

Third Quarter Performance Management Report

1st October 2022 to 30th December
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 third 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 third quarter

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




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Connecting People and Places	4	6	1	0	0
Enhancing our Environment	8	5	0	0	1
Supporting our Communities	3	13	0	0	1
Promoting Prosperity	2	8	1	0	0
Delivering and Innovating	4	10	0	0	0
TOTAL	21	42	2	0	2

KEY:




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

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

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

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Connecting People and Places	2	0	0	0
Enhancing our Environment	3	0	1	0
Supporting our Communities	0	0	0	3
Promoting Prosperity	0	0	1	3
Delivering and Innovating	4	2	0	2
TOTAL	9	2	2	8

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 third quarter, a further four projects are now complete bringing the total completed to 21. A further 42 projects are on track and progressing well. Two projects have an amber status as they have experienced delays and one has been cancelled in the third quarter due to the project no longer being financially viable bringing the total number of cancelled projects during the period of the Bouncing Back Together plan to two.

Targets are not set for all performance indicators due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and the need to revisit baseline targets which will be taking place prior to April 2023 in readiness for the next Annual Plan for 2023/24. For the targets that remain, nine performance indicators have met or exceed target, two performance indicators have missed target by less than 5% and two performance indicators have missed their target by more than 5%. The areas of underperformance are in relation to recycling rates (>5%), the average waiting time for disabled facility grants (>5%), response time for complaints (<5%) and the percentage of Council Tax collected (<5%).




The Council continues to respond to the cost-of-living crisis, working hard to address demand on service provision whilst supporting residents, communities and businesses and we will continue to monitor any impact this may have on our performance as we enter the last quarter of the year.

Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy








Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Adopt the Braintree District Local Plan providing a vision for the future growth of the district		
The 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	✓
Rejuvenate Braintree town centre by completing the Victoria Square development providing a Livewell health hub, 35 apartments, a hotel, bus interchange and public open space		
The Victoria Square development is 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	✓
Continue to support the safe return to our town centres and help build back together from the pandemic using the Welcome Back fund and other available funding		
Braintree District Council were allocated £268,835 of Welcome Back funding and the completed spend amounted to £268,811.50. One of the main projects delivered is in respect of the High Street Improvement Fund. This has been a hugely successful intervention, with positive engagement and feedback from businesses. 37 businesses successfully achieved improvements consisting of labour to improve the aesthetics of the retail/hospitality premises to create a safe and welcoming environment.	March 2022	✓
Deliver events in Braintree town centre to increase footfall and support local retailers taking advantage of the newly pedestrianised town centre		

The Braintree Street markets take place on the last Saturday of each month and continue to attract visitors. The Braintree Community Christmas event took place on 19th November 2022 across the Town Centre. As well as hosting over 80 market stalls selling a variety of crafts, foods and drinks, the all-day event had live festive entertainment, circus performers and a number of activities for all to enjoy. Further Christmas markets took place on the 3 rd and 17 th December and a free snowman trail took place during November and December for families to explore the town centre and find snowmen in shops to boost footfall to local businesses.	March 2023	
Deliver physical improvements to the town centres of Witham and Halstead		
Tender packages for civils and landscaping work for both Witham and Halstead Town Centres have been issued and responses will be considered in January 2023. Once the tenders have been awarded, the Council will be able to release the detailed build phase for both towns.	March 2023	
Develop a new Housing Strategy setting out how the Council will support the availability of good quality homes which best meet the needs of the current and future residents		
<p>The new Healthy Housing Strategy for the Braintree district went out to public consultation in December 2022 for 9 weeks. The draft strategy sets out three main commitments from the Council which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating a consistent programme of high quality, affordable homes which best meet the needs of the current and future residents • Supporting communities and enabling housing across the district to meet the needs of all our residents, especially those who are vulnerable • Improving access to and the quality of the Private Rented Sector and make best use of assets and existing properties <p>All feedback received will be considered before the strategy is finalised in March 2023.</p>	March 2023	

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue to work with our partners on the planning decisions of strategic infrastructure schemes		
<p>The Development Consent Order application for the widening of the A12 was submitted to the Planning Inspector in August and accepted for examination in September. There is now a pre-examination period where the public can provide their views on the proposals. A further six-month examination stage will start in January 2023 during which the Planning Inspector will examine the planning documents submitted. The latest round of ground investigation surveys was completed in November and the survey team are evaluating the results. Drainage condition surveys were completed in December and Ecological surveys are ongoing.</p> <p>The A120 Braintree to A12 was identified as a pipeline project and was being progressed by National Highways. The Council is still awaiting official confirmation of the scheme status.</p> <p>In December, National Grid announced that they have taken the decision to remove Hintlesham Woods Option 2 from their proposals for the Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement of overhead powerlines. They will be submitting the Development Consent Order in Spring 2023.</p> <p>The draft Development Consent Order for Longfields Solar Farm was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in early 2022. Preliminary meetings, hearings and site visits have been taking place in the second and third quarter for feedback on the proposals. The examination closes in January 2023.</p>	March 2023	
Work with partners including Essex Highways on the delivery of our Cycling Strategy and implementation plan which includes developing integrated, high quality cycle routes that are safe to use and connected across our district		





In October, Cabinet approved the response to the recommendations within the scrutiny report into cycling and walking in the Braintree District. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Braintree town has now started and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Witham is due to start in January. During the winter months, the Council continued to highlight safe cycling and the new highway code. Discussions are taking place with Essex County Council to implement the Active Travel Fund cycle scheme in Braintree Town. Staged implementation has started with 20mph zones and school streets.	March 2023	
Introduce the new Digital Demand Responsive Transport service, linking Horizon 120, with a fleet of electric mini-buses, to surrounding areas and central Braintree		
The new digital demand responsive transport Service has been launched and the first live outing was on the 1st April 2022. The service is called DigiGo and is a fully electric shared public transport service which offers on-demand or pre-bookable travel in parts of Essex including linking Horizon 120 to surrounding areas and central Braintree. There are no fixed routes or timetable and is booked through the 'Travel Essex' journey planning app and operates 7 days a week from 7am until 10pm.	March 2022	
Continue to support and monitor Superfast Essex in the delivery of Superfast Broadband across the district		
The Braintree district is currently at 95% of premises able to access superfast broadband and is forecast to reach 99% coverage within 3 years. The district wide take up of superfast broadband is currently at 30%. Further updates on the take up figures will be available in early 2023. Superfast Essex and Gigaclear have been running campaigns to increase uptake and Superfast Essex have launched their Gigabit project and are promoting low broadband deals for those on low incomes.	March 2023	
Facilitate the delivery of a purpose-built medical centre in Sible Hedingham		
Planning permission has been granted. The land transfer continues to be delayed and the end date has been pushed back to April 2023. This continues to be monitored and officers are engaging regularly with One Medical Group and the NHS in order to reach the final approval stage for the project.	April 2023	

ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT







Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Carry out air quality reviews in known air pollution hot spots across the district to improve the knowledge of local air quality and the proposed actions to take		
The results of the air quality monitoring in Halstead have shown that no measures need to be put in place. The information from the monitoring in Halstead will be included in the overall air quality review of the district being carried out by external consultants.	May 2022	✓
The review of air quality in the district has been completed by the Consultants and reviewed by Management Board. The Council is still waiting for the secondary legislation from the Environment Act to confirm new targets. This will help the Council to understand what it needs to measure and will feed into new actions.	December 2022	✓
Provide replacement litter bins along the A120 and A12 to keep laybys litter free and our district clean and tidy		
The Council has installed a total of 57 new brightly coloured litter bins along the strategic network within its district, at various lay-bys located on the A12, A120 and A131. The new bins have been match funded by WRAP, allowing the council to invest a total of £30k to give the locations a brand new look. The Council is also trialling seven customised bins that have a large single opening allowing people to dispose of litter without having to leave their vehicle.	March 2022	✓
Continue to deliver campaigns and work with our communities to		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce litter, keeping our district clean and tidy • Reduce waste and increase recycling • Improve awareness and understanding of climate change 		
The Love Essex campaign 'It's for driving on, not littering on' highlighting the fixed penalty fines for anyone caught throwing litter from their vehicle came to an end in October. Further littering campaigns will be launched in 2023/24.	March 2023	✓
Recycle week took place in October (17 th to the 23 rd) with promotion on our social media channels to challenge perceptions and myths around recycling and target contamination to improve recycling behaviours. A video of our recycling facility showing people what happens to their recycling was also launched. The messaging at Christmas focussed on food waste, recycling in the right way, Christmas tree recycling and glass recycling.	March 2023	▶
During the third quarter, the Council promoted discounted water butts and kits resulting in 69 sales. Energy saving measures were promoted through social media	March 2023	▶

and in our contact magazine. A video of Oliver's Plants Nursery showcased how they are developing a sustainable business and addressing climate change.		
Carry out drainage works at Braintree cemetery to eliminate flooding and increase burial capacity		
This project has been closed following a decision by Cabinet at the Strategy Workshop in October due to the unviable costs of the scheme.	March 2023	
Carry out refurbishments to eight play areas across the district providing improved facilities for young people to enjoy		
Refurbishments to the play areas at Church Street in Bocking, Acorn Avenue in Braintree, Shaw Road in Witham and De Vere Road in Earls Colne are now complete providing improved facilities.	May 2022	
Consult with local residents and users of our skate parks at Weavers Park in Braintree and Spa Road in Witham around replacement of facilities		
Public consultation with local residents and users of the skate parks was completed in November 2022. An executive summary report will be considered in the fourth quarter and the results will help to shape the design of the refurbishments of the skate parks.	December 2022	
Create a garden of remembrance at Bocking cemetery providing a peaceful environment for families to visit		
Section 106 funds have been approved and the contract has been awarded. A site visit took place in December to discuss the works required which are now out of season. Works will now start in early spring with a view to completing by the end of June 2023. A change control to amend the end date of the project has been processed.	June 2023	

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Deliver actions set out in our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to achieve our long term aims of being a carbon neutral district		
The Council is still waiting for updated government guidance in several areas following the Environmental Bill receiving Royal Assent in November 2021. Following Council approval in July regarding monitoring of the Climate Change Action Plan, quarterly updates are now 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	
Involve residents and communities in tree and bulb planting across the district		
A high number of applications were received for planting packages. In total, 41,600 bulbs and 4,850 tree whips were handed out to Parish and Town Councils, Schools, Colleges, Charities and local community and voluntary groups. Success stories of planting across the district can be seen on our climate change pages of our website at https://www.braintree.gov.uk/advice-environment/climate-change/6 as well as encouraging everyone who has planted trees to plot their location on the Queens Green Canopy Map.	December 2021	
Complete our trial of anti-litter signage and continue to deter people from littering along highway verges		
The trial of the anti-litter signage closed in November 2021 after a year of strategically placing signs along the highway network. During the trial, there was a reduction in the litter discarded along the highway verges and the merits of the signs were clear. The results will be discussed with Essex Highways and discussions will take place to see if the signs are to become a permanent arrangement across the district.	November 2021	
Consider Opportunities to re-wild open spaces and verges in the district		
The Council's own Maintenance and Landscapes teams have identified potential; areas of land for re-wilding and these are being work up as options. The Council	March 2023	

has attended Parish Council meetings to assist with communicating the project aims to local residents and Essex Wildlife Trust have offered to work with Parish Councils to provide expert guidance.		
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CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS

In the third quarter, further progress has been made to embed Climate Change across the organisation and the district. A staff awareness programme has been developed and two members of staff attended a two-day Carbon Literacy Project training session. The Staff Eco Group was re-established and has met twice.

The Climate Change Delivery Board has continued to meet to review the progress of projects within the Climate Action Plan, which has helped to strengthen collaborative working across departments. The Climate Change Working Group has considered biodiversity over this quarter, with particular focus on biodiversity net gain and Essex County Council's led Climate Focus Area which covers a large percentage of the district

The actions in the Climate Action Plan are classified under seven themes and progress on these themes is outlined below:

Resources

The Council has commissioned a review of its commercial vehicle fleet including options for replacements vehicles based on market availability, consideration of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, affordability and operational suitability. A report will be presented to Management Board in March 2023. The Council is working in partnership with Essex County Council to promote Compost Bins and with their Flood Team to provide subsidised water butts to residents. The uptake this quarter was 69 water butts and 22 compost bins. A Staff Eco Group was re-established (temporarily halted during Covid 19) and the group are sharing ideas and suggestions to raise awareness and promote climate change and to consider what we can do to be more sustainable and help reduce our emissions.

Energy Conservation

Work has been agreed and is scheduled for the replacement of halogen lights with LED lighting at Braintree Swim & Fitness, part of the wider programme to switch the estate to LED lighting. All town and parish councils have been made aware of a scheme run by Essex County Council to collect free of charge, second-hand working LED lanterns to install themselves in their parish. The council, with partners, has submitted a bid for Homes Upgrade Grant (HUG2) funding to install energy efficiency measures in 2023 in off-gas areas which impacts on one third of the district. The Winter Warmth booklet has been created which signposts residents on energy saving measures.

Built Environment

Essex County Council has completed its guidance on how to install renewable technologies on listed properties which is published as part of the Essex Design Guide and a viability study to confirm the costs of net zero for new homes has been finalised and published. A major site in the district is developing no gas homes on its affordable and build for rent elements. When these properties begin to complete over the next year it will provide a useful case study on energy efficiency housing. A consultation was launched on a revised National Planning Policy

Framework to potentially remove the need for the Council to identify areas suitable for renewable energy within a separate development plan. The Council are working in close partnership with Essex County Council through the Local Nature Partnership to support the creation of an environmental assets map. Eastlight have submitted a bid for improvements to 150 homes to the second round of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Transport

The Council are in discussion with installers over fully funded rapid charger infrastructure hubs within our car parks which will form part of a funding bid process for further off-street EV infrastructure in the district. The Councils Taxi Policy is being reviewed and a baseline exercise is underway to understand the current status and potential opportunities for reduced emission taxis across the district. A Healthy School Street zone has been established along Lancaster Way and Gilcrest Road in Braintree where the pavement has been resurfaced to make active travel easier.

Business and the Green Economy

A North Essex Farming Cluster has been established and initial meetings booked to understand how the Council can work with this group and support local farming. The Council are promoting Low Carbon Across the Southeast (LoCASE) funding via businesses who have already benefited from the funded program. A regular "Green Business" feature has been launched in the fortnightly business email newsletter focusing on energy saving measures to support businesses in dealing with rising energy prices. Applications opened in October 2022 for funding of up to £20,000 to help support voluntary and community organisations in tackling climate change and our social media channels continue to showcase how local businesses are tackling climate change.

Natural Environment

A local nature partnership has been set up with stakeholders from across Essex. Several rewilding and sustainable planting projects have been progressed and the Council have engaged with the Essex Wildlife Trust who want to include a project as part of their 'Wilder Towns, Wilder Villages' initiative. Members of the project team have attended Parish Council meetings to discuss the communication of the project to residents. The use of Glyphosate weed killer has now finished for all identified rewilding areas. A bid has been submitted to DEFRA to fund a targeted campaign around vehicle idling and the Council will be advised in February whether this has been successful. The Council now has 500 Green Heart Champions registered who help keep our district clean and tidy by reducing litter across the district through voluntary litter picks.

Adapting to Climate Change







The Essex Resilience Forum and Partners are working through a programme of planned reviews to respond to emergencies. The Council is currently reviewing policy, legislation changes, latest guidance and best practice to inform the review of the Council's Emergency Plan. A supporting severe weather plan is being updated which is due for completion by March 2023. The Council is engaging with Parish Councils on the annual update of their parish emergency plans. Commitment has been given by ECC Highways to fund works in Halstead Town at the bottom of the High Street to alleviate surface flooding with initial works taking place in November to improve surface water run-off. Winter resilience advice has been provided to residents, communities and businesses through our various communication channels.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES











Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue to develop support for residents and businesses through the cost of living crisis		
Multiple partners forming the Braintree District Cost of Living Partnership Group meet on a regular basis to support residents in a number of areas such as fuel and energy poverty, general financial advice, food and essentials, housing, health and wellbeing and winter resilience. In October, the Council has compiled a list of 70 warm spaces being offered across the district which is published on our website the aim of which is to ensure people can enjoy a warm environment and drink and feel welcomed. 600 Winter packs which include a scarf, blanket and gloves amongst other items were provided for Community 360 and First Stop to distribute those in need. The Council is now a collection point for the Braintree Area Foodbanks to support efforts to increase supply to meet the increasing demand on this service.	March 2023	▶
Continue to work with communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live through the development of local neighbourhood plans		
The Feering Neighbourhood Plan will be taken to Full Council in January 2023. This will be the seventh neighbourhood plan to be adopted in the Braintree district. This follows a planning referendum held in October 2022 where 94.68% of votes were in favour of the neighbourhood plan to help decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area. Nine more plans are currently in progress.	March 2023	▶
Support and develop volunteering in the district		
The Council's community transport service currently has 23 volunteer drivers shared between the social car scheme and minibus hire scheme and in the third quarter, they provided 7,205 journeys. Promotional activity to recruit more drivers takes place regularly with promotion at events through the community engagement officer. The Council has also been supporting and growing the number of volunteers at Bocking Windmill and in the Halstead Dementia Friendly Choir. The volunteers assisting with the Ukrainian coffee mornings provided support at the Christmas and Independence Day events. An additional benefit from the work of our Community Support and Employment Officer is that a number of people on their journey back into work have become volunteers such as Age UK befrienders, volunteer firefighter and volunteering in charity shops.	March 2023	▶
Replace the artificial grass pitch at Braintree Sports and Health Club		

The artificial grass pitch at Braintree Sports and Health Club has now been replaced and is back in use.	October 2022	
Carry out physical improvements to Braintree Sports and Health club and Halstead Leisure Centre		
The improvements to the sports hall and studio floor at Braintree sports and health club have been postponed for future budget consideration. This project has been closed and will be considered as part of the budget preparations for a future year.	March 2023	
The replacement of the boilers and building plant management systems at Braintree sports and health club were completed in February 2022.	March 2022	
A Changing Places bid towards the cost of the hoist system as part of the refurbishments to the wet and dry changing facilities at Halstead Leisure Centre has been successful. Detailed designs are now being drawn up and the Council are meeting with Fusion in January to discuss.	March 2023	
Set up a young people's panel to encourage more young people to have their say on things that matter to them		
The Council have actively been involved in engaging with young people regarding the skate park consultations to ensure the revamp of the parks are what young people want to see. Further engagement has also taken place with young people who are home educated and meet weekly to study and socialise. They are keen to be part of the youth engagement work moving forward due to not attending school and finding it difficult to have their points of view heard.	March 2023	
Continue to deliver our LiveWell programme, focussing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children and their families to have the best start in life • Supporting older people to age well • Supporting children and adults to have good mental health • Tackling obesity in adults and children • Reducing hip fractures in over 65's 		
The health and wellbeing panel are reviewing the priorities of the health and wellbeing board. A number of activities continue to be delivered under the Livewell programme including fitness classes for people with health conditions and the over 60's, seated exercise classes, dance lessons and weight management sessions. Despite the weather conditions, a high number of walkers continue to enjoy the organised walking sessions and Terling held their first walk in October and they will continue on the third Saturday of every month. The BIG WALK in November at Markshall Estate attracted 123 walkers. The Man 'v' Fat programme has seen over 40 people join Season 3 with a total of 13 people completing the season. Of the completers, 42% lost weight totalling 45kgs. A dementia friendly tea took place at the Town Hall in December and work to approve the location of the Community Garden to support good mental health is in progress.	March 2023	

Actions carried out in partnership with others

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Provide support to children and families who need it during school holiday periods through the provision of activity sessions		
During the October half term, six clubs provided organised activities with 215 children attending. We are currently awaiting the data from the Christmas holiday programme where 12 clubs provided a total of 1750 spaces for children to attend.	March 2023	
Continue to develop a range of initiatives to address social isolation and loneliness across the district		
The Braintree Social isolation and loneliness forum met in October to discuss the various projects run by the partners, levelling up, cost of living and winter warmth. Whilst there are no new actions on loneliness and social isolation, the warm spaces project providing 70 venues across the district to anyone in need of a warm space	March 2023	



is also addressing loneliness with different offers such as hot drinks, soup and games.		
Continue to work with Essex County Council on the Governments 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' on initiatives to prevent rough sleepers returning to the streets		
The Next Steps accommodation programme 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. Regular meetings with NACRO take place to monitor progress.	March 2023	
Lead on the co-ordination of the Community Safety Partnership work focusing on protecting the vulnerable, promoting healthy relationships, keeping safe online, building community resilience and promoting safety in our communities		
The Community Safety Partnership hosted a workshop 'Partnership Working to Prevent & Tackle ASB' focused on improving partnership working to prevent and tackle ASB and protect victims and communities from harm. Around 50 representatives from local Housing Providers, Support agencies, Essex Police, and Braintree District Council attended. Attendees discussed ASB powers, out of court disposals, restorative justice and the support available for both perpetrators and victims. Plans to agree a standardised multi-agency process when tackling ASB in the district was also proposed and will now be progressed.	March 2023	
Work with the integrated care system and Health and Wellbeing panel to understand local health inequalities and develop the role of Primary Care Networks to support and improve the health of our communities		
The Council has been working with local authority health colleagues, local community groups and the voluntary sector across mid Essex to develop bids to the Mid & South Essex ICS Health Inequalities Fund. The fund provides grants from £500 to £1500 to support projects or initiatives which address health inequalities and the wider determinants of health within the local area. The bids submitted focus on men's mental health, obesity, and data/research. Applications for the bids opened on the 31st October 2022 and will be offered on a rolling basis until March 2023 or until all funds are spent.	March 2023	
Work with our leisure providers to get people back into activity improving their physical and mental health		
There are numerous activities across the district with growing participation as people get back into activity including sports for confidence sessions, rebound sessions, active rewards and cardiac rehab. Work is ongoing around a 'Let's Move Essex' project due to commence in February and will be hosted at Braintree Sport and Health Club, Braintree Swimming and Fitness Centre and Witham Leisure Centre. As part of the warm space's initiative, Halstead and Witham Leisure Centre launched Wellness Wednesday café's in November creating a comfortable and safe space for people to visit and socialise with others including a swim or gym session for 50p. Members of Fusions Sport and Community Development team were also on hand to offer advice and support around physical and mental health and well-being.	March 2023	
Engage with school age children and young adults through careers, jobs and apprenticeship fairs to inspire young people to raise their aspirations		
The Council continues to plan for the Jobs Fair in March 2023. Invites to businesses have been sent out to become exhibitors across a range of several key sectors. Marketing for the event will start on 1st February 2023.	March 2023	
Oversee the delivery of a safer streets programme to tackle perception of violence against women and girls in the night time economy and neighbourhood crime for identified areas in Witham		
Braintree District Council in partnership with Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner was successful in a bid to the Home Office for Safer Streets Round 4 funding which has a focus on anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood crime and violence against women and girls in a designated area of Witham. Interventions will include working with Witham Town Council to expand the CCTV network and employ street wardens and working with Fusion Lifestyle to deliver an outreach sports programme, providing training and awareness to local businesses around women's safety and to provide physical activity for young people.	March 2024	

PROMOTING PROSPERITY







Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Continue with the development of Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park creating up to 2,000 high quality jobs		
The Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park continues to be developed with a number of buildings currently under construction.	March 2023	
Complete the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre (The Plaza) providing space for conferences and events as well as serviced offices, café and public plaza for start-up companies and SMEs		
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	
Develop the Witham Enterprise Centre providing small industrial units for start-up companies and SMEs		
The Planning pre-app has identified a number of planning constraints and a revised scheme has been prepared. Market research is required on the demand and values of the scheme. Due to the current issues with the planning design, it is anticipated that completion will be delayed and the due date has been amended to October 2024	October 2024	
Complete the I-construct innovation centre supporting the development of SMEs in the construction sector		
I-Construct, a £2.3 million centre of excellence for construction innovation, has opened for business. Building work finished in December, 15 months after it began. The two-storey building consist of a technology suite, exhibition space, conference facilities and informal meeting areas. It is home to a team offering one-to-one mentoring, grant schemes and advice to small and medium sized firms connected to the construction industry. The business support programme at the hub will be run by the Haven Gateway Partnership and will serve businesses across Essex, Kent and East Sussex. The programme will support over 350 businesses and create up to 130 jobs. I-Construct was officially opened by Chairman Councillor Sue Wilson in a ribbon cutting ceremony in February 2022.	December 2021	
Refresh our Plan for Growth to identify future priorities and deliver the outcomes of the associated Action Plan		
A strategy has now been prepared following the completion of the evidence base work from consultants, discussions with businesses at an event at the Plaza and with members. Public consultation on the strategy and the key priorities for the next five years commenced in December to obtain views before presenting the final	March 2023	

proposals to Cabinet.		
Deliver campaigns to promote Braintree District as a place to invest in, live in and visit		
The Council continues to promote the district issuing social media posts on the Essex Playing Field awards where 48 awards were won (13 gold, 21 silver and 14 merit), the completion of the Braintree Victoria Square regeneration project which also received coverage in the national press, the opening of the new Livewell Hub and James Cleverley's visit to the Plaza. Promotional activity has taken place around the energy bill relieve scheme for businesses, free digital courses for residents and businesses and workshops at the Plaza for businesses. Over 400 businesses in the District responded to the Council's latest business survey to enable the Council to gain intelligence as to the issues facing our local business community and how the Council might help to address them. The majority of businesses are focussed on increasing sales and reducing the costs, but the ability to recruit staff is also being highlighted as an issue. 91.9% of businesses surveyed said they felt proud to trade in Braintree District.	March 2023	
Support individuals back into employment by addressing barriers and providing tailored support and access to training		
Since being in post, the Community Support and Employment Officer has engaged with 261 people resulting in 225 people accessing training and support. The Council are working closely with Essex County Council occupational therapists and social workers to identify those individuals that require support in getting back to employment.	March 2023	




Actions carried out in partnership with others








Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Rise to the economic challenges by working in partnership with members of the North Essex Economic board to provide support to businesses and create opportunities to boost growth		
The programme continues to be delivered with monthly update meetings with all suppliers being held and KPIs reported against and managed by the Board. Funding for a new strategy has been agreed and a consultant has been appointed to complete a new strategy and associated action plan.	March 2023	
Continue to develop the business support offer for the construction sector as part of the I-construct innovation centre		
The Council has continued to promote the I-Construct membership to gain access to the grants programme for match funding towards project activity by the end of this year. The first grant application from a Business in the Braintree District has been received in December and is currently being considered by the Haven Gateway Partnership panel. I-Construct has put together a series of in-person roadshows to support businesses and strengthen the supply chain throughout Kent, Essex and East Sussex. Businesses can hear directly from major projects, tier 1 contractors, public procurement experts, network with other businesses, and learn how our new supply chain collaboration platform can help businesses find new growth opportunities.	March 2023	
Continue to provide signposting to business support, advice and suitable grants		
The Economic Development Team continue to signpost businesses to support, advice and information on grants which now includes a dedicated webpage on The Plaza website. Following the award of the Rural England Prosperity Funding, a paper was presented to Cabinet in November proposing part of the money is used to directly grant fund rural businesses setting out the schemes available. This has been submitted to Government and if accepted, the project will begin in April 2023.	March 2023	
Ensure residents have access to the skills programmes and education they need to access employment opportunities including in new and expanding sectors		

An options analysis is currently being undertaken to determine the direction and form the Braintree Education Skills Board will take. This will inform the type of business engagement and the key sectors the Council focus on. Detailed research to determine the skills gaps and current provision has begun to investigate what courses and skills are required to impact on the local businesses and help with their recruitment issues.	March 2023	
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Actions carried out by Braintree District Council

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Through our Investment and Development Programme, continue to develop and implement a pipeline of projects focussed on reducing costs, improving efficiency, generating income and becoming more commercially focussed to deliver against the £1.6m financial gap over the next four years.		
The Investment and Development Programme has been reviewed with a new structure consisting of a single Investment and Capital Programme Officer group serving two boards: The Capital Board and the Investment and Development Board. In the last quarter, Commercial Gov has undertaken a review of commercial activity across the Council with a significant number of opportunities identified. These have been reviewed by officers and members through the above groups and a prioritised shortlist is being finalised. The Plaza is now fully operational with good office lettings and events and hatchery space usage is growing. Spend analysis data has been requested from councils across Essex to identify future procurement opportunities.	March 2023	
Refresh our Digital Strategy and action plan to address future demand and improve the way we use technology to deliver services		
Cabinet agreed the Digital Strategy 2022-2026 at their meeting in December 2022. The Strategy sets out how future challenges will be met and how technology will be used to deliver better outcomes across the strategy's themes of Council, Customer and Place.	December 2022	
Encourage residents to transact with us online by developing our website to allow customers to make bookings, track requests and sign up to receive council tax bills electronically		
A number of online forms for waste processes were reviewed and updated in line with the launch of the new waste management system in October to ensure the information feeds straight into the system. Further online processes have been	March 2023	

identified to improve the customer transaction process around our street scene services and are currently in development to go live in the new year.		
Residents are now able to sign up to receive their council tax bills electronically and promotion of this will be ongoing.	March 2022	
Develop a plan of community engagement to better understand the needs of our local communities		
In the last six months (June to December) 24 events have been attended within the community and feedback has been received from 760 people. Events attended range from specific community catch ups to Ukrainian coffee mornings, Little Legs festivals, slipper exchanges, roadshows and the Santa Bus. The events provide an opportunity to update people on the cost of living, wellbeing and how the Council can support them as well as to gather feedback on consultations. Community Engagement events are currently being planned for 2023.	March 2023	
Use customer information and feedback to improve services whilst working towards retaining the accreditation for customer service excellence		
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	
Review the criteria for the discretionary business rates scheme for charitable and non-profit organisations		
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	
Monitor changes to various legislation to understand the impact on services including but not limited to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Environmental Bill 2020 and Planning reforms		
The Specialist Domestic Abuse Officer continues to provide support to colleagues within the Housing Service. Additional training was undertaken in October to provide the Housing Service with the skills required in making enquiries into homelessness where there are issues relating to domestic abuse.	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





Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Work with Fusion to recover and develop leisure services following the pandemic ensuring the district has the right type and level of leisure provision to meet resident's needs		
Works to upgrade the gym facilities at all four leisure centres across the district commenced in October 2022. The gyms at each centre are being completely transformed with new, energy efficient equipment, a new layout, new lighting, décor and flooring.	March 2023	
Review and adopt a new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex and enhance the value of joint working through the waste management partnership		
The consultants working with the Essex Waste Partnership members, completed modelling work for 6 collection options, which they presented to the Essex Waste Partnership Board back in November 2022. The Chairman of the Board emphasised that whilst a particular option had emerged as the 'best overall'	March 2023	

collection methodology, the decision on whether to adopt it was a matter for each Waste Collection Authority to determine locally. The next steps for developing the Waste Strategy for Essex is for officers to discuss the emerging principles and to present these to the Partnership Board in January 2023, with a view to completing the first draft of the strategy by end of March 2023.		
Drive forward Levelling Up for the district including delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund and rural prosperity fund projects		
Government has approved the investment plan submitted by the Council for our £1.36million share of the Governments Shared Prosperity Fund to support communities and businesses over the next three years. The Council has signed a grant agreement and the first-year funding is expected to be received in the new year. A list of projects to utilise the funding has been developed and one of the projects to provide a business support programme will be hosted at the Plaza in January and February.	March 2025	
Deliver the Levelling Up rural pilot with Essex County Council		
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. In the third quarter, Essex County Council have commissioned consultants to undertake research in the community and the Council has been involved with stakeholders in the design of the consultation programme.	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	75		37		
Percentage of superfast broadband coverage across the district	95%	95%	95%		n/a	n/a	
Cumulative number of homes granted planning permission (outline and full)	148	569	888		810		<i>The breakdown between full and outline permissions are as follows: Full – 202 Outline - 686</i>
ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT							
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	52.04%	49.34%	44.67%		60%		<i>Figures are awaiting validation by Essex County Council. The reduction in recycling for the third quarter is mainly due to the garden waste suspension which commenced at the end of November and will not be re-introduced until late February. A number of recycling campaigns were introduced during recycling week in October together with launching a video showing people what happens to their recycling at</i>

Performance Indicator	2022/23						Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	
							our recycling facility. Christmas messaging focussed on food waste, recycling in the right way, Christmas tree recycling and glass recycling.
Kilograms of residual household waste collected per household	107kgs	107kgs	110kgs		117kgs		
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	7%	5%		6%		Recorded three times a year – July, November and March.
Number and percentage of accessible non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (168)	100% (197)	100% (189)		100%		
Number of residents assisted in installing energy saving measures	Annually reported						
SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES							
Average waiting time for applicants on the Disabled Facilities Grant (calculated in days from point of referral to approval)	153 days	151 days	129 days		90 days		In the third quarter, the service received 65 new grant referrals (5 of which were critical) and approved 38 cases (5 of which were critical). Critical cases approved in the quarter were dealt with on average in 101 days, with the quickest of those completed in 23 days. The remaining caseload at the end of the second quarter is 109. Although this remains over the target, there has been significant progress made in the third quarter towards reducing the period of time between referral being received and grant approved. With the grant approval numbers increasing, grant funding amounts allocated and grant funding actually paid out in Q3 the highest in the year so far the team are aiming for reducing this further in the last quarter. The Team are continuing to receive a high number of complex cases some with planning permission required and it remains the case that builder's quotes are taking longer to turn around due to the ongoing difficulties the industry is experiencing with supply of materials.
Participation levels across all our sports centres	167,599	179,405	134,465		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	58		n/a	n/a	
Number of homelessness cases prevented	60	62	60		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	
PROMOTING PROSPERITY							
Percentage of people in the district claiming out of work benefits rate (aged 16 – 64)	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%		n/a	n/a	
Number of new business start-ups across the district	239	234	224		n/a	n/a	
Number of businesses that have contacted us for business support	116	67	297		n/a	n/a	<i>There has been an increased number of businesses contact the Council following the issue of a business needs survey and Christmas events.</i>
DELIVERING AND INNOVATING							
Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in the Customer Service Centre	73%	73%	66%		n/a	n/a	
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	97.83%	97.7%	98%		97%	✅	
Number of people transacting with us online	41,016	30,730	26,109		n/a	n/a	
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	18.3 days	15.23 days	15.83 days		20 days	✅	
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	10.93 days	4.45 days	2.81 days		6 days	✅	
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 7 working days	95.83%	88.20%	86.73%		90%	⚠️	<i>Represents 85 out of 98 stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescales. Complainants have been kept informed of progress.</i>
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.01%	57.4%	84.23%		84.63%	⚠️	<i>Marginally off target. Whilst performance continues to benchmark favourably against other Essex Authorities, the reduction compared to target could be an early indicator of the impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on households</i>
Collection rate for Business Rates	31.26%	56.9%	82.26%		81.99%	✅	

Complaints

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

Complaint Category	Q1 2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	TOTAL
Justified	40 (51)	87 (67)	45 (39)	(49)	(206)
Not Justified	61 (82)	65 (68)	32 (49)	(60)	(259)
Partially Justified	27 (26)	15 (46)	28 (7)	(18)	(97)
Not known	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	(1)	(1)
Total	128 (159)	167 (185)	108 (91)	(128)	(563)

Comments

There has been a reduction in the number of complaints received in the third quarter of the year compared to the second quarter with reductions mainly in the Operations service area.

Although complaints have lowered in the Operations service, complaints in this area still make up 75% of the total number of complaints received with the main reasons being missed waste collections. The snow and icy weather conditions in December impacted on the crew's ability to complete collections. Messages on social media and our website advised residents to leave their collections out and crews went out every day and worked additional time to ensure the district was cleared relatively quickly with residents praising crews for their efforts in such extreme conditions.

In the third quarter of 2022/23, of the 108 complaints received:

- 98 are stage one complaints
- 5 are stage two complaints
- 5 are stage three complaints

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

In the third quarter of 2022/23, the LGO received three new complaints in respect of planning and initial enquiries have been made to the Council

The ombudsman also issued a draft decision notice for one of the complaints received this quarter and has invited the Council to make comment on the draft decision. The Investigator has found fault against the Council in respect of the Councils record keeping for a planning enforcement case.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	487	487	494		+ 7	-
Total staff FTE	440.71	439.23	441.74		+ 2.51	-
Level of employee turnover	2.87%	2.67%	2.02%		- 0.65	-
Number of leavers	14	13	10		- 3	-
Number of starters	9	13	17		+ 4	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.61 days	1.37 days	2.61 days		+ 1.24 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness	79.01%	68.38%	53.85%		Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	2400	1,041	1288		+ 247	-
Number of delegates	106	539	605		+ 66	-
Number of apprentices **	18	20	20		-	-

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

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

Health & Safety

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

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

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	(2021/22 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	13 (8)	5 (7)	15 (9)	(15)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	12 (6)	5 (6)	15 (8)	(11)	<i>Main areas are slips, trips and falls (responsible for 7 of the accidents).</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	0 (2)	0 (1)	0 (1)	(0)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	(4)	
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	37 (0)	35 (10)	16 (22)	(26)	<i>One person broke their wrist</i>
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	3 (2)	2 (1)	1 (1)	(1)	
Number of near miss incidents	1 (0)	1 (0)	2 (0)	(2)	<i>Laptop cable began to burn and an animal became violent during waste pickup</i>
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	2 (2)	1 (1)	0 (3)	(3)	
Number of claims settled	4 (1)	0 (0)	1 (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 Q3 is a positive variance of £65k. This compares to the positive variance projected at Q2 of £126k.

The projected change in General Fund unallocated balance is currently a net addition of £428k giving an estimated balance at 31 March 2023 of £6.5m.

Actual spend on the capital programme was £6.9m, of which £3.5m was on the Plaza and £1.3m 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 Q3.

Business Plan Service	Updated Budget £'000	Quarter 3 forecast Spend £'000	Quarter 3 forecast Variance £'000	Previous Quarters Forecast £'000	Forecast RAG Status
Asset Management	(2,571)	(1,929)	642	520	R
Community & Leisure	682	668	(14)	9	G
Corporate Management Plan	1,635	1,599	(36)	(25)	G
Economic Development	223	223	0	0	G
Environment	802	833	31	25	A
Finance	1,302	528	(774)	(495)	G
Governance	1,262	1,159	(103)	(59)	G
Housing Services	812	742	(70)	(21)	G
Human Resources	855	810	(45)	(35)	G
ICT & Facilities	1,850	1,851	1	(14)	A
Marketing & Communications	605	632	27	33	A
Operations	6,491	6,423	(68)	(22)	G
Strategic Investment	20	193	173	0	R
Sustainable Development	1,277	1,345	68	(135)	R
Service Total	15,245	15,077	(168)	(219)	G
Corporate Financing	1,282	1,099	(183)	(207)	G
Efficiency	(285)	0	285	300	
Net Total	16,242	16,176	(66)	(126)	G

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

The table below breakdowns the forecast variance:

Business Plan Service	Forecast £'000	Staffing £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000
Asset Management	642	96	195	351
Community & Leisure	(14)	(32)	(22)	40
Corporate Management Plan	(36)	(63)	17	10
Economic Development	0	0	0	0
Environment	31	225	1	(195)
Finance	(774)	(97)	82	(759)
Governance	(103)	(38)	(46)	(19)
Housing Services	(70)	(4)	61	(127)
Human Resources	(45)	(39)	(6)	0
ICT & Facilities	1	37	(36)	0
Marketing & Communications	27	9	25	(7)
Operations	(68)	106	447	(621)
Strategic Investment	173	173	0	0
Sustainable Development	68	(194)	68	194
Service Total	(168)	179	786	(1,133)
Corporate Financing	(183)	0	2	(185)
Efficiency	285	300	(15)	0
Net Total	(66)	479	773	(1,318)

Commentary on Main Service Variances reported at Q3

Staffing Variances

Staffing costs are projected to higher following the pay award implemented from April 2022, which has added an extra £724k to payroll costs than was budgeted. A positive variance of £245k (net of the efficiency target) is projected because of other changes, e.g., vacancies, appointments at lower scale points, changes to contracted hours.

Asset Management

- Net overspends on staffing include interim arrangements and provision made for extra resources to deal with high workload. The increased resources will allow progress to be made on outstanding rent reviews and marketing of properties helping longer-term income.
- Loss of rent (£134k) and service charges (£157k) due to areas of Causeway House being vacant, partially offset by savings on operating cost and short-term business rate relief (£28k). It is assumed that the lettable office space will remain vacant for the remainder of the year, although the area continues to be marketed and discussions continue with prospective tenants. Part of the space will be occupied in the new financial year through relocation of staff from Unit 4 Lakes Road.
- New Facilities (I-Construct, The Plaza, Victoria Square, and H120 Business Park) – It is still early days for the operation of the new facilities completed under the strategic investment programme. Projections reflect higher operating costs across facilities totalling £200k, a significant part of which relates to energy costs where facilities have been added to existing contracts but at current wholesale prices. There are also unrecovered service charge costs where development is in progress or land plots remain unsold on H120. As occupation increases these costs should reduce in future. Rent and other income across

the sites is slightly above budget (£33k). The projections are subject to a high degree of uncertainty as operational requirements are becoming clearer, including levels of staffing.

- Shortfall on income achieved from other commercial and property rent reviews compared to the target assumed in the budget and rent voids (£51k). As referred to above, the extra resources being introduced into the team will help recover this position.

Environment

- Building Control additional agency staff are engaged covering vacant posts where there have been difficulties in recruitment, and this has been combined with high service demand. The additional costs in the service (£231k) are partially offset by increased income (£141k).
- Licensing – there is increased demand from tax operators resulting in additional net income; however, as a regulated activity this income is ringfenced for service investment and is excluded from the projections.

Finance

- Staffing related savings from a combination of service efficiencies, vacancies, and appointments at lower scale points and cost recovery through New Burdens funding provided for administering energy rebate schemes and Covid related reliefs.
- 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 (£831k)
- Local tax and housing benefit cost recoveries are projected to be lower than budget (£124k).

Operations

- Net staffing overspends due to pay award netted off against staff vacancies.
- Increased vehicle operating costs due to the higher diesel costs (£149k); and spot hire and maintenance of an aging fleet (£169k).
- Provision of wheelie bins and kitchen caddies for new properties and lifecycle replacements (£30k).
- Increase in income from mixed dry recycling material net of higher processing and haulage costs (£622k). This is due to a higher average basket price for material assumed for the year at £106 per tonne against a budget of £43. The price per tonne set for the period Jan-Mar fell sharply from the peak price for the previous quarter.
- Recycling and other sacks contract – increased costs following procurement (£45k)
- Saving on the contract for In-Cab Technology (£36k)
- Higher glass recycling income (£79k) (price/ tonnage), Bulky Waste collections (£50k) and Trade Waste income (£31k)
- 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 (£185k)
- Waste Management payment from ECC is expected to exceed the budget to reflect higher inflation (£45k)
- Increase in grave digging cost and general maintenance (£29k)

Sustainable Development

- Majority of the staffing underspend due to vacancies within the service including new enforcement roles/ landscape services. Several posts are being held vacant as part of the in-year Recovery Plan to offset the higher service cost of the April 2022 pay award.

- Overall planning income is projected to be underachieved (£195k). Planning application income is forecast to be lower than budget by £400k due primarily to a sharp reduction in the number of major applications. Pre-application income is also anticipated to be lower (£50k) although this is in part considered to be due to a move towards Planning Performance Agreements, the income from which is projected to exceed budget by £245k for the year. Income budgets will need to be reviewed and realigned ahead of 2023/24 to reflect the changing pattern of service demand.

Corporate Financing

- Council Tax Sharing Agreement – share-back from preceptors based on local tax collection performance at the end of Q3 is higher than budget (£175k).

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.

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.

Capital Programme

Current capital programme totals £19.5m of which £9.4m is profiled into 2022/23:

	Profiled Spend 2022/23 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 3 £000	Actual Spend at Quarter 3 % of Profile
Horizon 120 Business Park infrastructure	466	327	70%
Horizon 120 - The Plaza	3,838	3,455	90%
Manor Street regeneration	1,497	1,286	86%
I-Construct Innovation Centre	140	26	19%
Maltings Lane Community Facility	120	24	20%
Town Centre improvements	136	18	13%
Industrial estate improvements	2	2	100%
Property planned maintenance	288	22	8%
Information technology systems & equipment	662	159	24%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	322	167	52%
Cemetery improvements	1	1	100%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	6	5	83%
Operational equipment	80	21	26%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	315	289	92%
Climate change initiatives	47	-	0%
Housing renovation & disabled facilities grants	1,012	713	70%
Capital salaries	497	356	72%
Total	9,429	6,871	73%

Changes to programme since last report

- The overall programme has increased by £1.5m since the previous quarter reflecting decisions made on releasing capital provisions for the Manor Street regeneration project and for a Halstead Community Grants Fund. Project expenditure has also increased due to additional s106 funded works.
- The status of projects has been reviewed with project officers and where appropriate budgeted expenditure reprofiled into later years.

Programme risks

- I-Construct – awaiting final cost which is required to confirm the final claim for European Funding.
- Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre ('The Plaza') – final account to be confirmed.
- Horizon 120 shortfall on serviced land sales leading to a potential requirement to allocate additional capital resources and provide Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

Capital resources generated in the year

- Sale of serviced land plots at Horizon 120 (£3.8m)
- Interim payments from Eastlight in respect of the residential units at Victoria Square (£363k).
- Eastlight agreements: Right-to-Buy sales – number of completed sales 9, generating c£1.5m. A further 14 applications are in progress although not all would be expected to complete in this financial year. With recent increases in interest rates, together with wider economic uncertainty, a slowdown in RTB sales is anticipated (Number of sales completed in 2021/22 was 19 generating £2.7m); and VAT shelter receipts of £389k.
- Better Care Funding received £1.056m which is used to fund expenditure on disabled facilities grants.
- Changing Places Fund £120k which will be used to construct new disabled changing places toilets within Halstead Leisure Centre and Witham Town Council.

Treasury Management

Investment activity

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

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity to the end December		Amount Invested at end of the quarter
	New Investments	Investments Matured	
£56.8m	£131.9m	£125.5m	£63.2m
Average amount invested for the period			£66.3m
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

The table below sets out the amount of interest and dividends earned to the end of the quarter and the annualised rate of return:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£19.0m	£613k	4.29%
Short-Term	£41.0m	£573k	1.61%
Total	£60.0m	£1,186k	2.37%

The projected investment income for the year is £1.6m, which is £831k better than budget. The MTFS assumes an improvement in 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 £20.5m, representing an unrealised gain of £1.5m over the amount originally invested.

Investment portfolio

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

- Long-term pooled fund investments £19m (allocated: £3m property fund; £13m 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 £12m
- Short Term Fixed Deposits (2x£3m) £6m
- Lloyds current account £2.2m

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:

	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2022	6,056
Addition/(deductions):	
Budgeted reduction	(89)
Funding for one-off investment	(371)
Pension Fund triennial payment – repayment	823
Projected outturn variance at Q3	65
Estimated Balance at 31 March 2023	6,484

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

- The approved budget included an anticipated reduction in balances of £460k. One-off investment included £310k drawdown in respect of the initial operating costs of the Plaza at H120 and £61k for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme.
- A one-off payment was made in 2020/21 to the Essex Pension Fund covering the period April 2020 to March 2023, which was part funded from General Fund balances. A repayment back into balances is being made in 2022/23.
- The projected outturn variance for the year at Q3 is an overall positive variance of £65k.