

# Second Quarter Performance Management Report

1st July 2022 to 30th September 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 second 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 second quarter

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




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Connecting People and Places	4	6	1	0	0
Enhancing our Environment	5	7	1	0	0
Supporting our Communities	3	13	0	0	1
Promoting Prosperity	2	7	2	0	0
Delivering and Innovating	3	10	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

#### 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 second quarter**

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

#### **KEY:**

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

### **Summary Position**

At the end of the second quarter, a further seven projects are now complete bringing the total completed to 17. A further 43 projects are on track and progressing well although some have been through the appropriate change management process to amend the end date due to being re-prioritised or re-scoped as necessary to accommodate new and competing demands on the Council. Four projects have an amber status mainly due to delays in processes. Full details are provided in the report.

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 which will be taking place over the next six months. For the targets that remain, nine performance indicators have met or exceed target, one performance indicator has missed target by less than 5% and three performance indicators have missed their target by more than 5%. The areas of underperformance are in relation to recycling rates (>5%), the percentage of land that falls below the cleanliness standards (>5%), the average waiting time for disabled facility grants (>5%) and the percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale (<5%).

Once again, the Council is stepping up to a new challenge providing support to residents through the cost-of-living crisis. The council is working in partnership on schemes to help keep people warm, save energy and feed themselves and their families whilst signposting to additional information and organisations that can offer further support. The Council recognises the impact on services and is mindful that performance will be affected as demand in some areas increases and with far more support required over the coming months.



## Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy

# CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES







### Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Adopt the Braintree District Local Plan providing a vision for the future growth of the district</b>		
The Council formally adopted Section 2 of the Local Plan at a meeting of Full Council in July 2022. Section 2 contains local policies and allocations to guide development of homes, employment, infrastructure and community facilities in the Braintree district between now and 2033. Section 1 of the Plan, which was adopted in February 2021 and is shared by Tendring District and Colchester Borough Councils, sets the key vision, objectives, and overall strategic direction for growth. Now that Section 2 of the Local Plan has been adopted, it has full weight in determining planning applications.	August 2022	✓
<b>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</b>		
The Victoria Square development is now complete. The £30 million town centre regeneration included a 70-bed Travelodge, 35 new homes, a livewell hub, pharmacy, restaurant, new bus interchange, public toilets, a car park and garden area to complement Braintree's historic Town Hall. A ceremony has been held with partners to mark and celebrate the completion of the build.	August 2022	✓
<b>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</b>		
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	✓
<b>Deliver events in Braintree town centre to increase footfall and support local retailers taking advantage of the newly pedestrianised town centre</b>		
The Braintree Street markets take place on the last Saturday of each month and continue to attract visitors to our high street businesses. Plans are underway for Christmas events including the Christmas light switch on in November. New directional wayfinding signs have been installed in Braintree town centre to	March 2023	▶

celebrate Braintree's history and help visitors navigate through the town centre.		
<b>Deliver physical improvements to the town centres of Witham and Halstead</b>		
Stakeholders have approved the designs for the improvements to the town centres which 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. The works will now be going out to tender in the third quarter.	March 2023	
<b>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</b>		
The Housing Research and Development Team have been continuing with the research required and the evidence base to inform the priorities of the new Housing Strategy. Consultation with stakeholders will take place in October and a draft strategy should be ready in November with public consultation taking place in December.	March 2023	

### Actions carried out in partnership with others







Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Continue to work with our partners on the planning decisions of strategic highway schemes for the A12, A120 and A131 Chelmsford Bypass</b>		
A development consent order has been submitted to the Department for Transport in August 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 in October with night-time road closures in place to carry out the works. In respect of the A120 upgrade, we are awaiting further details from National Highways on the current position of the project.	March 2023	
<b>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</b>		
The cycle video launched in conjunction with National Bike week in June was used again for Bike to Work week in August. The council has also supported three local cycling organisations who have now received cycling grants up the value of £12k. 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 October 2022.	March 2023	
<b>Introduce the new Digital Demand Responsive Transport service, linking Horizon 120, with a fleet of electric mini-buses, to surrounding areas and central Braintree</b>		
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	
<b>Continue to support and monitor Superfast Essex in the delivery of Superfast Broadband across the district</b>		
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%. Superfast Essex and Gigaclear	March 2023	

have been running campaigns to increase uptake and to raise awareness of 5G.		
<b>Facilitate the delivery of a purpose-built medical centre in Sible Hedingham</b>		
Planning permission has been granted. The land transfer continues to be delayed and the end date has now been pushed back to December 2022. This is to allow adequate time for the necessary process requirements to complete within the NHS to exchange contracts	December 2022	⚠




#### Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>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</b>		
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 review of air quality in the district has been completed by the Consultants. A report will be taken to Management Board in the third quarter.	December 2022	▶
<b>Provide replacement litter bins along the A120 and A12 to keep laybys litter free and our district clean and tidy</b>		
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	✓
<b>Continue to deliver campaigns and work with our communities to</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce litter, keeping our district clean and tidy</li> <li>• Reduce waste and increase recycling</li> <li>• Improve awareness and understanding of climate change</li> </ul>		
The Love Essex campaign launched in August with local media releases and promotion in Council newsletters. the slogan 'It's for driving on, not littering on' highlighted the fixed penalty fines for anyone caught throwing litter from their	March 2023	▶

vehicle and local businesses, KFC and McDonalds supported the campaign by displaying banners with the message 'it's a takeaway not a throwaway'. The campaign will run for six weeks.		
The 'Let's get it right' campaign is being finalised and aims to reduce contamination in the recycling waste streams collected by educating and encouraging residents to recycle the right things. The campaign will be launched in October in conjunction with Recycle Week which has been rescheduled to October following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.	March 2023	
A 'beat the heat' campaign was launched during the heatwave to give advice to residents and communities on how to stay safe in hot weather. The Councils Contact magazine shared inspiring stories of local residents and businesses doing their bit to raise awareness of climate change as well as sharing tips to be more environmentally friendly and save money	March 2023	
<b>Carry out drainage works at Braintree cemetery to eliminate flooding and increase burial capacity</b>		
A topographical survey was carried out in July and final plans were submitted to the Environment Agency. The approval of the designs by the Environment Agency were delayed which has had a knock-on effect to the procurement process. Tender documents have been completed with a view to going out to tender in the third quarter. The end date of the project has been amended accordingly.	March 2023	
<b>Carry out refurbishments to eight play areas across the district providing improved facilities for young people to enjoy</b>		
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	
<b>Consult with local residents and users of our skate parks at Weavers Park in Braintree and Spa Road in Witham around replacement of facilities</b>		
Public consultation with local residents and users of the skate parks was due to go live in September. Due to the death of her late Majesty the Queen, consultation will now be launched at the beginning of October. Online consultation forms have been tested with promotion arranged via social media and through community engagement events. The end date of the project has been pushed back to December to allow time for the consultation results to be analysed.	December 2022	
<b>Create a garden of remembrance at Bocking cemetery providing a peaceful environment for families to visit</b>		
The contract for this project had to be re-tendered due to the withdrawal of the previous contractor. The new tender was published in August and due to costs coming back higher than the available budget, the council is currently exploring the option of using S106 contributions to fund the budget gap. The end date of the project has been revised to the end of December 2022.	December 2022	

## Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Deliver actions set out in our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to achieve our long term aims of being a carbon neutral district</b>		
The Council is still waiting for updated government guidance in several areas following the Environmental Bill receiving Royal Assent in November 2021. Following Council approval in July regarding monitoring of the Climate Change Action Plan, quarterly updated will now be included in this report on the progress against the themes of the Strategy. A full report will be published on our website at the end of the year.	March 2023	
<b>Involve residents and communities in tree and bulb planting across the district</b>		



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 <a href="https://www.braintree.gov.uk/advice-environment/climate-change/6">https://www.braintree.gov.uk/advice-environment/climate-change/6</a> as well as encouraging everyone who has planted trees to plot their location on the Queens Green Canopy Map.	December 2021	✓
<b>Complete our trial of anti-litter signage and continue to deter people from littering along highway verges</b>		
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	✓



## CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS

An internal lead officer Climate Change Delivery Board has been established with the purpose of monitoring delivery of the 73 actions in the Climate Action Plan. The actions in the Climate Action Plan are classified under seven themes and progress on these themes is outlined below:

### Resources

Work continues regarding establishing a Sustainable Procurement Policy within the Council. Water butts have been ordered for the Council's cemeteries and will be installed in Quarter 3. Officers are Investigating options around the re-use of rainwater run off at Cordon's Farm. A Climate Change staff training program is being created. A full review of the waste management service is being progressed although this is dependent on the secondary legislation due from Environment Act 2021. Numerous campaigns have been run supporting residents with energy efficiency, food reuse, shopping local many of which also targets the current Cost of Living crisis. External Climate focusing partnerships have been developed further. Continued recycling messaging has been shared across social media platforms.

### Energy Conservation

The Council has 0.6MW of solar on its estate generating 392,385kW hours in 2021-22. The Council estate in 2020-1 used 1,717,153kWh of electricity. The Council is in the process of renewing its energy contracts and we are reviewing inclusion of a green tariff as part of this process. Capital bids have been submitted for the purchase of solar panels at Springwood Drive Industrial Estate as well as the replacement of current lighting at all Leisure Centres to LED lighting.

### Built Environment

The Plaza and the iConstruct buildings have now opened and act as flagship sites for the promotion of sustainable development. A Sustainable Planning Checklist has been written and is awaiting approval. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) on sustainability and carbon reduction, including waste management, biodiversity gain, encouraging developers to exceed targets and build sustainable, resilient and efficient new homes is underway and on track for completion by March 2023.

## **Transport**

Electric Vehicle charging points have been installed at The Plaza. There are now 54 charging units the majority of which are fast chargers across Council Car Parks. The Council have created a partnership with Gridserve UK and continue to work with BP Pulse to investigate locations for installation of rapid charging units. The Council's Sustainability Team continue to signpost residents to Essex County Council's on-street charging referral page. Superfast Broadband forecasts have risen. The Council continue to promote and support active travel including cycling and walking and the new DigiGo service has been promoted widely. An internal Renewable Fuel Vehicle Replacement working group has been established and is investigating options around lowering the Council's fleet emissions.

## **Business and the Green Economy**

The Council have again engaged businesses within the district to take part in a solar auction to provide support with installing solar packs on premises. We have continued to promote LoCase and FAIR schemes across the district. Nine businesses have been supported to achieve a successful LoCase grant. Support has been given to Essex County Council to develop their Green Business Accreditation Award. A survey was sent to local businesses to gauge an understanding of how the Council can support them further with advice and signposting. A new "Green Business" feature has been agreed for launch in Quarter three which will be included in fortnightly business newsletters.

## **Natural Environment**

The Council continue to follow a "single cut" policy in certain areas of the district. The Council have received funding from the Changing Futures Programme to create a Braintree Community Garden for adults with multiple complex disadvantages/needs. Potential partnerships have also been identified for the further development of rewilding and tree planting across the district. A baseline accounting tool has been created which will allow the Council to map and carbon calculate planting.

## **Adapting to Climate Change**



The Corporate Risk Register is up to date and the partnership with ERF remains constant. Throughout August, there was continuous messaging for heatwave management and fire mitigation to inform and support residents. There were also messages on water saving and risk management during droughts. At the end of August, flood risk warnings and resident advice against flooding was shared. A severe weather plan is in place. Internal 'Rest Centre' training is being undertaken in November to support the community if required.

# SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES











## Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Replace the artificial grass pitch at Braintree Sports and Health Club</b>		
The contract and spend to replace the artificial grass pitch at Braintree Sports and Health Club was agreed at Cabinet in July. Works commenced in September and due to supply chain issues in respect of the goals and dugouts, completion is now expected to be in October and the end date of the project has been amended to reflect this.	October 2022	
<b>Carry out physical improvements to Braintree Sports and Health club and Halstead Leisure Centre</b>		
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	
<b>Revitalise our Community Transport scheme and increase the number of volunteers</b>		
The service currently has 20 volunteer drivers shared between the social car scheme and minibs hire scheme. In the second quarter of the year, the Community Transport team provided 6,530 journeys. Demand for the service post pandemic is starting to increase. The Community Transport service have been working with Community 360 to promote volunteer driving opportunities at various events across the district.	March 2023	
<b>Deliver the Braintree District Volunteer Awards to recognise the contribution volunteers make in our district</b>		
The Volunteer awards took place on the 11 <sup>th</sup> August at the I-Construct Innovation Hub. This year there was an additional award to recognise the covid response made by volunteers. Live social media posts announced winners as their awards were presented. The annual awards are now in their sixth year and continue to successfully recognise and reward individuals and groups who make a positive difference in their community and in inspiring others.	August 2022	
<b>Continue to work with communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live through the development of local neighbourhood plans</b>		
The Kelvedon Neighbourhood plan was formally adopted at a meeting of Full Council in July 2022. This brings the total number of neighbourhood plans adopted in the district to six with eight others being progressed including the Feering Neighbourhood Plan which is subject to a referendum in the third quarter. A	March 2023	

Neighbourhood area for Witham was also approved in September.		
<b>Set up a young people's panel to encourage more young people to have their say on things that matter to them</b>		
Contact has been made with a local youth group and engagement sessions will be set up following the October half term.	March 2023	
<b>Continue to deliver our LiveWell programme, focussing on:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting children and their families to have the best start in life</li> <li>• Supporting older people to age well</li> <li>• Supporting children and adults to have good mental health</li> <li>• Tackling obesity in adults and children</li> <li>• Reducing hip fractures in over 65's</li> </ul>		
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 (which average 200 walkers each month), fitness classes for people with health conditions and the over 60's, seated exercise classes, dance lessons and weight management sessions. Funding has been applied for through Active Essex to offer a large group walk on 4th November at Markshall Estate in Coggeshall, to be held during Stress Awareness week. Transport will be included for those who need it and a free hot drink. A community Garden at the Tabor Centre in Weavers Park is being designed. The first meeting of the working group will take place in October.	March 2023	

### Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>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</b>		
We continue to work with Active Essex and Community 360 to provide activities and a nutritious meal through the school holiday periods. The summer holiday sites saw 82% of children return to an activAte club. During the summer, 11 clubs were provided by ten organisations providing support to 644 children and young people	March 2023	
<b>Continue to work with Community 360 to promote volunteering opportunities and support the voluntary sector</b>		
Community 360 now lead on the promotion, recruitment and allocation of volunteering across the district. Work has been ongoing with the Community Transport team to promote volunteering driving opportunities at various events across the district.	March 2023	
<b>Continue to develop a range of initiatives to address social isolation and loneliness across the district</b>		
The Braintree District Social Isolation and Loneliness Forum met in July to discuss the activities that took place during Loneliness Awareness Week in June which the Forum agreed were very successful. The All In Alliance held a drop in event in August at the United Reformed Church in Witham and a focus group at Witham library in September to explore ideas for activities aimed at 16 - 19 year olds to address social isolation with representation from Witham Town Council, United Reformed Church, Community360, Heads2Minds, Hold Fast Credit Union and United in Kind. Activity suggestions will be narrowed down by All In before taking forward any projects. The next meeting of the Braintree District Social Isolation and Loneliness Forum is scheduled for October	March 2023	
<b>Continue to work with Essex County Council on the Governments 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' on initiatives to prevent rough sleepers returning to the streets</b>		
The Next Steps accommodation programme to provide stable accommodation and tailored support to prevent people returning to rough sleeping and begin to rebuild their lives is now up and running with all six units of accommodation now occupied.	March 2023	

Regular meetings with NACRO take place to monitor progress.		
<b>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</b>		
Essex Police's Strategic Vulnerability Centre, Crime and Public Protection Command organised a meeting in September promoted to all partner agencies by the Community Safety Partnership to provide an overview on the Child Exploitation Team and the proactive measures being put into place, how restorative justice could assist victims of crime and to provide a better understanding on the use of out of court disposal options and the proactive orders available.	March 2023	
<b>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</b>		
The Mid Essex Alliance provided a data set which alongside the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment data portal will enable the Council to develop a local health profile. The Livewell Hub in Manor Street was officially opened and we will be exploring the potential community use for this. The Council has provided support to Colne Valley Primary Care Network to promote and expand their Low Carb project encouraging members of their community to lead a low carb lifestyle.	March 2023	
<b>Work with our leisure providers to get people back into activity improving their physical and mental health</b>		
There are numerous activities across the district with growing participation as people get back into activity. The cardiac rehab sessions held at Braintree Sports and Health Club and Witham Leisure Centre have increased their session times to deal with an increase in demand. Active Essex have recruited a Community Engagement Co-ordinator and a Sports and Community Development Officer to ensure activities are promoted and to lead on projects to encourage people to take part in sport to lead a healthier lifestyle.	March 2023	
<b>Engage with school age children and young adults through careers, jobs and apprenticeship fairs to inspire young people to raise their aspirations</b>		
An apprenticeship fair took place in September at Chelmsford City Racecourse for year 11 students to meet a range of employers and to hear about apprenticeship opportunities. A further jobs fair will take place in March and work will begin on this in the third quarter. Officers from the Council have met with ACL (Adult Courses and Learning) to discuss outreach programmes for rural areas. Projects to support skills have been included as part of the Shared Prosperity Fund bid submitted in August.	March 2023	



# PROMOTING PROSPERITY







## Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>Continue with the development of Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park creating up to 2,000 high quality jobs</b>		
The Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park continues to be developed with a number of buildings currently under construction. At the Cabinet meeting in July, they approved that the Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure remained under the ownership and stewardship of the Council and to agree terms, with Marshgate Developments, for the grant of improved access rights to and from an adjoining 9 acre plot. The developer has now requested a planning pre-app.	March 2023	▶
<b>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</b>		
The Plaza opened in July 2022 providing private offices, a co-working space with desks for individuals as well as businesses, shared meeting rooms, seminar rooms, conference and event spaces and a café area.	July 2022	✓
<b>Develop the Witham Enterprise Centre providing small industrial units for start-up companies and SMEs</b>		
The Planning pre-app has identified a number of planning constraints and therefore the scheme design is being reviewed.	March 2024	⚠
<b>Complete the I-construct innovation centre supporting the development of SMEs in the construction sector</b>		
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	✓
<b>Refresh our Plan for Growth to identify future priorities and deliver the outcomes of the associated Action Plan</b>		
The consultants have completed their research project which has been provided to the Council to enable a draft strategy to be prepared based on the findings. Key priorities are continuing to be tested with members and businesses before taking	March 2023	▶



the draft new plan to Cabinet in November.		
<b>Deliver campaigns to promote Braintree District as a place to invest in, live in and visit</b>		
There continues to be a number of campaigns to promote the district including take up of the facilities at the Plaza, the new garden and area behind the Town Hall, training and funding opportunities to support businesses, promotion of the street markets, Bocking Windmill and parks as places to visit together with the summer events guide. A summer tourism video was shared on social media to bring in more out of district visitors. The Councils Marketing and Communications team have also supported smaller businesses throughout the summer by sharing details of their events.	March 2023	
<b>Support individuals back into employment by addressing barriers and providing tailored support and access to training</b>		
Since being in post, the Community Support and Employment Officer has engaged with 206 people resulting in 172 people accessing training and support. To date 31 people have secured employment through the programme. The Councils Community Engagement Officer attended the Witham Jobs fair in September to promote the scheme resulting in a further eleven referrals.	March 2023	

### **Actions carried out in partnership with others**

<b>Project description and comments</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>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</b>		
The programme continues to be delivered with monthly update meetings with all suppliers being held and KPIs reported against. There is further work ongoing with partners to promote the digital skills development scheme.	March 2023	
<b>Continue to develop the business support offer for the construction sector as part of the I-construct innovation centre</b>		
A letter from Cllr Cunningham was sent to approximately 400 Springwood Industrial Estate businesses to encourage them to register for the I-Construct programme which provides grants and a membership network for all businesses who serve the construction and built environment sector. The Haven Gateway Partnership also hosted a stand at the opening of the Plaza in September to further promote the offer of I-Construct.	March 2023	
<b>Continue to provide signposting to business support, advice and suitable grants</b>		
The Economic Development Team continue to signpost businesses to support, advice and information on grants which now includes a dedicated webpage on The Plaza website. The Council submitted 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. The Council is awaiting the outcome of this.	March 2023	
<b>Ensure residents have access to the skills programmes and education they need to access employment opportunities including in new and expanding sectors</b>		
The Council is currently waiting on the outcome of the submission to the shared prosperity fund which is expected in October to better understand how this will be utilised for skills and education before creating a skills plan.	March 2023	






# DELIVERING AND INNOVATING






## Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
<b>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.</b>		
There are a number of projects being progressed under the Investment and Development programme of works. The opening of the Plaza will secure income from office lettings and events and a review of all traded services will help to understand opportunities to increase income. The approach to our Investment and Development Programme will be reviewed with new terms of reference. Monthly senior officer and member meetings continue to review and track progress of the programme.	March 2023	▶
<b>Refresh our Digital Strategy and action plan to address future demand and improve the way we use technology to deliver services</b>		
There are a number of priorities in our previous strategy which are still relevant. They have been reviewed and updated to reflect current and future needs and the revised Digital Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in the third quarter.	December 2022	▶
<b>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</b>		
The Plaza Meeting Rooms and Hatchery spaces online booking process is now live. A number of online forms for waste processes have been reviewed and updated to ensure they can feed into the new waste management system going live in October. Further online forms will be reviewed once the system is live. The end date of this project has been amended to reflect the ongoing work around the development of the online forms planned for the remainder of the year.	March 2023	▶
Residents are now able to sign up to receive their council tax bills electronically and promotion of this will be ongoing.	March 2022	✔
<b>Develop a plan of community engagement to better understand the needs of our local communities</b>		
A number of community events have been held across the district in the second quarter including a Livewell event, Police open day, All-in event, Community Market Place event where information and feedback from residents has been captured for the 'Love where you live' survey as well as providing information about local services, activities and support. Additional community events for our Ukrainian guests and sponsors have been announced and will run monthly until the end of the year. These events will now include English conversational language lessons.	March 2023	▶









<b>Use customer information and feedback to improve services whilst working towards retaining the accreditation for customer service excellence</b>		
The Customer Service Excellence Assessment took place in September and the Council has been successful in retaining the accreditation for the seventh year in a row.	September 2022	
<b>Review the criteria for the discretionary business rates scheme for charitable and non-profit organisations</b>		
The criteria for the discretionary business rates scheme has been reviewed and no changes to the criteria are being made. The relief scheme has been published and all current recipients of this relief have been contacted and asked to reapply so that entitlement can be reassessed against policy.	March 2023	
<b>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</b>		
The Specialist Domestic Abuse Officer is now in post and is providing support to colleagues within the Housing Service. They are also establishing links with others in similar roles in other Authorities and looking into DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation to enable the council to respond to domestic abuse situations more effectively.	March 2023	
The Council is still waiting for the Government to formally announce the policy changes 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.	March 2023	


### **Actions carried out in partnership with others**







<b>Project description and comments</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>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</b>		
Fusion continue to see an increase in participation levels with all restrictions now lifted and will be looking to set targets again for 2023/24. Works to upgrade the gym facilities at all four centres across the district will start in October 2022	March 2023	
<b>Review and adopt a new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex and enhance the value of joint working through the waste management partnership</b>		
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	
<b>Look at how the Greater Essex system will work together for the benefit of our residents in response to Levelling Up</b>		
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, the Council submitted in August, its own investment plan for our £1.36million share of the government's Shared Prosperity Fund to support communities and businesses over the next three years. The plan is expected to be approved in the autumn to enable work to start on the proposals for year one.	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	70			37		
Percentage of superfast broadband coverage across the district	95%	95%			n/a	n/a	
Cumulative number of homes granted planning permission (outline and full)	148	569			540		<i>The breakdown between full and outline permissions are as follows: Full – 153 Outline - 416</i>
ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT							
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	52.04%	50.41%			60%		<i>Figures are awaiting validation by Essex County Council. The residual waste tonnage collected in the second quarter was down by 243 tonnes, with dry mixed recycling increased by 82 tonnes compared to the previous quarter. The excessive hot dry period throughout the summer impacted on the amount of garden waste collected, with a reduction of 643 tonnes compared to the first quarter of the year. As expected, the lower garden waste tonnage is a trend reported by most Council's across the Essex Waste Partnership. This illustrates the seasonality and regular changes that can occur during the annual growing season.</i>
Kilograms of residual household waste collected per household	107kgs	103kgs			117kgs		
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	7%			6%		<i>Recorded three times a year – July, November and March. Main issues with littering have been on the trunk road (A12) where we continue to see high deposits around slip road locations. The Council are liaising with National Highways to arrange works to remove the litter however, there is a 12-week lead time for organising traffic management on slip roads and other roadworks schemes are currently taking precedence.</i>
Number and percentage of accessible non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (168)	100% (197)			100%		
Number of residents assisted in installing energy saving measures	Annually reported						

Performance Indicator	2022/23						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES							
Average waiting time for applicants on the Disabled Facilities Grant (calculated in days from point of referral to approval)	153 days	151 days			90 days		<i>In the second quarter, the service received 70 new grant referrals (8 of which were critical) and approved 32 cases (4 of which were critical). Critical cases approved in the quarter were dealt with on average in 20 days, with the quickest of those completed in 3 days. The remaining caseload at the end of the second quarter is 107. It remains the case that builder's quotes are taking longer to turn around due to the ongoing high demands in the industry and the current difficulties with the supply of materials. Additional approved contractors who work to an appropriate standard are in the process of being added to the approved builder's list. The Team are continuing to receive a high number of complex needs cases some of which involve seeking planning permission and working with multiple partner organisations before final approval can be achieved. The team progresses these complex cases whilst managing the ongoing workload of substantial and critical applications. The reluctance of the elderly and vulnerable to let people into their homes following the pandemic to allow for assessments of works continues to improve.</i>
Participation levels across all our sports centres	167,599	179,405			n/a	n/a	
Participation of adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported						
Number of customers using out Handyman scheme	49	50			n/a	n/a	
Number of homelessness cases prevented	60	61			n/a	n/a	
PROMOTING PROSPERITY							
Percentage of people in the district claiming out of work benefits rate (aged 16 – 64)	2.5%	2.6%			n/a	n/a	
Number of new business start-ups across the district	239	234			n/a	n/a	
Number of businesses that have contacted us for business support	116	67			n/a	n/a	
DELIVERING AND INNOVATING							
Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the Customer Service	73%	73%			n/a	n/a	

Performance Indicator	2022/23						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
Centre							
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	97.83%	97.7%			97%		
Number of people transacting with us online	41,016	30,730			n/a	n/a	
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	18.3 days	15.23 days			20 days		
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	10.93 days	4.45 days			6 days		
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 7 working days	95.83%	88.20%			90%		<i>Represents 142 out of 161 stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescales. There has been an increase in the number of planning complaints received in the second quarter requiring additional time to provide a response. Complainants have been kept informed of progress.</i>
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.01%	57.4%			57.5%		<i>Marginally off target. Collection is still holding up and comparable with last year and benchmarks positively against other Essex billing authorities. There is a risk that as the cost-of-living continues to impact households this could impact future collection performance</i>
Collection rate for Business Rates	31.26%	56.9%			51.6%		

## **Complaints**

The quarterly complaints analysis for the second 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.

<b>Complaint Category</b>	<b>Q1 2022/23</b>	<b>Q2 2022/23</b>	<b>Q3 2022/23</b>	<b>Q4 2022/23</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Justified	40 (51)	87 (67)	(39)	(49)	(206)
Not Justified	61 (82)	65 (68)	(49)	(60)	(259)
Partially Justified	27 (26)	15 (46)	(7)	(18)	(97)
Not known	0 (0)	0 (0)	(0)	(1)	(1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>128 (159)</b>	<b>167 (185)</b>	<b>(91)</b>	<b>(128)</b>	<b>(563)</b>

## **Comments**

The number of complaints received in the second quarter has increased. The increases are mainly in the Operations and Planning Services.

The majority of complaints relate to the Operations service, in particular, complaints around missed waste collections and bins not being returned to the collection point. Staff shortages of refuse and recycling staff at the beginning of the second quarter impacted on the number of missed collections. Messages were put on our website and social media platforms apologising for the delays and for customers to leave their bins out for collection.

The second quarter has also seen an increase in the number of planning complaints received which are complex in their nature referring to particular planning decisions and processes. Additional time has been required to provide comprehensive responses and ensure all areas of the complaints are addressed.

In the second quarter of 2022/23, of the 167 complaints received:

- 161 are stage one complaints
- 4 are stage two complaints
- 2 are stage three complaints

## **A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:**

In the second quarter of 2022/23, the LGO received one new complaint in respect of the councils consultation on an outline and reserve matters planning application.

In the second quarter, the ombudsman also issued three final decision notices. For two decisions, the LGO declined to investigate the complaint due to their being insufficient or no evidence of fault to warrant an investigation. For the third decision, a complaint against the Planning service was not upheld by the LGO as they did not find any evidence in their investigations of fault by the council causing injustice.

## **Our Organisation**

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

<b>People: Indicators of Performance</b>	<b>Q1 22/23</b>	<b>Q2 22/23</b>	<b>Q3 22/23</b>	<b>Q4 22/23</b>	<b>Change on previous period</b>	<b>Yearly Target</b>
Total headcount	487	487			-	-
Total staff FTE	440.71	439.23			- 1.48	-
Level of employee turnover	2.87%	2.67%			- 0.2	-
Number of leavers	14	13			- 1	-
Number of starters	9	13			+ 4	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.61 days	1.37 days			- 0.24 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	79.01%	68.38%			N/A Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	2400	1,041			- 1,359	-
Number of delegates	106	539			+ 433	-
Number of apprentices **	18	20			+ 2	-

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.

<b>Health &amp; Safety: Indicators of Performance</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	
	(2021/22 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	13 (8)	5 (7)	(9)	(15)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	12 (6)	5 (6)	(8)	(11)	<i>Main areas are slips and trips. One person was hit by a car.</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	0 (2)	0 (1)	(1)	(0)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	1 (0)	0 (0)	(0)	(4)	
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	37 (0)	35 (10)	(22)	(26)	<i>Lost days account for the employee hit by a car.</i>
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	3 (2)	2 (1)	(1)	(1)	
Number of near miss incidents	1 (0)	1 (0)	(0)	(2)	<i>A vehicle reversed into a mower</i>
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	2 (2)	1 (1)	(3)	(3)	
Number of claims settled	4 (1)	0 (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 forecast outturn for the year at Q2 is a positive variance of £126k. This compares to the adverse variance projected at Q1 of £721k, which triggered implementation of a Recovery Plan that required all managers to review their service areas to identify opportunities for increased income, savings, and deferral of expenditure wherever possible. The Recovery Plans, which generated a net £589k, was the main factor in the improvement now reported at Q2. Other changes include a downward revision to the estimated impact of the National Employer's pay offer for 2022 (£47k). Further net improvement (£211k) across services has been projected, the main changes being an increase in investment income (£125k) and a higher level of incentive reward under the Council Tax Sharing Agreement (£110k).

The updated projections will be reviewed to ensure that any ongoing items, if not already, are reflected in the 2023/24 budget planning proposals.

The projected change in General Fund unallocated balance is currently a net addition of £536k giving an estimated balance at 31 March 2023 of £6.6m.

Actual spend on the capital programme was £4.6m, of which £2.9m was on the Plaza, with £0.6m on the Manor Street regeneration project.

### **Background**

Full Council agreed a budget of £13.5m, net of a £2.7m drawdown from the business rate retention reserve to offset a Collection Fund deficit. An adjusted budget figure of £16.2m is therefore used for the purposes of in-year 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 Q2.



Business Plan Service	Updated Budget £'000	Q2 Forecast Spend £'000	Q2 Forecast Variance £'000	Previous Quarter's Variance £'000	Q2 RAG Status
Asset Management	(2,262)	(1,742)	520	434	R
Community & Leisure	682	691	9	22	A
Corporate Management Plan	1,635	1,610	(25)	31	G
Economic Development	223	223	0	9	G
Environment	802	827	25	(11)	A
Finance	1,302	807	(495)	(286)	G
Governance	1,262	1,203	(59)	25	G
Housing Services	812	791	(21)	6	G
Human Resources	855	820	(35)	(3)	G
ICT & Facilities	1,850	1,836	(14)	9	G
Marketing & Communications	605	638	33	5	A
Operations	6,491	6,469	(22)	125	G
Strategic Investment	20	20	0	0	G
Sustainable Development	1,277	1,142	(135)	114	G
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>15,554</b>	<b>15,335</b>	<b>(219)</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>G</b>
Corporate Financing	987	780	(207)	(59)	G
Efficiency	(300)	0	300	300	
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>16,241</b>	<b>16,115</b>	<b>(126)</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>G</b>

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

Key assumptions reflected in the above:

- Staff Pay Award – Q2 projections reflect an updated forecast of the impact of the latest National Employers offer of a flat rate £1,925 per FTE. This would increase pay costs by £724k over that provided in the approved budget.
- Staffing projections are based on known changes at the end of Q2 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	520	93	7	73	347
Community & Leisure	9	(45)	30	(21)	45
Corporate Management Plan	(25)	(65)	12	18	10
Economic Development	0	(8)	8	0	0
Environment	25	134	46	5	(160)
Finance	(495)	(171)	76	89	(489)
Governance	(59)	(50)	30	(35)	(4)
Housing Services	(21)	(47)	44	58	(76)
Human Resources	(35)	(61)	32	(6)	0
ICT & Facilities	(14)	1	30	(45)	0
Marketing & Communications	33	21	16	16	(20)
Operations	(22)	(107)	325	453	(693)
Strategic Investment	0	0	0	0	0
Sustainable Development	(135)	(224)	68	40	(19)
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>(219)</b>	<b>(529)</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>(1,059)</b>
Corporate Financing	(207)	0	0	(9)	(198)
Efficiency	300	300	0	0	0
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>(126)</b>	<b>(229)</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>(1,257)</b>

## **Commentary on Main Service Variances reported at Q2**

### **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 (£93k)
- Loss of rent (£134k) and service charges (£157k) due to areas of Causeway House being vacant, partly offset by operating cost savings and short-term business rate relief (£28k). It is currently assumed that the lettable office space will remain vacant for the remainder of the year.
- A combination of increased operating costs at I-Construct (£66k) mainly due to energy costs; unrecovered service charges at H120 (£22k) whilst some sites are under development or still subject to land sales; and shortfall in rental income (£38k) at Victoria Square as rental agreements are yet to be completed on the pharmacy and retail units. As all these sites are in early stage of operation, there is still a high degree of uncertainty over spending requirements and, where relevant, income that will be achievable.
- Shortfall on income achieved from commercial and other property rent reviews compared to the target assumed in the budget, and rent voids (£51k)

### **Environment**

- Building Control additional agency staff costs net of savings on permanent vacant posts (£174k) which are being incurred due to difficulties in recruitment combined with an increase in service demand, partially offset by increased income (£106k).

### **Finance**

- Staffing related savings from a combination of service efficiencies, vacancies, and appointments at lower scale points (£117k) which offsets the additional cost of the pay award +£76k; and cost recovery through New Burdens funding provided for administering the Energy Rebate Scheme and Covid related grants (£53k).
- Housing Benefits net additional cost of benefits paid (£60k) – 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 (£500k)

### **Operations**

- Staffing underspends due to vacancies within the service (£107k).
- Increased vehicle operating costs due to the market price of diesel (£156k); and spot hire and maintenance of an aging fleet (£131k).
- Provision of wheelie bins and kitchen caddies for new properties and lifecycle replacements (£60k).
- Increase in income from mixed dry recycling material net of higher processing and haulage costs (£691k). This is due to a higher average basket price for material assumed for the year at £113 per tonne against a budgeted £43. The Council has been advised that market prices have peaked and are expected to reduce when reset at the next quarter.
- Recycling and other sacks contract – increased costs following procurement (£56k)
- Saving on contract for In-Cab Technology (£35k)
- Higher glass recycling income (£72k) (price/ tonnage) and Bulky Waste collections (£34k)
- Shortfall in car parking income from pay and display which has still not recovered to levels pre-pandemic. It also still too early to assess the impact of the new Victoria Square car park and general town centre improvements on usage levels (£201k).

## Sustainable Development

- Majority of the staffing underspend (£224k) due to vacancies within the service including new enforcement roles/ landscape services. Some posts are being held vacant as part of the in-year Recovery Plan to meet the higher service cost of the proposed pay offer +£68k.
- Whilst income is projected to be overachieved (£19k) this masks a wide variation with a shortfall in income from Planning Applications and Pre-Applications (£190k), offset by increased income from Planning Performance Agreement (£195k) and other recoveries (£14k).

## Corporate Financing

- Council Tax Sharing Agreement – share-back from preceptors based on local tax collection performance at the end of Q2 is higher than budget (£190k).

## Excluded from the Forecast Variance:

## Economic Development

- The Economic Development team and activities are funded from a combination of base budget, external funding, and an earmarked reserve. Where there are projected variances to the budget these are reflected in movements on the reserve (+/-) creating a neutral financial position.

## Strategic Investment Team (SIT)

- Forecast total cost £570k of which £281k has been estimated will be charged to capital works, leaving a revenue cost of £289k partly funded: £20k base budget; £96k residual balance of SIT reserve. This leaves an estimated shortfall of £173k. Options for funding this shortfall are being assessed in terms of the balance available in the Feasibility Reserve or utilising unallocated New Homes Bonus.

## Capital Programme

Current capital programme totals £18m of which £11.2m is profiled into 2022/23:

	Profiled Spend 2022/23 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 2 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 2 % of Profile
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	879	167	19%
Horizon 120 - The Plaza	4,341	2,891	67%
Manor Street regeneration	734	653	89%
I-Construct Innovation Centre	140	26	19%
Maltings Lane Community Facility	170	9	5%
Town Centre improvements	268	17	6%
Industrial estate improvements	60	2	3%
Property planned maintenance	674	-	0%
Information technology systems & equipment	1,239	47	4%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	573	150	26%
Cemetery improvements	5	-	0%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	100	5	5%
Operational equipment	131	13	10%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	313	2	1%
Climate change initiatives	67	-	0%
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	1,056	382	36%
Capital salaries	476	233	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,226</b>	<b>4,597</b>	<b>41%</b>

## Changes to programme since last report

- The profiled spend in 22/23 has been reduced by £800k from that reported at Q1 with this expenditure now anticipated in 23/24.

## Programme risks

- Manor Street regeneration – final account to be confirmed.
- I-Construct – awaiting final cost which is required to confirm the final claim for European Funding.
- The Plaza – final account to be confirmed
- Inflationary cost and impact on tendered prices
- Capital receipts: residential site sales and Right-to-Buy impacted by economic slowdown

## Capital resources generated

- Sale of serviced land plots at Horizon 120 (£3.9m)
- Interim payments (£363k) from Eastlight in respect of the apartments at Victoria Square.
- Eastlight agreements: Right-to-Buy sales – number of completed sales 6 generating c£966k. The second quarter saw a marked reduction with only one sale completed. The pipeline of sales has also reduced with 22 reported in progress; however, it is uncertain how many of these will proceed to completion given the recent sharp rise in interest rates. VAT shelter receipts were £214k at the end of Q2.
- Better Care Funding received £1.056m which is used to fund expenditure on disabled facilities grants.
- Changing Places Fund £120k ringfenced to construct new disabled toilets within Halstead Leisure Centre and Witham Town Council.

## Treasury Management

### Investment activity

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

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity to the end September		Amount Invested at end of the quarter
	New Investments	Investments Matured	
£56.8m	£109.5m	£100.1m	£66.2m
Average amount invested for the period			£67.0m
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 £739k, which is equivalent to an annualised rate of return of 2.20%:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£19.0m	£464k	4.87%
Short-Term	£47.6m	£275k	1.14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£66.6m</b>	<b>£739k</b>	<b>2.20%</b>

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 £1.3m, which is £500k better than budget. The MTFS assumes an improvement income in 23/24 but based on a lower level of cash being available for investment.

The market value of shares and units in pooled funds at the end of the quarter was £19.8m, representing an unrealised gain of £0.8m over the amount originally invested. The sharp fall in market values at the end of September resulted in the valuations reducing by £1.6m from that reported at the end of Q1.

### 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 across four equity funds; and £3m in two diversified asset funds)
- Low volatility Money Market Funds (MMFs) (4 x £5m) £20m
- Variable net asset value MMF £4m
- Debt Management Office Account Facility £16m
- Short Term Fixed Deposits (2x£3m) £6m
- Lloyds current account £1.2m

### 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:

<b>Balance at 1 April 2022</b>	<b>£'000</b>
	<b>6,056</b>
Addition/(deductions):	
Budgeted reduction	(89)
Funding for one-off investment	(324)
Pension Fund triennial payment – repayment	823
Projected outturn variance at Q2	126
<b>Estimated Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>6,592</b>

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. The amount to be applied has been reduced by £47k reflecting a current projected underspend on the Plaza in the year.
- 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 Q2 is an overall positive variance of £126k.