our street scene vehicles allowing staff to use the hand held devices to deal with any street scene matters and upload real time information improving the efficiency of the service.	March 2019	



Overall Strategy and Direction

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<p>Work effectively with our partners to deliver the Essex Vision to give communities, groups and businesses in Essex a way to collaborate in planning their future, recognising the collective power of Essex as a whole</p>		
<p>Throughout this report, the actions that reference how we are supporting the Essex Vision are marked with (E). They provide an update to show how we are dedicated to improving the county by working with partners to deliver the Essex Vision. The support of the Essex Vision will continue into next year.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p></p>
<p>Ensure that Braintree District Council is financially sustainable and fit for the future by delivering a balanced budget and becoming financially independent by 2020, whilst ensuring we remain a resilient organisation providing effective frontline services through smarter working</p>		
<p>Services have identified savings in what they do whilst ensuring the residents of Braintree continue to receive the service they need. A new project will be launched next year to undertake a systematic review of services to ensure they are well positioned to meet any anticipated financial challenges happening in 2020.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p></p>
<p>(E) Deliver projects under the District Investment Strategy to achieve better outcomes for the District and a return for the taxpayers purse by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership to improve health provision across the District • Facilitating the need for housing by providing homes and supporting infrastructure • Improving our most congested roads and journeys across the District • Planning for growth by providing 9000 jobs by 2026 by delivering increased opportunities for new businesses and employment • Delivering investment opportunities that support growth and provide a return for the District Council 		
<p>The regeneration of Manor Street will include a Livewell Hub providing residents with access to more integrated health and wellbeing services. The Council is also working with two local GP practices, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England to develop proposals to deliver a rural healthcare hub on Council-owned land in Sible Hedingham. Provision of new health care facilities in Witham continue to progress. The Council has acquired Silver End doctor's surgery which will also provide an income for the Council and secure the provision of healthcare to local residents.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p></p>
<p>The Manor street regeneration project includes the provision of 35 new homes. Work continues on the Local Plan which will allow us to shape where new homes go and ensure that they are built in sustainable places.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p></p>
<p>Over the last year, the preferred option for the A120 has been announced which will help improve the infrastructure and provide a stronger road network. A new slip road will also be created on the A120 to help relieve congestion at Galleys Corner.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p></p>
<p>A number of projects and actions have been completed to ensure delivery of the Braintree Plan for Growth to provide jobs in the district such as the construction of four grow on units at Braintree Enterprise Centre, purchasing strategic employment land at Great Notley, acquiring new office premises to support new and existing firms looking to develop their business and securing funding for the delivery of a Construction Innovation Centre. Braintree District Council has also worked in partnership with Witham Chamber of Commerce on a Business Showcase with over 30 local businesses attending and worked with</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p></p>





the job centre by hosting a job fair providing job seekers the chance to talk to local companies about vacancies and training opportunities.		
Over the year, the Council has acquired a doctor's surgery in Silver end which will provide an income for the Council, has taken back ownership of the Braintree Enterprise Centre and the management of Corner House.	March 2019	
Work with partner authorities (Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council) and other public and private sector organisations to plan for and enable sustainable growth in homes and jobs in the north Essex area		
Work with Tendring and Colchester continues on the Joint section one of the Local Plan. Officers from Braintree have also been working with Essex County Council on Housing Infrastructure Bids (HIF) to support the development of Garden Communities and we are currently awaiting the outcomes. Positive work continues with Uttlesford in the lead up to their Local Plan examination with a meeting scheduled for May 2019 between senior executives. Essex wide work is also underway on a number of evidence documents and guidance including the Essex wide Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). This project will be continuing into next year.	March 2019	
Support Essex County Council in the management and operation of the Country Park to enhance the visitor experience, making full use of the leisure, recreational and natural facilities the park has to offer		
Joint Partnership Venture Board Meetings have been attended to provide support in the management and operational arrangements of the County Park. A New service level agreement has been developed with Braintree Town Football Club to develop Football in conjunction with the artificial grass pitch and multi-use games area.	March 2019	

Section 3: Managing the Business

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	2018/19									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
Environment and Place										
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	6%	6%	7%	6%		6%	6%		Recorded three times a year – July, November and March
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	55.18%	49.98%	47.65%	43.47%	46.77%		49.50%	60%		Our resident's efforts contributed to 49.50% (estimated) of all the household waste generated in the District being recycled with an increase in the tonnage of dry mixed recycling and bio waste (garden and food) of 830 tonnes, compared to the same period in 2017-2018. For the first time in 6 years the total amount of waste we collected fell by 1.9% (575 tonnes). The annual recycling target of 60% is an aspirational target adopted by the Essex Waste Partnership to be achieved by 2020. With the launch of the Government's new Resources and Waste Strategy and associated consultations, targets for recycling and tonnage of waste will be reviewed. The Council will continue to focus on waste minimisation and recycling initiatives including promotional events to help residents manage their waste more effectively.
Tonnage of residual household waste not recycled	120kgs	114Kgs	114kgs	115kgs	108kgs		464kgs	432kgs		
Number and percentage of non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (188)	100% (231)	100% (201)	100% (181)	100%		100% (801)	100%		
Number of fuel poverty and domestic energy reduction installations carried out	Annually reported indicator					n/a	808	750		
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure										
Number of affordable homes delivered	63	51	31	20	20		165	100		
Number of homes granted planning permission	667	125	430	293	212		1515	845		

Performance Indicator	2018/19									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
Health and Communities										
Average waiting time for applicants on the Disabled Facilities Grant	105 days	59 days	95 days	89 days	75 days		87 days	75 days		The outturn has improved since the third quarter but this has still not met target due to the number of complex cases requiring additional time to ensure the right installations are carried out to meet the customer's needs. Examples of where additional time is required are due to planning permission which requires at least 8 weeks to process, where contributions to the works being carried out are required and where delays are incurred from customers making decisions regarding the way forward. In all cases that go over the target, customers are involved and kept informed throughout the process. The target is being revised for 2019/20 to 90 days which is still below the national average of 116 days.
Achieve a 2% increase on the contract baseline in participation levels across all our sports centres	227,433	267,366	272,348	292,384	244,131		1,059,531	942,1287		
Achieve at least a 1% increase in adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported indicator					n/a	66%	58%		
Finance and Performance										
Average call answer time in the Customer Service Centre	13 seconds	20 seconds	7 seconds	14 seconds	15 seconds		14 seconds	15 seconds		
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	19.92 days	20 days	18.02 days	16.66 days	22 days		18.65 days	22 days		
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	7.7 days	7.39 days	4.43 days	4.09 days	6 days		5.9 days	6 days		
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within target	94.71%	93.88%	89.71%	85.16%	90%		91.87%	90%		The target has not been achieved in the fourth quarter of the year due to an increased number of complex complaints that required additional time to formulate a response. The target has been achieved over the year. More detailed information on complaints can be found in the complaints section of this report.
Collection rate for Council Tax	31.06%	58.80%	86.80%	98.22%	98.30%		98.22%	98.30%		The amount of council tax 2018/19 collected was £86.906m. Whilst the percentage collected was

Performance Indicator	2018/19									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
										<i>marginally below target the majority of the amount outstanding will be collected during 2019/20 and future years. The actual amount of council tax 2018/19 written off as uncollectable in the year was £36,026.</i>
Collection rate for Business Rates	31.40%	57.76%	85.09%	99.05%	98.60%		99.05%	98.60%		
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	99.19%	99.26%	99.15%	98.53%	99.25%		99.02%	99.25%		<i>8,535 supplier invoices were paid in the year of which 84 were paid outside of the 30 day target. The relevant sections have been reminded, during the year, of the importance of passing invoices for payment in a timely manner.</i>

Complaints

The quarterly complaints analysis for the fourth quarter of 2018/19 and the end of the year is detailed below. This is compared with 2017/18 figures shown in brackets. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

Complaint Category	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Q3 2018/19	Q4 2018/19	TOTAL
Justified	110 (64)	92 (67)	61 (38)	60 (60)	323 (229)
Not Justified	76 (69)	88 (79)	59 (67)	54 (81)	277 (296)
Partially Justified	25 (27)	26 (31)	21 (22)	28 (17)	100 (97)
Not known	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (3)	0 (0)	1 (4)
Total	211 (160)	207 (178)	141 (130)	142 (158)	701 (626)

Comments

In the fourth quarter of the year, the number of complaints received is on par with the third quarter and remains lower than the number of complaints received in the first two quarters of the year. However, overall for the year, there has been an increase in the number of complaints received.

The majority of the complaints relate to missed waste collections due to either collection times changing and residents not presenting their waste at their boundary on time or due to waste operative staff not being familiar with certain collection points. During the year changes were made to collection routes which has seen a positive impact on the number of complaints.

In contrast, during the last half of the year, the Planning service has seen an increase in the number of complaints received in relation to the handling of planning applications due to resource issues and an unprecedented demand on the service. This is currently being monitored and a number of actions are being looked at to ease the demand on the service so they have the time to deal with the applications.

In the fourth quarter of 2018/19, of the 134 complaints received:

- 129 are stage one complaints
- 11 are stage two complaints
- 3 are stage three complaints

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

In the fourth quarter of 2018/19, the LGO has received four new complaints which are currently being assessed and initial enquiries or investigations are taking place.

The LGO has also issued two final decisions in the fourth quarter. Both complaints were in relation to Planning of which the Ombudsman found no fault by the Council in one instance and some fault with how the council dealt with matters but this had not caused any significant injustice in respect of the other complaint.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 18/19	Q2 18/19	Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	469	473	478	481	+ 3	-
Total number of posts	485	485	485	494	+ 9	-
Number of temporary staff	33	32	30	28	- 2	-
Total staff FTE	425.08	427.45	431.97	435.04	+ 3.07	-
Level of employee turnover	2.13%	2.96%	1.67%	1.87%	+ 0.2%	-
Number of leavers	10	14	8	9	+ 1	-
Number of starters	13	18	13	12	- 1	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	2.07 days	1.71 days	2.21 days	2.65 days	+ 0.44 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	78.68%	64.9%	53.97%	43.24%	Cumulative annual figure	-
Number of learning hours	7747	8131	10,427	9,652	- 775	-
Number of delegates	602	381	305	244	- 61	-
Number of apprentices **	15	24	22	20	- 2	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	478	472	470	464	466	481

** BDC's apprenticeship programme runs from September each year. The figures reflect level 2, 3 and 4 apprenticeships together with degree apprenticeships.

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	
	(2017/18 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	10 (10)	6 (10)	9 (26)	13 (13)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	6 (8)	6 (8)	9 (20)	11 (12)	<i>Main cause of injury to staff this quarter was injuries to hands (5 out of 11 accidents)</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	0 (1)	0 (2)	0 (5)	1 (0)	<i>Head injury caused by a low hanging branch whilst undertaking grass cutting duties.</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	1 (1)	<i>A member of the public tripped over the step at the rear of the Town Hall</i>
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	85 (0)	19 (20)	48 (8)	24.5 (28)	<i>The total is accounted for by just two back injuries.</i>
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	2 (0)	1 (2)	1 (1)	1 (0)	<i>An aggressive member of public in reception caused a lot of distress.</i>
Number of near miss incidents	1 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	<i>RTA close to a dust cart could have been a lot worse as operatives narrowly escaped injury</i>
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	1 (0)	3 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)	
Number of claims settled	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	

Financial Performance

This part of the report provides the outturn financial position for the year. It examines the spending incurred on day-to-day service provision compared to the budget for the year. Also included is a summary of treasury management activities; details of movements on the General Fund balances, including earmarked reserves; and a summary of spending on capital projects.

Background

Full Council approved a budget of £14.784 million for the 2018/19 financial year. This included planned spending across all services totalling £12.144 million; corporate items amounting to £2.840 million; and an overall efficiency target to be achieved in-year of £200,000.

Financing of the budget was to be from a combination of: general government grants (£294,000); business rates (£5.237 million); and Council Tax (£9.253 million).

During the year individual budgets may be updated in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure, and against which quarterly performance is monitored.

On 23rd July 2018, Full Council approved a supplementary budget of £219,460 to fund the transitional staffing arrangements for the Strategic Investment Team, with the amount to be met by a withdrawal from General Fund balances. Furthermore, Full Council agreed on 8th October 2018, a budget virement of £181,500 between the Planning Application Fees budget and the Development Management Staffing budget. These budget changes have been taken into account for the purposes of this report.

Summary Outturn Financial Position

- An overall positive variance for the year of £1.545 million (-10.5%) against the budget.
- Across all services staffing budgets were underspent by £551,000; and after allowing for the corporate efficiency target of £200,000, this resulted in a net variance of £351,000.
- Other expenditure was underspent by £219,000.
- Income was overachieved by £975,000.
- The outturn variance has improved by an overall £842,000 from the position reported at Q3, which forecasted an overall positive variance of £703,000. This overall change comprises: an increase in the staffing underspend by £76,000; a positive change in the net position for other expenditure of £503,000; and £263,000 of extra income.
- For some service areas the variances reflected in income and expenditure included in this report and reported at Q3 were expected to be ongoing and therefore have already been reflected in the Council's budget for 2019/20.
- During the year the Council has monitored its overall financial position with the following position reported at each quarter end:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2*	Quarter 3	Outturn [^]
	Reported Full-Year Projected Variance			Actual Variance
	Adverse/ (Positive)			
Net Variance	87	(127)	(703)	(1,545)
Staffing	236	(94)	(275)	(351)
Other Expenditure	136	382	284	(219)
Income	(285)	(415)	(712)	(975)

* After a budget virement of £181,500 was agreed by Full Council between planning application fee income, which in the previous quarter was projected to be overachieved for the year, and the Development Control staffing budget to reflect the need for more resources to undertake an increased workload.

[^] Before budget carry forward requests

Revenue Spending

Service	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Adverse (Positive) variance against budget				RAG Status
			Staffing	Other Expenditure	Gross Income	Total	
			£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Asset Management	(2,129)	(2,245)	3	114	(233)	(116)	G
Business Solutions	1,991	1,917	(24)	(41)	(9)	(74)	G
Community Services	346	324	(2)	(29)	9	(22)	G
Corporate Management	1,233	1,148	(82)	(3)	-	(85)	G
Economic Development	239	252	-	14	(1)	13	A
Environment & Leisure	840	743	(49)	10	(58)	(97)	G
Finance	1,101	389	(223)	(308)	(181)	(712)	G
Governance	918	987	64	(82)	87	69	R
Housing Services	864	825	8	(32)	(15)	(39)	G
Human Resources	386	371	-	(15)	-	(15)	G
Marketing and Communications	538	490	(18)	(38)	8	(48)	G
Operations	5,128	4,995	(97)	104	(140)	(133)	G
Strategic Investment	231	229	-	(2)	-	(2)	G
Sustainable Development	677	309	(131)	134	(371)	(368)	G
Service Total	12,363	10,734	(551)	(174)	(904)	(1,629)	G
Corporate Financing	2,621	2,505	-	(45)	(71)	(116)	G
Efficiency target	(200)	0	200	-	-	200	
Total	14,784	13,239	(351)	(219)	(975)	(1,545)	G

RAG Status: G = favourable or nil variance, A = up to 5% adverse variance or <£50k, R = > 5%
Budget = controllable expenditure budget net of direct service income

Staffing

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

Further details of the staffing budget variances is provided in the following table:

Service – Staffing Budgets	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Adverse/ (Positive) variance £'000	RAG Status
Asset Management	265	268	3	A
Business Solutions	1,198	1,174	(24)	G
Community Services	368	366	(2)	G
Corporate Management	1,198	1,116	(82)	G
Economic Development	224	224	-	G
Environment & Leisure	1,553	1,504	(49)	G
Finance	2,363	2,140	(223)	G
Governance	566	630	64	R
Housing Services	856	864	8	A
Human Resources	281	281	-	G
Marketing & Communications	374	356	(18)	G
Operations	5,285	5,188	(97)	G
Strategic Investment	447	447	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,722	1,591	(131)	G
Service Total	16,700	16,149	(551)	G
Corporate Financing	-	-	-	
Efficiency	(200)	-	200	
Total	16,500	16,149	(351)	G

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

Commentary on staffing variations:

Across all service areas staffing budgets were underspent by £551,000, an increase from that reported at Q3 of £76,000.

The largest underspend was **Finance** (-£223,000). This position was mainly the result of a number of posts in the Benefits Service which have been held vacant allowing the Council to adjust resources in response to the gradual roll out of Universal Credit. Underspends were also made due to other vacant posts, reductions in contracted hours, and appointments made at lower grade/ scale points. The budget for 2019/20 included the deletion of four of these vacant posts.

Sustainable Development is also underspent by £131,000. An increase in the staffing structure for the Development Management team was previously agreed in order to meet the higher demands on this service. However, recruitment of suitable candidates has proven difficult leading to the service continuing to hold a number of vacancies (including maternity absences), some of which have by necessity been covered by external agency staff (see comments under Other Expenditure).

Changes in senior management appointments, along with a restructuring of the management arrangements for the Business Solutions service resulted in an overall underspend on **Corporate Management** of £82,000, after allowing for the appointment of a Commercial Manager.

Other service areas with underspends include: **Environment & Leisure** (-£49,000) and **Operations** (-£97,000), mainly due to vacancies, lower overtime costs, and also external grant funding for some staff engaged on recycling activities.

Governance overspent for the year (+£64,000), although this was slightly lower than was initially projected at previous quarters. Additional costs have been incurred necessarily to provide increased legal capacity in support of the Council's strategic growth agenda and related projects. The budget approved for 2019/20 provides additional resources to implement a new permanent structure.

The approved budget provided for a **Corporate Efficiency Target** which in previous years has been achieved from in-year staffing variances. The amount included in the budget for 2018/19 was £200,000, which after taking this into account, left an overall staffing underspend for the year of £351,000.

Other Service Expenditure

In total non-staffing expenditure budgets were underspent by £219,000, an improvement of £503,000 from the position reported at Q3 (forecast overspend of £284,000). The main service areas contributing to this position were:

- **Finance - Net Housing Benefit Cost** (-£193,000): A net saving on the cost of housing benefit to the Council. This is due to an overall reduction in the value of benefits paid to claimants (£33m compared to an original estimate of £39m) - this will in part be due to a transfer of claimants of working age from receiving housing benefits over to Universal Credits which is paid directly by the Department for Work and Pensions. Also, the level of recovery through government subsidy on the amounts paid by the Council was higher at 99.45%, compared with that originally assumed in the budget of 99%.
- **Finance Other** (-£114,000): a net underspend on a range of financial services, including system related costs, banking and credit card transaction fees, internal audit training/

specialist support, and local tax court fees and charges. Due to ongoing service requirements and system developments a number of these underspends have been requested to be carried over into 2019/20.

- **Asset Management** (+£114,000): Includes increased costs following the transfer back to the Council of the management and operation of the Braintree Enterprise Centre, including a one-off cost to address Energy Performance Compliance requirements. Unbudgeted holding costs were incurred in relation to premises held vacant pending works starting on the Manor Street regeneration scheme. This overspend was more than offset by higher rental income.
- **Operations** (+£104,000): increased costs in Waste Management on gate fees payable to the Council's material recovery facility (MRF) operator, the price of which was linked to market indices and subject to quarterly review. The budget was set based on an assumed fee of £24.36 per tonne (based on Q3 17/18), whereas the average price paid across the year was in excess of £44 per tonne. This resulted in a £195,000 overspend for the year, with further additional costs being incurred due to rising fuel prices. However, these additional costs were partially offset by other savings on the cost of recycling and residual waste sacks (a mix of usage and lower cost); lower operating costs of the clinical waste service; lower operating costs of the Cordons Farm waste transfer site, and lower vehicle and plant maintenance costs. The Council's budget for 2019/20 included allowances for the estimated ongoing additional costs from gate fees and increased fuel prices.
- **Sustainable Development** (+£134,000): The main element of this overspend relates to the use of consultants which has been necessary due to the complex and specialist nature of some of the planning applications being received. This approach to using bought-in resources is considered to be more cost effective for addressing the current service demands. Further consultancy support has been used to provide pre-application advice and support delivery against Planning Performance Agreements, both of which are areas of activity where additional fees have been charged to meet the extra costs incurred. Actual spending on planning appeals was lower than originally forecast at Q3 with £294,000 being spent rather than £340,000. The difference was mainly due to one major appeal being deferred until 2019/20. The costs of appeals was largely met by fully utilising an existing reserve leaving a £6,000 overspend in the year. The budget for 2019/20 included a further provision of £500,000 to cover future appeal costs. Progress towards implementation of a new staffing structure has also involved additional expenditure on recruitment and staff training.
- **Governance** (-£82,000): The main underspend (-£57,000) is against the budget for the digital enhancement of records required in preparation for migration of data to the Land Registry. As activity on searches was lower some of this work has been absorbed by the service; however, it is still anticipated that additional costs will be incurred in the future and hence a carry forward was requested. Other positive variances in this service area related to Member and Civic budgets.

External Income

A significant proportion of the Council's budget was reliant on external income. Grants and subsidies from government, alongside income from business rates were major elements totalling over £45 million.

The amount of business rates ultimately retained by the Council depends on the actual amounts collectable (taking into account changes in the Valuation List, exemptions and reliefs granted, and provisions for non-collection and rating appeals). Variances are accounted for via the Collection Fund and taken into account when determining future budgets and council tax setting. Fluctuations from those elements which have a direct impact on the General Fund revenue account, e.g. the levy payable on growth or grants received from Government to fund certain discretionary reliefs, are managed via the Business Rate Retention reserve.

As a participant in the Essex Business Rates Pool the Council was entitled to a share of the extra business rates retained “locally” which was rebated against the 2018/19 levy. The final determination and receipt of the actual amount of the Council’s share will be made after year-end returns have been collated from each of the participating authorities; however, a provisional amount of £638,000 has been notified to the Council. The benefits received from being a member of the Pool have to date been held in the Business Rate Retention reserve.

Other external income for which the Council had budgeted £16.114 million came from a variety of sources that are subject to external demands and other influences, meaning these were more susceptible to variations against budget. In total income was overachieved by a net £975,000, as shown in the table below:

Service	Updated Budget £000	Joint Financing & Other Reimburs.	Sales, Fees & Charges	Rents	Other Income	Total	RAG status
		5,676	5,715	2,906	1,817	16,114	
<i>Adverse (Positive) Variance £000 against Budget :</i>							
Asset Management	3,005	(2)	(4)	(228)	1	(233)	G
Business Solutions	30	(9)	-	-	-	(9)	G
Community Services	247	(1)	15	-	(5)	9	A
Corporate Management Plan	-	-	-	-	-	-	G
Economic Development	-	(1)	-	-	-	(1)	G
Environment & Leisure	1,368	(25)	(3)	-	(30)	(58)	G
Finance	2,512	19	-	-	(200)	(181)	G
Governance	293	-	87	-	-	87	R
Housing	74	-	(11)	(4)	-	(15)	G
Human Resources	8	-	-	-	-	-	G
Marketing & Communications	141	20	19	-	(31)	8	A
Operations	5,375	(50)	(59)	11	(42)	(140)	G
Strategic Investment	157	-	-	-	-	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,485	(39)	(328)	-	(4)	(371)	G
Service Total	14,695	(88)	(284)	(221)	(311)	(904)	G
Corporate Financing	1,419	(9)	-	-	(62)	(71)	G
Total	16,114	(97)	(284)	(221)	(373)	(975)	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

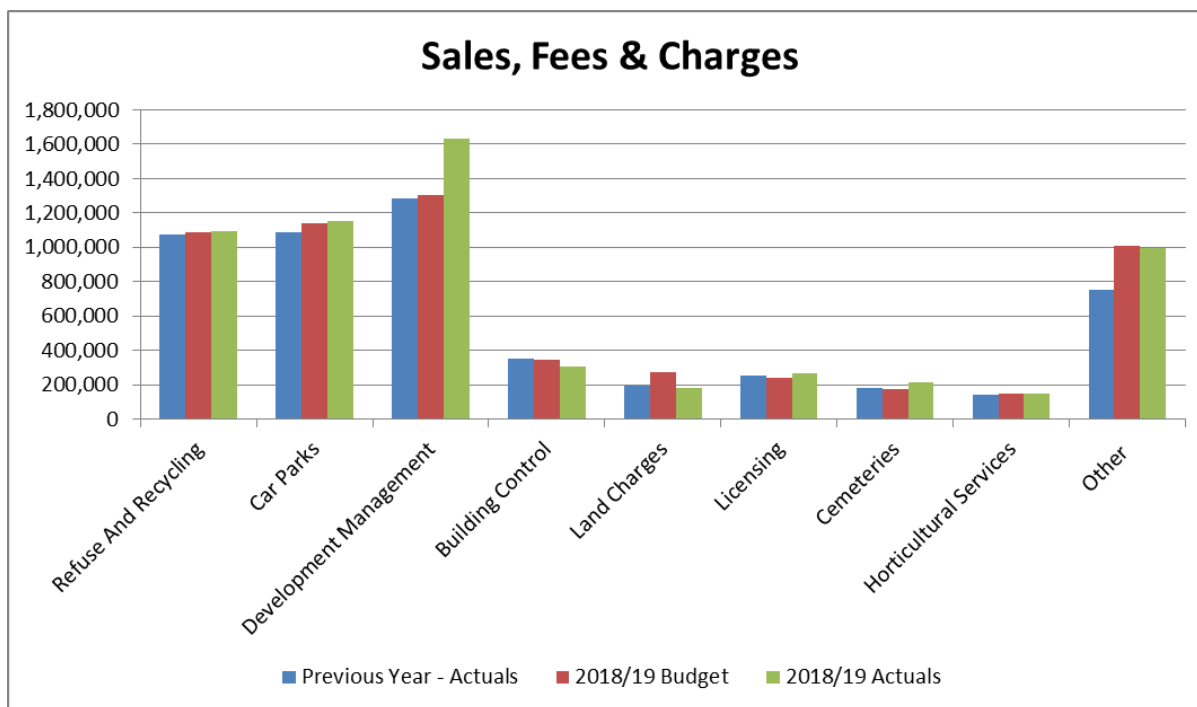
Joint Financing & Other Reimbursements

The total budget for income from joint financing and other reimbursements was £5.676 million and the actual amount received was £5.773 million, an overachievement of £97,000. The main sources of which were: Essex County Council contributions towards service costs (£2.402 million); a provisional amount from the Essex Business Rate Pool (£638,000); Council Tax sharing and investment agreement with the major precepting bodies (£635,000); housing benefit overpayment recoveries and local tax costs recovered (£762,000); and income to the Procurement Hub (£232,000).

Income was overachieved in areas such as: planning pre-application advice; recycling credits on activity at Cordons Farm; and one-off costs recovered in Health Protection following a recent prosecution.

Sales, Fees & Charges

Income from sales, fees & charges was £5.999 million which represents an over achievement of £284,000 against budget. The following chart shows the main income streams:



Commentary on Fees and Charges:

- Development Management:** Planning application income for the year was £1.607 million, which exceeded the updated full year budget of £1.293 million by £314,000 (£350,000 higher than the previous year actual). In addition, the service also received additional income over budget on the Street Naming and Numbering service of £14,000.
- Building Control:** As predicted in earlier quarters, income for the year was down against budget by £33,000, and around 12% lower than the actual received in the previous year. Offsetting this the service has been able to reduce some of its staffing and other operating costs. Looking forward the position continues to be monitored in this highly competitive market.
- Local Land Charges:** Income from search fees at the end of year was £183,000 which in cash terms was almost 7% lower than the previous year. The number of full searches was down by 15% (1616 compared to 1897), whereas free of charge viewings, mainly by personal search companies, increased by 18% (1913 compared to 1625). This resulted in a shortfall of £89,000 against the budget. The Council's budget for 2019/20 includes an adjustment to reflect an estimate of lower fees going forward. Currently the service is continuing to prepare for the potential transfer of the activity to the Land Registry although as yet no deadline has been set for this happening.
- Licensing:** An increase in charges from October along with the triennial review of some licences increased income in the current year leading to an over achievement of £26,000. Some of the licences granted will now be for extended periods despite being charged the same and therefore future income levels will be subject to fluctuation.
- Cemeteries:** Across all cemeteries income achieved was higher than budget with total income of £216,000, which was £43,000 more than budget. This level of income is the highest recorded over the last four years.

Rental Income

The budget for rental income from land & property was £2.906million – comprising the investment and commercial property portfolio, markets, housing properties, and other let properties. The outturn was a net over achievement of £221,000.

Commentary on Rental Income:

- **Asset Management:** Following the closure of Ignite Business in May 2018, the Council took back responsibility for the management and letting of the former Ignite House at the Springwood Industrial Estate, as well as the Corner House in Braintree town. With the addition of the grow-on units developed by the Council at Springwood, and the acquisition of premises in Silver End, there was an increase in rental income of £116,000, which after allowing for some additional one-off costs, resulted in a net £25,000 of additional income. On the existing commercial portfolio, occupation levels remained high, and a number of rent reviews settled which taken together increased the amount of income in the year by £68,000. Again, there were related costs incurred and therefore the net additional income was £31,000. In addition, following the completion of tenancy agreements last year, Causeway House remained fully let leading to £36,000 of extra income than was originally budgeted.
- **Operations – Markets:** Promotion of reduced rates and the introduction of street markets has yet to reverse the underlying downward trend in income seen over recent years with a shortfall against budget of £13,000.

Other Service and Corporate Income

Total budgeted Other Income was £1.817 million of which £572,000 related to internal recharges including staffing costs expected to be charged against capital projects (£364,000). In total other external income was higher than budget by a net £373,000.

Commentary Other Service and Corporate Income:

- **Investment and Other Interest Income:** Investment income for the year was £1.158 million, part of which was transferred to the treasury management reserve, leaving a net overachievement of £157,000, with further additional interest from loans and other agreements of £43,000. Investment income was higher due to a combination of increases in money market interest rates, and higher levels of cash balances.
- **Solar Panel Feed-in-Tariffs:** the budget provided for an expected £93,000 of income from investment in solar panels at various Council facilities, however the outturn was slightly higher at £106,000.
- **Recharges to capital projects:** A number of service areas recharge a proportion of officer time to capital projects which means the costs are not charged against the General Fund revenue account. The extent to which these recharges can be made is dependent upon actual progress of individual projects and the nature of the activities being undertaken. The budget provided for a total of £364,000 to be recharged. Based on actual time allocations the overall level of recharges for the year was £402,000, with higher recharges from the Strategic Investment Team more than offsetting a reduction in charges from other service areas.

Treasury Management

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

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity for the year		Amount Invested at end of the year
	New Investments	Investments Sold or Matured	
£42.3m	£105.0m	£100.3m	£47.0m
Average amount invested for the year			£58.3m
Highest amount invested during the year			£68.3m

Part of the Council's investment portfolio comprised investments in a range of pooled funds exposed to property, bond, and equity markets and which the Council intended to hold for the medium-long term. At the end of the year the total amount invested in such funds was £18 million spread across seven different funds. Remaining investments were in short-term instruments including call accounts and term deposits with UK and Non-UK financial institutions, loans to other local authorities, and Money Market Funds (MMF).

Interest and dividends earned to the end of the year was £1.158million, which is equivalent to an annualised rate of return of 1.98% (last year's return was 1.62%):

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£16.5m	£0.866m	5.24%
Short-Term	£41.8m	£0.292m	0.70%
Total	£58.3m	£1.158m	1.98%

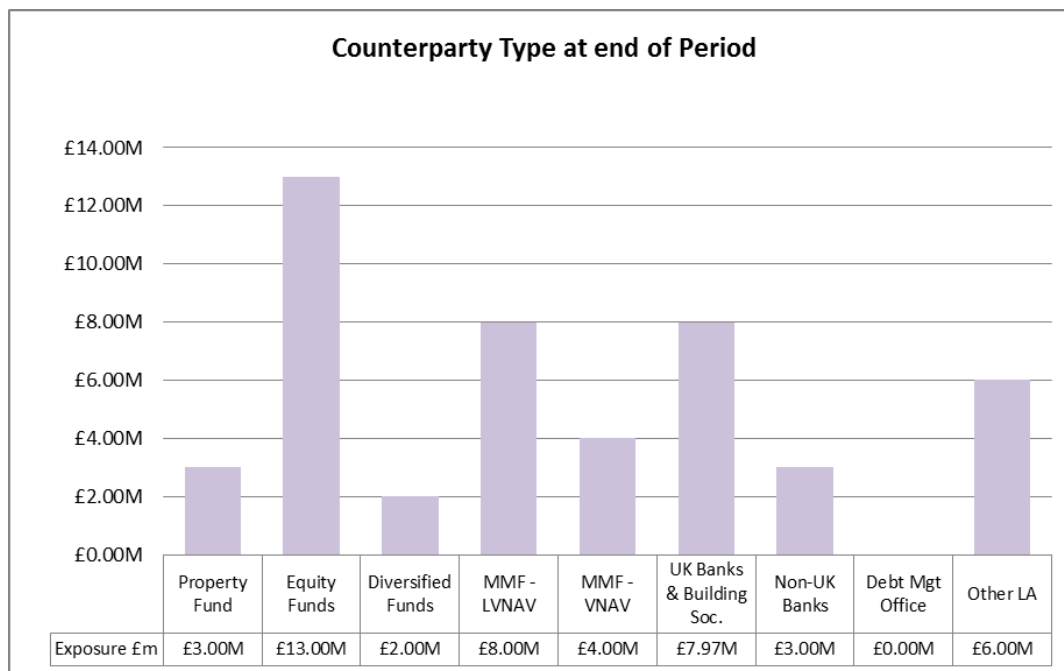
Investment returns have been increased by the dividend income earned from long-term investments. The amount of dividend income for the year from long-term pooled funds included a one-off retrospective adjustment, which if excluded, resulted in an adjusted return of 4.95%. In addition, being exposed to equities and property, the value of these funds fluctuate based on prevailing market conditions. At the end of the year the market valuation for all pooled funds was £19.308million, representing an unrealised gain of £1.308million on the original amounts invested.

Reflecting the upward movement in interest rates, a revised forecast of cash balances, and the increased amount invested in pooled funds, the Council's budget for 2019/20 includes an expected additional £181,000 of investment income.

Market Commentary

Whilst December was a turbulent month, most notably for equities, since the beginning of the calendar year markets have rallied, and the FTSE 100 and FTSE All Share indices were both around 10% higher than at the end of 2018. Gilt yields continued to display significant volatility on the back of ongoing economic and political uncertainty in the UK and Europe. The increase in Bank Rate earlier in the financial year pushed up money market rates.

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



LVNAV = Low Volatility Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value is expected to remain constant
VNAV = Variable Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value and therefore amounts invested can fluctuate

General Fund Balances

General Fund balances are held for the following reasons:

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

Based on the outturn set out above, the movement on the General Fund balance is as follows:

	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2018	2,860
Add:	
Budgeted addition	228
Pension Fund triennial payment	1,411
Transfer from unused earmarked reserves	612
In-year variance	1,545
Less:	
Supplementary budget	(219)
Carry forwards	(650)
Balance at 31 March 2019	5,787

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

- The budget approved by Council for 2018/19 included an anticipated addition to balances of £228,072, reflecting savings anticipated being made in advance of future years' budget shortfalls.

- The budget for 2017/18 included a one-off payment to the Pension Fund covering the period April 2017 to March 2020, which was in part funded from General Fund balances. A repayment back into balances was expected in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- The budget process for 2019/20 included a review of existing earmarked reserves out of which it was agreed that two reserves with a balance of £600,000 were no longer required and could be credited back to the unallocated General Fund balance. Following a review of budget carry forwards brought forward from 2017/18, one item of £12,590 was identified as no longer being required and so this amount has also been credited back to the unallocated balance.
- The outturn variance for the year would mean an additional £1.545 million being added to balances; however, this is offset by the total of agreed carry forwards of £650,000. Requests for carry forwards were considered by Management Board and subsequently approved on 1st May 2019, by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance under delegation which was approved as part of the 2019/20 budget process.
- An allocation from General Fund balances was approved by Full Council in July 2018 to meet a supplementary budget request for the transitional costs of the Strategic Investment Team.

Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked reserves form part of the overall General Fund balances, but reflect decisions which have been made to ring-fence amounts for specific purposes. Generally, these reserves fall into four categories:

- Capital investment – revenue resources set aside to support the Council's capital investment programme, either for specific projects or the programme in general.
- Risk Management – resources set aside to manage some of the inherent risks in the Council's activities e.g. treasury management, business rates income, and collection of housing benefit overpayments
- Service Reserves – reserves set-up for specific services/ initiatives, including annually approved budget carry forwards
- Change Management – to support the Council in terms of organisation development and improvement programmes.

The outturn position reported is after a net addition to reserves of £168,000 million made in accordance with the approved purposes. This includes an addition of £394,000 of New Burdens' government grants which have been paid to the Council to fund a range of national priorities to be delivered by local authorities and/ or as a result of changes by Government in roles and responsibilities.

A further £650,000 was added to reserves for the 2018/19 approved carry forwards.

The overall movement on earmarked reserves can be summarised as follows:

	Additions	Withdrawals	Transfer to unallocated General Fund balance	Net Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Movement on earmarked reserves	4,438	(3,333)	(612)	493
New carry forwards	650	-	-	650
Total	5,088	(3,333)	(612)	1,143

The total amount held in earmarked reserves at the 31st March 2019 was £22.625 million.

Risks and Assumptions

The outturn is subject to finalisation of the Council's Statement of Accounts which is scheduled to be completed by the end of May, following which the Council's external auditors, BDO LLP commence their audit. The outcome of the audit could lead to changes in the outturn, details of which will be reported to the Governance Committee and Cabinet when receiving the final audited financial statements.

The outturn will be reviewed to ensure that any on-going issues have either been/ will be addressed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy as detailed planning commences for the 2020/21 budget.

Capital Investment

Taking into account projects which were in progress and carried forward from earlier years, new projects approved as part of the Budget agreed in February 2018, and the subsequent decisions taken by Council on some major growth and infrastructure projects, the overall capital programme currently totals £53.4million. Delivery of significant projects will span a number of years, therefore, the amount that was expected to be spent in the current year was £13.777million. The following table shows how much was spent at the end of year.

	Profiled Spend 2018/19 £000	Actual Spend £000	Actual Spend % of Profile %
Commercial and investment property	8,368	6,993	84%
Manor Steet regeneration	579	470	81%
Springwood Drive business units and parking	639	542	85%
Planned maintenance to Council premises	533	418	78%
Replacement vehicles and plant	645	631	98%
Information technology systems (incl broadband)	437	414	95%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	398	201	51%
Spa Road environmental improvements	302	291	96%
Museum ICT & replacement heating system	115	115	100%
Operational equipment	335	229	68%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	83	-	0%
Cordons Farm waste transfer station	23	-	0%
Grants to registered social landlords	47	16	34%
Grants to private home owners – disabled facilities grants	909	873	96%
Capital salaries - recharged from revenue	364	402	110%
Total	13,777	11,595	84%

The programme for 2018/19 increased by £677,000 in the final quarter. This included the market value attributable to the transfer of Osier House to the Council under a planning Section 106 agreement, and reprofiling of previously agreed project spending.

Total spend for the year was £11.595million leaving £2.182million of the programme budget remaining. Of this amount £2.066 million is being carried over into 2019/20 for ongoing projects.

Capital resources

The main sources of new capital resources anticipated for the year were from the sale of land (£3.674 million), preserved right-to-buy (RTB) receipts (£1 million) and a share of savings from a VAT shelter operating in conjunction with Greenfields Community Housing (£250,000).

During the final quarter a sale of land was completed resulting in a capital receipt of £2.52 million. Earlier in the year the Council also received an overage payment of £136,000 relating to a previous sale of land.

A number of other sites where contracts have been exchanged are still subject to buyers gaining satisfactory planning consents. Consequently, sales are now not expected to complete until at least 2019/20.

Greenfields reported that 27 RTB sales were completed up to the end of year generating £3.838 million for the Council. This compares to 20 sales completed last year which generated £2.122million for the Council.

VAT shelter monies due for the year were £252,000.

Grant funding of £961,000 was received from the Better Care Fund, which is being used to pay for the Council's disabled facilities grant scheme. This is an increase of £261,000 over that originally anticipated for the year with £70,000 of this funding being carried over into 2019/20.