



FOURTH QUARTER **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

1st January 2020 to 31st March 2020

AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

2019/20

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Section 1: Introduction and Summary






Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the fourth quarter and the end of the year in relation to the publication of the 'Annual Plan 2019/20'. This sets out the key activities and measures used to check our performance for the year and along with the Corporate Strategy 2016-20 sets out the priorities we are working towards. We have also signed up to 'The Future of Essex' which is a vision shared by more than 100 partners, all dedicated to improving the county over the next 18 years. The projects that are supporting this vision are marked with **(E)**. Further detail is given in relation to a set of business performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, our people and health and safety.






This report does not contain details of the numerous activities ongoing in each service area that also contribute to delivering what is important and will make a difference to all in the District. Full details of all projects and performance indicators used to measure the outcomes are available upon request.

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

The following table provides updates for the end of the year in relation to the key activities in the 'Annual Plan 2019/20'




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Environment and Place	6	1	0	0	0
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure	7	3	0	0	0
Economic Development	7	3	0	0	0
Health and Communities	10	2	1	0	0
Finance and Performance	6	1	0	0	1
Overall Strategy and Direction	6	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	42	10	1	0	1

KEY:




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

Summary of the Performance Indicators position for the end of the year

The following table shows the performance for the end of the year in relation to the quarterly reported Performance Indicators that have targets set as defined in the 'Annual Plan 2019/20'.

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Environment and Place	3	0	1	0
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure	2	0	0	0
Health and Communities	1	0	2	0
Finance and Performance	4	2	1	0
TOTAL	10	2	4	0

KEY:

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

Summary Position

The Council has performed well throughout the year with 42 projects completed and a further ten on track and progressing well. One projects has an amber status and one project was cancelled during the year. Ten performance indicators have met or exceeded their target and six performance indicators have missed their target.

Over the year, we have remained committed to investing across the district and a number of projects are underway to provide better homes and future job opportunities. We have delivered a total of 233 affordable homes, exceeding our yearly target and our overall four year target. The Horizon 120 development has brought with it the first electric forecourt in the UK and the pedestrianisation of Braintree town centre will allow more opportunities for events and markets which proved very popular with residents, businesses and visitors to the district. The development of the Tourism Plan and website will also promote the district as a key destination to visit.

Our focus on empowering residents to get active and live well continued through a number of campaigns and activities as well as providing support to families to adopt healthier habits. In combating social isolation and loneliness, the 'Meet up Mondays' initiative has expanded to seven venues and we are supporting a number of nationwide campaigns. From our work with the Dementia Action Alliance, it is hoped that Braintree station will become the first station in Essex to be branded a dementia friendly station by the Alzheimer's Society.

A new Corporate Strategy was agreed in March to take us into the next four years with new priorities developed in consultation with our residents and businesses to focus on connecting people and places, enhancing our environment, supporting our communities, promoting prosperity and delivering and innovating.

As the year financial year ended, the coronavirus hit and no one could have predicted how in a few short weeks the Council would have to step up and deliver in a way that no one could have

anticipated. The scale of the challenges we now face, almost makes the achievements of the council in the last year pale into insignificance as it becomes clear that navigating our way through the pandemic and effectively responding to the needs of our residents, communities and businesses is our biggest challenge yet, pivoting the Council into exploring new ways of going above and beyond, adapting fast to changing situations.

All of this has enabled us to recognise our strengths and the positive difference we can make to the lives of everyone in our district.



Environment and Place







Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Respond to the consultations on the new Government Resource and Waste Strategy for England and consider proposals in relation to the Council's refuse and recycling service		
On 11 March the government issued the 2nd consultation document for Plastic Packaging Tax which is seeking views on 'design' of the tax i.e. how it will work and its implementation. The closing date is 20 May 2020, and we will be submitting our comments accordingly. This project will be ongoing and the end date has been amended to 31st May 2020 to tie in with the deadline for the 2nd consultation. The Consultation on the Deposit Return Scheme is currently on hold.	May 2020	▶
Continue to promote and raise awareness of the importance of minimisation, reuse and recycling to both residents and businesses to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill		
Throughout the year, promotional events such as talks to schools and community groups have taken place to raise the importance of recycling and minimising waste. The recycling calendars were refreshed using a pictorial approach to list what goes in each bin. In the last quarter of the year, the Council has been working with Essex County Council and other local authorities to do their bit and are encouraging residents to join them to 'Love Essex, not plastic'. The Essex wide 2020 campaign aims to tackle the amount of waste across the county by highlighting the issue of single use plastic and urging households, schools and businesses to switch to re-useable options to recycle more. Activities within the Council have changed to support this by significantly reducing the amount of plastic cups used.	March 2020	✔
Refurbish the four play areas at St Mary's Road in Rivenhall, Ashpole Road in Bocking, Mill Chase in Halstead and Clare Road in Braintree		
All refurbishments to the four play areas at St Mary's Road in Rivenhall, Ashpole Road in Bocking Mill Chase in Halstead and Clare Road, Braintree were completed by the end of February 2020.	February 2020	✔
Continue to protect our larger open spaces from illegal encampments by creating earth bunds and ditches to prevent disruption and inconvenience to local residents		
All sites in this project have been completed and are now secured against illegal encampments.	November 2019	✔
Replace the benches in parks and open spaces ensuring they are fit for purpose allowing residents and visitors to enjoy recreational time		

Benches have been replaced in Halstead public gardens and Halstead cemetery allowing residents and visitors somewhere to sit and enjoy recreational time.	August 2019	✓
Continue to investigate and enforce littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping offences to help keep the district looking clean and tidy		
In the fourth quarter of the year, 38 fixed penalty notices have been served for general littering, cigarette butts, smoking and fly-tipping offences. This brings the total number of fixed penalty notices for the year to 130.	March 2020	✓
Deliver a car litter campaign to support the introduction of new legislation		
The district wide 'Love Essex' campaign to highlight the recently increased fines that people throwing litter from their car face and to encourage people to dispose of their litter responsibly ended on the 27 th October 2019. We are currently awaiting the results and evaluation of the campaign from Keep Britain Tidy which are delayed by partner organisations not submitting their results in time and the impact of prioritising work due to the coronavirus.	March 2020	✓



Strategic Growth and Infrastructure






Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
(E) Continue to work towards completing the examination and adoption of the Local Plan		
The examination of Section 1 of the Local Plan has now been completed. The Inspector noted he will provide an interim letter of his findings in 'a few weeks'. Once the letter has been received a way forward can be agreed.	December 2020	▶
(E) Formally adopt the first Neighbourhood Plan in the district		
The first Neighbourhood Plan in the district has been formally adopted at a meeting of Full Council in July 2019. The Bradwell and Pattiswick Neighbourhood Plan can now be used when considering planning applications within the parish of Bradwell and Pattiswick.	July 2019	✓
(E) Continue to work with partners to provide housing, employment and supporting infrastructure to address our long term housing and community needs		
The long term approach to how homes, jobs and infrastructure are developed for future generations is set out in Section one of the Local Plan which was considered by the Planning Inspector in January 2020. We are currently awaiting the outcome. A further project will be set up next year detailing the way forward depending on the outcome.	March 2020	✓
(E) Develop Council owned sites to deliver additional mixed tenure homes across the district and consider establishing a Council owned Housing Development Company		
Over the last year, Cabinet members have granted the disposal of seven sites subject to planning. The heads of terms have now been agreed with Chelmer Housing Partnership on all seven sites and progress will be monitored by the Strategic Investment Team. Members also decided not to proceed with establishing a Council owned Housing Development Company at this time, delaying this for future consideration in the context of the proposed Garden Communities.	March 2020	✓
(E) Commence construction of the regeneration of Braintree Town Centre enhancing the appeal of		

the town to residents and visitors		
Kier Construction (Eastern) Ltd took full possession of the new development site in Manor street on the 23rd March and preliminary works are underway. Consultation took place in the fourth quarter on the pedestrianisation scheme giving residents, visitors and businesses the opportunity to have their say on what they want the new space to be used for, to help shape the design plans. The pedestrianisation project will see Market Place, Great Square and most of the High Street become traffic-free, whilst making crucial long-term improvements to the roads and pavements and the creation of new public spaces. Braintree District Council is now working up final design concepts, taking on board comments from the consultation. The first phase of the construction work is expected to start at Fairfield Road and Bank Street in mid-April 2020. This will be reported on as a separate project next year.	March 2020	
(E) Continue to work with Essex County Council to reduce congestion on the local road network in Braintree		
Essex County Council is continuing to work with our Planning Department on the works required to the roundabout as part of the S106 for land West of Panfield Lane, which was granted planning approval subject to S106 in July 2019. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored next year.	March 2020	
(E) Work with Essex County Council and Highways England to secure planning consent and commence construction of new slip roads linking the A120 to Millennium Way alleviating congestion at Galleys Corner		
We continue to work with Essex County Council and Highways England as the project moves into the design phase and it has been confirmed, subject to completion of the necessary sectional agreement, that Essex County Council will lead the project and a project team has been established. Construction is due to commence Spring/Summer 2020 and will continue to be monitored by the Strategic Investment Team.	March 2020	
(E) Continue to work with Essex County Council on securing improvements to the strategic highway network including the A120 and A12		
The Council will continue to work with Essex County Council on improvements to the A120 and A12. Braintree District Council provided a response to a consultation in December on improvements to the A12 between junctions 23 and 25. The Government published their Road Investment Strategy in March 2020 which is now being reviewed. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	March 2020	
(E) Commence construction of an improved bus interchange as part of the Manor Street regeneration		
The bus park in Braintree has now closed due to construction work starting on the regeneration of Manor Street which includes a modern and bigger bus interchange. Temporary bus stands are now positioned close to the current bus park site for the duration of the build. This will continue to be reported on as part of the regeneration scheme.	March 2020	
(E) Create a high quality business community through the development of the Horizon 120 business and innovation park		
Braintree District Council has adopted the Local Development Order to encourage businesses onto the new Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park planned for Great Notley. The Authority is adopting this type of planning framework as it automatically grants planning permission for certain forms of development and land uses within particular zones on a site, making it easier and quicker for businesses to build the premises they need without the need to apply for separate planning permission (as long as they meet certain conditions). Despite the lockdown, the Council is pressing ahead with plans, in readiness for when businesses start moving again as and when the coronavirus restrictions are changed or lifted by Central Government. The Marshgate Group will take the lead on the delivery of the business park and as this project is ongoing, we will continue to report on progress.	March 2020	




Economic Development







Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
(E) Complete the acquisition of strategic employment land in Witham supporting business creation and growth		
The Council is committed to the delivery of high-quality business premises, including grow-on units to promote business start-ups and growth in Witham. A suitable site has been identified and acquired at nil capital cost to the public purse through the prudent use of the planning system. Land transfer is progressing.	July 2021	
Complete physical improvements to key industrial estates including new signage and branding		
New and improved signage at Springwood Industrial Estate is now installed improving the branding and wayfinding on the estate. Next year, the Council will be looking at how they can work with other groups to secure BID status to support further improvements.	March 2020	
Work with existing and form new partnerships to increase levels of targeted business and skills support		
In the last year, members, senior managers and officers from the Economic Team have visited a number of businesses to gain a greater understanding of the successes and challenges businesses face and to provide bespoke support and details on access to grant funding. The Council has also worked with partners to deliver various free of charge informative events and training opportunities for the business community. The support service provided by the Economic Team has proven to be vital for businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic with businesses exploring additional routes to business support including self-employment guidance, information on grants and loans, employee support and skills development. Businesses have been encouraged to join the closed Braintree District Businesses Facebook group and sign up to receiving newsletters to keep up to date with changes.	March 2020	
Secure planning consent and commence construction of the I-construct Innovation in Construction Hub at the Braintree Enterprise Centre		
Detailed planning permission for the construction of the I-construct Innovation Hub is effective from 28th October following completion of a unilateral undertaking. The European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) has been approved in principle and the Council is working in close partnership with Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) colleagues and our professional team. A minor material amendment has been submitted for planning approval to be considered at a future planning committee. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	March 2020	
(E) Work with the Braintree Education and Skills board to secure funding and develop projects to increase skills across the district providing a workforce that meets employers' needs		
Over the year, the Braintree Education and Skills Board has supported students making post 16 education or work choices by promoting apprenticeships, career days, STEM opportunities and local facilities. This includes approving a STEM work experience opportunity due to start after the May half term which is now on hold due to the coronavirus health pandemic. The board have also secured additional funds which had been allocated towards Primary School engagement and will be the focus of future work. Work with the Education and Skills Board will continue into next year.	March 2020	






(E) Deliver physical improvements to the town centres of Braintree, Witham and Halstead		
Work is continuing in respect of the physical improvements to the town centres and plans have been passed to subcontractors to progress	December 2020	
(E) Establish a Tourism Partnership to promote the district, support businesses and increase tourism		
The Tourism Partnership is now established and meetings have taken place throughout the year. A Tourism Plan has been developed and in February 2020, the Visit Braintree District launched a new tourism website designed to promote the area as a key destination to attract visitors from outside the district. The new website brings together the abundance of attractions, landmarks, businesses and events the district has to offer.	March 2020	
Supporting markets across the district including continuing to develop the street market concept		
Throughout the year, we have supported street markets which have proven to be a great success with local businesses reporting higher sales, an increase in footfall and an all-round positive community atmosphere. In line with the Government Coronavirus advice, we have made the decision to cancel the street markets for March, April and May to help protect our residents, visitors and traders.	March 2020	
Working through the Town Centre Partnership, deliver schemes to improve the vibrancy of Braintree Town Centre		
Over the last year, the Council has supported the Town Centre Partnership in establishing regular meetings of the group where they can discuss projects to improve the vibrancy of the Town Centre. The partnership have received presentations on the pedestrianisation scheme and the new tourism website. With all the planned investment for the town centre, the newly appointed chairman of the partnership has called for more members to join the partnership to enable business owners in the town to get involved and help shape the towns future	March 2020	
The events in Braintree town centre have proven to be a great success with local businesses reporting higher sales, an increase in footfall and an all-round positive community atmosphere.	March 2020	



Health and Communities

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
(E) Continue to deliver the Livewell child project working with families with young children providing support and advice on nutrition and healthy activities in an attempt to locally halt the rise in childhood obesity		
Over the year, Braintree District Council has worked with partner organisations, local communities, businesses and schools to provide a variety of activities and initiatives to help support families and children to live well and lead healthy lives ranging from Xplorer events to healthy habits programme and play champions scheme which is extending into two more schools. Due to the closure of schools to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Livewell child project has adapted to provide information and advice through the Livewell child facebook page.	March 2020	

Improve the play experience at Great Notley Country Park and Halstead Leisure Centre by replacing the artificial pitches		
Planning permission has been granted to replace the artificial pitch at Halstead Leisure Centre and the Football Foundations have agreed the funding for the project. The assigning of the leases has been delayed due to the impact of coronavirus in shutting all leisure centres and the furloughing of staff involved in the project. This will be progressed once the situation improves and the end date of the project will be revised.	March 2020	
A new artificial pitch surface and associated equipment has been installed at Great Notley Country Park allowing players of all ages to enjoy the facilities.	August 2019	
(E) Work in partnership with local GP surgeries, the NHS and Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (MECCG) to develop a new modern healthcare facility in Sible Hedingham		
The Council continues to work with the NHS and MECCG to develop a modern healthcare facility, which will provide a new combined premises for existing surgeries in Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham. The design team have met with GPs and two pre-app meetings have been held with the Planning Department resulting in a revised scheme which has been costed and will need to go back to a future Cabinet meeting. This project is ongoing and will continue to be monitored.	March 2020	
(E) Work with partners to improve emotional health and wellbeing and identify improvements to access mental health services for residents		
Over the year, regular mental health workshops have taken place bringing partner organisations together to understand the gaps in support for children and young people. Community Tree sent out leaflets in October providing information on a variety of support services available across the district on a range of matters and meetings have been held to look at the crisis café model to offer a safe, relaxing and friendly environment where people in crisis can go. The Council has also supported the national campaign 'Every Mind Matters', which has launched a range of new resources, designed specifically to help manage mental wellbeing during coronavirus, including a tailored Covid-19 Mind Plan, Covid-19 specific content for individuals and their loved ones, and support for specific mental wellbeing issues such as anxiety, stress, low mood and trouble sleeping.	March 2020	
Develop a Rough Sleeping Strategy setting out how we will provide specialist support for vulnerable people on the street		
The Council's Homelessness Strategy addresses rough sleeping and has been renamed as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to comply with Government requirements. We are currently working in partnership with local authorities across Essex and CHESS to provide a rough sleeper outreach service guiding rough sleepers to the help and support they need to make positive change. In response to the Governments request, the Housing team successfully found accommodation for 11 rough sleepers across our district in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus.	May 2019	
(E) Continue to raise awareness of child exploitation through the 'spot-it, stop-it' campaign		
Promotion of the scheme and training has been provided during the year through Pubwatch meetings in Braintree, Halstead and Witham. A draft awareness program to deliver a countywide approach to child exploitation is being developed with partners and Braintree District Council has provided feedback. Countywide training will continue into next year. In March, a member of staff within the Community Services Team received a commendation from Essex Police for her work and dedication to raising awareness through the 'spot-it stop-it' campaign.	March 2020	
(E) Continue to promote events and provide opportunities that would benefit those living with dementia and their carers		






Events to support those living with dementia and their carers have taken place across the district in the last year including dementia friendly cinema, walk & talk groups, seated exercise classes, afternoon teas and a dementia friendly choir in partnership with the Big Sing and Colne View Care UK who provided a public performance in December. In the last quarter of the year, Braintree District Council have been working to make Braintree Station dementia friendly and it is hoped that a few small alterations and additions at the station will be enough to become the first station in Essex to be branded a dementia friendly station by the Alzheimer's Society.	March 2020	
In partnership with Fusion, encourage inactive over 60's to become active again by developing the Age well sessions at our local sports centres		
Before lockdown closed the Leisure Centres, Fusion had introduced a number of agewell sessions into the leisure centres such as ACE weigh ins, racket ball, seated dance, walking football and chair based exercise classes. An agewell timetable had also been created to show the classes suitable for people aged 60+. Due to the closure of the Leisure Centres in combating the spread of coronavirus, Braintree District Council are working with Greenfields to distribute leaflets through care agencies on chair based exercises and gentle home exercises. We are also working with Active Essex and Active Braintree to put exercise classes on line.	March 2020	
(E) Continue to support community groups to deliver local projects and activities through the Councillor Community Grant Scheme		
In the fourth quarter of the year, a further 32 grants have been awarded bringing the total number of grants issued throughout the year to 69. This amounts to £48,390.	March 2020	
(E) Work with partners to raise awareness and identify ways to combat social isolation and loneliness		
Meet up Mondays, which have been running in the district for over a year, now have seven venues. Meet up Mondays is a weekly meet up for people who want to meet and chat to new people. The venues offer free tea or coffee and a place to sit and chat for a couple of hours. As well as Mondays, there are Meet Up Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays running across the district. Braintree District Council has been supporting a countywide social movement campaign called United in Kind which launched in September to raise awareness of loneliness in Essex. Working with communities, charities and voluntary groups the aim is to help people connect with friends, neighbours and strangers and overcome feelings of isolation. Due to the impact of the coronavirus, United in Kind have become part of the Community Shield befriending service along with Community 360.	March 2020	
Continue to work with key local groups to develop plans for a community facility in Witham		
Braintree District Council has been working with local residents and community groups in shaping plans for a new community facility in Witham. The malting's lane steering group have met with representatives from the Council, Witham Town Council, Ingletonwood (Architects), St Nicholas Church, Witham Boys Brigade and local residents to consider how money funded from various section 106 contributions is best spent to develop the site and outdoor space. Current proposals include a main hall and smaller hall to cater for various activities including indoor sports, community events, meetings, children's activities, performance and music, a café and social area and changing rooms for the outdoor sports space. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, they are currently looking at holding virtual meetings to move this forward. This project will be continuing into next year.	March 2020	
Promote volunteering opportunities to work with young people and promote activities and clubs available to young people in our district		

Volunteers from across the district were recognised and celebrated at the Braintree District Volunteer awards evening in June 2019 for the positive difference they make in their community and in inspiring others which this time included new categories to recognise the contributions made by children and young people in the district. A volunteering protocol to ensure recruitment, support and training for volunteers across all services was adopted to be used in promoting volunteering opportunities throughout the Council. Essex Map, a website designed to bring communities together by promoting activities, clubs and volunteering was launched in 2019 and they are now working with local authorities and other key partners to co-ordinate and offer support, recruit volunteers and promote groups, services and activities for all those affected by the coronavirus pandemic.	March 2020	✓
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Finance and Performance

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Review our services and processes to ensure they continue to provide value for money		
A service review process is now in place and has been tested on a number of projects. This provides a framework to support the Council in its commitment to modernise the way we work to ensure we continue to delivery high quality and value for money services. Reviews will continue and there has inevitably been impact on some projects with resources redirected or homeworking. The ongoing projects take on greater importance given the financial challenges anticipated over the next few years and we will continue to monitor and report on significant projects.	March 2020	✓
Develop our commercial programme to generate income that can be reinvested in front line services		
Commercial income took a hit in February and March in the lead up to lockdown, particularly across our conference income line. Despite this income increased by 40% across the three commercially controlled services of advertising, sponsorship and the conference centre against 2018/19 figures. The Essex Commercial Network now has membership from 11 Essex authorities and the Local Government Association and is allowing us to look for opportunities to share and trade services.	March 2020	✓
Identify and progress investment opportunities that help us to deliver our corporate strategy whilst providing a return on investment to strengthen our financial independence		
£1million of the additional investment in pooled funds of £2m agreed in principle by the Strategic Investment Group was placed in the Kames Diversified Fund in October 2019. However, the remaining £1million has been held in abeyance due to uncertainties in the market caused initially by Brexit and more recent by the coronavirus pandemic. We are continuing our work with Marshgate to develop 20 acres of the site at Horizon 120. Any further investment opportunities are currently on hold due to a cautious approach being adopted in considering any new investment opportunities in the district due to uncertainties in the market as outlined earlier	March 2020	✓

Respond to the anticipated Government consultation on its proposed 75% Business Rate retention scheme and the Fair Funding Review which will impact on the Council's finances from April 2020		
The fair funding review and 75% business rates retention has been delayed by Government until after 2020/21. This project has therefore been cancelled and will be set up again once we know how and when Government will be proceeding.	March 2020	
Continue to identify improvements in customer focused services using the Customer Service Excellence Standard as a framework		
The Customer Service Excellence assessment took place on the 5th, 6th and 7th November looking at consultation and engagement, satisfaction surveys, customer service standards, how we improve our written, verbal and web based information, benchmarking and best practice and how we improve our delivery of service. Braintree District Council has successfully retained the accreditation retaining three areas of compliance plus and achieving compliance plus in four new areas.	December 2019	
Implement the Council's discretionary Business Rate relief scheme for independent retail businesses		
The new retail rate scheme was approved by Full Council in February 2019. The new relief was awarded to eligible retail businesses and included in the business rate bills for 2019/20. Any further businesses meeting the criteria will be assessed throughout the year and the reduced rate applied.	May 2019	
Expand our online booking and payment systems enabling residents to book and pay for more services through our website.		
The online booking and payment systems are now set up for the pest control service and Enterprise Centre. Due to the coronavirus, changes have been made to the way services are currently operating and therefore the new online booking and payment system will go live when normal services resume.	March 2020	
Develop a digital platform enabling residents to access health information, initiatives and support to improve their health and wellbeing		
This project was originally set up as the Council had applied for funding from the Government 'trail blazer' programme to develop an app that residents could access for information on health initiatives and support to improve their health and wellbeing. As the Council were unsuccessful in securing funding, alternative digital platforms continue to be explored and piloted. The end date of the project has been extended from March 2020 until September 2020 to allow more time for the development of an app as the project has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.	September 2020	






























Overall Strategy and Direction

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
(E) Continue to deliver projects under the District Investment Strategy to achieve better outcomes for the district and a return for the taxpayers' purse by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership to improve health provision across the district • Facilitating the need for housing by providing homes and supporting infrastructure • Improving our most congested roads and journeys across the district • Planning for growth by providing jobs delivering increased opportunities for new business and employment • Delivering investment opportunities that support growth and provide a return for the District Council 		
Throughout the year, the council has continued to work with the NHS, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and other healthcare partners to develop modern healthcare facilities in Sible Hedingham, the Newlands Centre in Witham and Braintree Town Centre as part of the Manor Street regeneration. Further projects will be set up next year regarding the support required to deliver improved health care facilities across the district	March 2020	✓
In the year, the Planning service agreed the development of 2,000 homes including some major applications which will provide supporting infrastructure. Cabinet have also agreed to the development of up to seven Council owned sites	March 2020	✓
Work has continued throughout the year on a number of projects in partnership with Highways England and Essex County Council reported under the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure section such as the A120 Millennium slip roads, land west of Panfield Lane, improvements to Springwood Drive roundabout and securing improvements to the A12 and A120	March 2020	✓
A number of projects and actions have been carried out throughout the year to ensure delivery of the Braintree Plan for Growth to provide jobs such as developing the first 20 acres of Horizon 120 and approving the planning applications for grid serve and the Construction Innovation Centre. The regeneration of Manor Street started in March 2020 and Kier Regional Building Eastern are working closely with local subcontractors creating a range of job opportunities for those living in the area	March 2020	✓
There are a number of projects reported on throughout this report that provide an update on investment opportunities under the District Investment Strategy	March 2020	✓
Work with partner authorities (Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council) and other public and private sector organisations to plan for and enable sustainable growth in homes and jobs in the north Essex area		
Throughout the year, Braintree has worked with Tendring and Colchester on the Joint section 1 Local Plan which was submitted to the Planning Inspector in January. Work has also taken place with Essex County Council on Housing Infrastructure Bids (HIF) to support the development of Garden Communities. Essex wide work has also taken place on a number of evidence documents and guidance including the Essex wide Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) study. The North Essex Economic Strategy was agreed at Cabinet in December providing a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation in the overall economic prosperity of the North Essex area. An action plan is being developed to guide the delivery of the key actions	March 2020	✓

Section 3: Managing the Business

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	2019/20									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
Environment and Place										
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	10%	1%	2%	6%		4%	6%		Recorded three times a year – July, November and March
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	54.43%	52.45%	47.65%	42.28%	60%		49.58%	60%		The latest figures are awaiting verification by Essex County Council any may change slightly. Need comments The annual recycling target of 60% is a target adopted by the Essex Waste Partnership Education and intervention activities have taken place throughout the year and the Waste Minimisation & Recycling Officers have been working with local residents living in flats which have communal facilities to reduce contamination of recyclable waste.
Tonnage of residual household waste not recycled	114kgs	113kgs	114kgs	116kgs	117kgs		457kgs	470kgs		
Number and percentage of non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100% (211)	100% (236)	100% (153)	100% (312)	100%		100% (912)	100%		
Number of fuel poverty and domestic energy reduction installations carried out	Annually reported indicator					n/a		350	TBC	We are waiting for information from BEIS to confirm the number of installations carried out across the district. This information will not be available until later in the year.
Strategic Growth and Infrastructure										
Number of affordable homes delivered	13	52	104	64	37		233	150		
Number of homes granted planning permission	1,103	507	312	212	200		2,134	845		
Health and Communities										
Average waiting time for applicants on the Disabled Facilities Grant	78 days	100 days	89 days	106 days	90 days		98 days	90 days		In the last quarter and at the end of the year, the target has not been met due to delays in responses from builders providing quotes and in some cases we have been waiting for clarification from the Occupational Therapists in complex cases. Customers are kept informed throughout the

Performance Indicator	2019/20									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
										process and builders are reminded of the need to return quotes in a timely manner.
Achieve a 2% increase on the contract baseline in participation levels across all our sports centres	238,842	246,576	218,135	195,094	249,014		898,647	960,970		Due to the closure of all leisure centres on the 20 th March to control the spread of coronavirus, we have not been able to include participation rates for the whole of March impacting on the outturns for the fourth quarter and the end of the year. As at the end of February, the cumulative participation levels had been exceeded and it was therefore expected that the overall targets in the fourth quarter and at the end of the year, would have been achieved.
Achieve at least a 1% increase in adults being active for 150 minutes per week	Annually reported indicator					n/a	62%	60%		
Finance and Performance										
Average call answer time in the Customer Service Centre	14 seconds	19 seconds	13 seconds	21 seconds	15 seconds		17 seconds	15 seconds		In the last quarter of the year, the Customer Service Centre received an increase in the number of calls in relation to Council Tax due to the 2020/21 bills going out and due to a high number of enquiries from residents and businesses when the Country went into lockdown on the 23rd March.
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	16.25 days	16.09 days	15.87 days	12.56 days	20 days		15.15 days	20 days		
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	5.28 days	4.43 days	3.59 days	3.18 days	6 days		4.12 days	6 days		
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within target	88.98%	93.71%	89.81%	89.83%	90%		90.76%	90%		The target has just been missed In the fourth quarter of the year. In this period, the Authority received 118 stage one complaints of which, 106 where responded to within 7 working days. Of the twelve complaints not responded to, the customer was kept informed and advised that additional time was required to provide a comprehensive response due to the complex nature and/or length of the complaints. We are monitoring the complaints received and further information on complaints is provided in the next section of this report.
Collection rate for Council Tax	30.46%	58.80%	86.20%	98.00%	98.30%		98.00%	98.30%		The collection rate achieved of 98.0% is marginally lower than

Performance Indicator	2019/20									Comments
	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Status at the end of the Quarter	Yearly Outturn	Yearly Target	Status at the end of the year	
										<i>the previous year (of 98.22%) and also the target of 98.3%. Total income of £92.43million was received in the year, the balance of monies outstanding for the year will continue to be collected over the next and future financial years.</i>
Collection rate for Business Rates	31.13%	57.95%	84.58%	99.28%	98.60%	✓	99.28%	98.60%	✓	
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	98.82%	98.52%	99.37%	98.72%	99.25%	⚠	98.86%	99.25%	⚠	<i>In the fourth quarter, the Council processed 2,585 invoices of which 33 were not paid within 30 days of receipt. For the year, a total of 10,182 invoices have been processed of which 117 were not paid within 30 days. Services have been reminded of the importance of passing invoices for payment in a timely manner.</i>

Complaints

The quarterly complaints analysis for the fourth quarter of 2019/20 and the end of the year is detailed below. This is compared with 2018/19 figures shown in brackets. The figures represent all three stages of the complaints process.

Complaint Category	Q1 2019/20	Q2 2019/20	Q3 2019/20	Q4 2019/20	TOTAL
Justified	45 (110)	52 (92)	51 (61)	44 (60)	192 (323)
Not Justified	54 (76)	69 (88)	49 (59)	49 (54)	221 (277)
Partially Justified	22 (24)	24 (26)	14 (21)	29 (28)	89 (100)
Not known	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	2 (0)	2 (1)
Total	121 (210)	145 (207)	114 (141)	124 (142)	504 (701)

Comments

The number of complaints received in the fourth quarter is low in comparison to the previous year and has continued the trend seen over the last year resulting in an overall reduction of 28% in the number of complaints received. At the time of writing the report, two complaints were still being investigated.

The majority of complaints in the fourth quarter relate to missed waste collections due to restricted access to collection points caused by parked cars or road closures, collections being overlooked by crews due to agency staff not being familiar with collection points, overlooked assisted collections or bins not being returned to the collection point.

The Planning service has also dealt with a higher than normal number of complaints relating to delays with planning applications or the committee process. The planning service have

experienced resourcing issues due to a high demand on their service resulting in the recruitment of new officers throughout the year to meet this demand. The service is now looking at improvements to their processes and the monitoring of cases.

Throughout the year, the Council monitors trends in complaints and uses this information to identify improvements to processes and the service provided with the aim of reducing the number of complaints received.

In the fourth quarter of 2019/20, of the 124 complaints received:

- 118 are stage one complaints
- 5 are stage two complaints
- 1 is a stage three complaints

A summary of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases:

In the fourth quarter of 2019/20, the LGO has not received any new complaints and has issued a final decision in relation to a housing complaint. The LGO did not investigate this complaint as the complainant was offered suitable housing during the process and it was unlikely that the Ombudsman could achieve a better outcome.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q4 19/20	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	480	475	481	492	+ 11	-
Number of temporary staff	28	23	25	27	+ 2	-
Total staff FTE	435.42	429.45	436.31	441.68	+ 5.37	-
Level of employee turnover	2.5%	3.37%	2.29%	1.02%	- 1.27%	-
Number of leavers	12	16	11	5	- 6	-
Number of starters	11	11	17	16	- 1	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.83 days	2.09 days	2.35 days	1.84 days	- 0.51 days	8.0 days
Percentage of staff with nil sickness (cumulative)	79.8%	62.9%	48.6%	45.1%	Cumulative	-
Number of learning hours	1748	1903.5	2857.5	1954	- 903.5	-
Number of delegates	63	85	225	62	- 163	-
Number of apprentices **	18	18	24	19	- 6	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	472	470	464	466	481	492

** The figures reflect level 2 up to level 6 (degree) apprenticeships.

Health & Safety

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

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

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	(2019/20 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	11 (10)	4 (6)	14 (9)	11 (13)	<i>Most commonly reported accidents/incidents in the fourth quarter are in relation to verbal abuse</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	9 (6)	3 (6)	14 (9)	10 (11)	<i>There have been a variety of accidents in the fourth quarter which have been reported by 5 different services</i>
<i>Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	
<i>Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	1 (1)	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	<i>In the fourth quarter, a member of public fell ill outside the Town Hall and staff administered assistance.</i>
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	6 (85)	4 (19)	7 (48)	0 (24.5)	
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	1 (2)	0 (1)	1 (1)	4 (1)	<i>Four verbal incidents have occurred in the fourth quarter to a waste operative, housing officer, receptionist and customer services advisor.</i>
Number of near miss incidents	1 (1)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	1 (1)	1 (3)	0 (1)	1 (1)	
Number of claims settled	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	

Financial Performance

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

Background

Full Council approved a net budget of £14.540 million for the 2019/20 financial year. This included planned spending across all services totalling £13.247 million; corporate items amounting to £1.493 million; and an overall efficiency target to be achieved in-year of £200,000.

Financing of the budget was to be from a combination of: general government grants (£22,000); business rates (£4.965 million); and Council Tax (£9.553 million).

During the year individual budgets have been updated in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure, and against which performance has been reported.

Previously, virements totalling £171,680 were approved between the Development Management and Planning Policy income budgets and the staffing budgets for these service areas. Waste Management budgets were also realigned to reflect changes to the contractual arrangements for transporting and processing of recyclable materials.

Summary Outturn Financial Position

- An overall positive variance for the year of £565,000 (-3.9%) against budget.
- Across all services staffing budgets were underspent by £228,000; and after allowing for the corporate efficiency target of £200,000, this resulted in a net underspend of £28,000.
- Other expenditure was over budget by £40,000.
- Income was overachieved by £577,000.
- The overall variance changed slightly from that reported at Q3, which had projected a positive variance of £530,000. However, within this overall change there were some individually significant changes, the details of which are provided in the commentary.
- Additional expenditure amounting to £101,710 was incurred in March relating to COVID-19, mainly on the provision of ICT equipment to staff to facilitate the rapid introduction of homeworking due to restrictions introduced by the UK Government. Most of this expenditure was capitalised and was partially funded by the first tranche of government funding (£61,411).
- General Fund unallocated balances were £6.883 million and earmarked reserves £21.931 million at the end of the year.
- A number of the variances identified within this report were highlighted at earlier quarters and, where these were judged to be ongoing, have been reflected in the Council's budget approved for 2020/21.
- During the year the Council monitored its overall financial position with the following reported at each quarter end:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2 ¹	Quarter 3	Outturn
	Reported Full-Year Projected Variance Adverse/ (Positive)			Actual Variance
Net Variance	(642)	(715)	(530)	(565)
Staffing	9	(21)	(127)	(28)
Other Expenditure	(72)	(192)	7	40
Income	(579)	(502)	(410)	(577)

¹ Variances from Q2 onwards reported against updated budget reflecting changes summarised in the Background notes above

Revenue Spending

Service	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Adverse (Positive) variance against budget				RAG Status
			Staffing £'000	Other Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Total £'000	
Asset Management	(2,387)	(2,219)	2	238	(72)	168	R
Community Services	364	335	(4)	(22)	(3)	(29)	G
Corporate Management	1,385	1,521	111	31	(6)	136	R
Economic Development	187	170	5	(19)	(3)	(17)	G
Environment & Leisure	902	805	(75)	30	(52)	(97)	G
Finance	1,423	791	(148)	(132)	(352)	(632)	G
Governance	1,026	1,072	39	32	(25)	46	A
Housing Services	890	801	(28)	(44)	(17)	(89)	G
Human Resources	375	358	2	(17)	(2)	(17)	G
ICT & Facilities	1,564	1,527	10	(46)	(1)	(37)	G
Marketing and Communications	526	511	18	(46)	13	(15)	G
Operations	5,715	5,600	(94)	20	(41)	(115)	G
Strategic Investment	11	(9)	-	(2)	(18)	(20)	G
Sustainable Development	1,244	1,432	(66)	84	170	188	R
Service Total	13,225	12,695	(228)	107	(409)	(530)	G
Corporate Financing	1,515	1,280	-	(67)	(168)	(235)	G
Efficiency target	(200)	-	200	-	-	200	
Total	14,540	13,975	(28)	40	(577)	(565)	G

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

Budget = controllable expenditure budget net of direct service income

Staffing

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

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

Service – Staffing Budgets	Updated Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Adverse/ (Positive) variance £'000	RAG Status
Asset Management	296	298	2	A
Community Services	376	372	(4)	G
Corporate Management	1,360	1,471	111	R
Economic Development	194	199	5	A
Environment & Leisure	1,617	1,542	(75)	G
Finance	2,666	2,518	(148)	G
Governance	741	780	39	A
Housing Services	961	933	(28)	G
Human Resources	298	300	2	A
ICT & Facilities	787	797	10	A
Marketing & Communications	391	409	18	A
Operations	5,664	5,570	(94)	G
Strategic Investment	579	579	-	G
Sustainable Development	1,675	1,609	(66)	G
Service Total	17,605	17,377	(228)	G
Corporate Financing	-	-	-	
Efficiency	(200)	-	200	
Total	17,405	17,377	(28)	G

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

Commentary on staffing variations:

Across all service areas staffing budgets were underspent by £228,000, a reduction from that reported at Q3 of £99,000.

Finance: Savings were mainly achieved in Billing and Recovery (-£100,000); Systems Control (-£13,000); and Customer Services (-£20,000). These were made through a combination of vacant posts; reductions in contracted hours; and new appointments being made at lower grades/ scale points. Furthermore, efficiencies were made in Billing and Recovery by staff absorbing additional tax collection and fraud work which had generated external funding. The outturn variance reduced from that reported at Q3 as it was agreed to meet one-off pension costs relating to a flexible retirement from the in-year service variance.

Operations: Mainly due to vacancies in the following areas: Waste Management (-£40,000); Horticultural Services (-£36,000); and Service Management & Administration (-£52,000).

Environment and Leisure: Underspent by £75,000 due mainly to vacancies in Health Protection; Health Development; and Building Control.

Sustainable Development: During the year, permanent staffing resources in the Development Management team were gradually replenished so that by the year end only 1 planner position and an administrative role remained vacant, both of which are expected to be filled during 2020/21. To supplement the team's resources temporary agency staff were used, the additional cost of which has partially offset underspends on direct staff, giving an overall net underspend of £54,000 in this area. In addition, there were further staffing underspends in Planning Policy and Landscape Services.

Corporate Management: Changes in senior management during the year which required the appointment of an interim Corporate Director, and more recently an interim Head of Governance, resulted in net additional costs which contributed mainly to the overall overspend of £111,000. A proportion of the costs of the interim Corporate Director were capitalised to reflect the involvement in the town centre pedestrianisation project which mitigates the overall impact on the General Fund revenue account.

Governance: Overspent on staffing by £39,000 due mainly to agency staff being used to cover a vacancy and maternity leave. An unsuccessful attempt was made to recruit a permanent Major Projects and Planning Lawyer earlier in the year, and with the appointment of a new Head of Service the arrangements for legal support will be reviewed in 2020/21.

Strategic Investment Team: The team continued to operate largely with interim staffing. During the year additional capacity was added to maintain progress on schemes and accelerate feasibility reviews on a number of pipeline projects. The current budget for the team is funded from a mixture of revenue and capital resources which were allocated for a four-year period and the level of spending to date has remained within the overall resources allocated.

The approved budget provided for a **Corporate Efficiency Target** which in previous years has been achieved from in-year staffing cost variances. The amount included in this year's budget was £200,000, and after taking this into account the overall net staffing underspend for the year was £28,000.

Other Service Expenditure

Other service expenditure is overspent by a net £40,000. The main variances were:

Underspends

- **Finance** (-£132,000): The net cost of **Housing Benefits** (after allowing for government subsidy) was £22,000 lower than budget. In addition, whilst the government has been reducing the amount of grant paid towards administration costs, the original budget anticipated a higher reduction than was actually made consequently a provision of £62,000 was no longer required. Other areas of underspend within Finance included: charges for banking services; transaction charges for credit/ debit card payments; and savings on a replacement system used for securely submitting direct debit and BACS payment files.
- **ICT and Facilities** (-£46,000): a combination of underspends arising from: delay on implementation of arrangements for business continuity after an unsuccessful attempt to explore a potential solution with another local authority; ongoing projects to upgrade the GIS server and implementation of Wi-Fi improvements now running over into 2020/21; and a net underspend on the running costs of Causeway House.
- **Marketing and Communications** (-£46,000): mainly due to lower spend on external postage and publicity and promotion activities.
- **Housing Services** (-£44,000): includes underspends on temporary accommodation costs recharged by Greenfields Community Housing (net of additional costs at Digby Court and Great Eastern Close); and rent advances which are demand led, and also subject to varying levels of offsetting repayments.
- **Corporate Financing** (-£67,000): includes savings on annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) of £25,000; additional savings from the staff annual leave purchase scheme (£20,000); and lower pension fund payments (-£9,000).

Overspends

- **Asset Management** (+£238,000): The main reason for the service overspend was a write back to revenue of £198,000 of costs which had been accrued over many years and which were expected to be recouped through a sale of land and properties in Halstead as part of a wider vendor consortium arrangement. Due to difficulties in completing a sale of the site this arrangement has now ended and a review of the Council's options for this site is to be undertaken.
- **Sustainable Development** (+£84,000): Additional costs were incurred for the recruitment of Development Management staff, including providing the new staff with equipment; and within Landscape Services there were unbudgeted storm damage works, higher tree maintenance costs, and additional expenditure for support required from Essex County Council for ecology works.

External Income

A significant proportion of the Council's budget was reliant on external income. Grants and subsidies from government, alongside income from business rates were major elements, totalling around £35million.

The amount of business rates ultimately retained by the Council depended on the actual amounts collectable (taking into account changes in the Valuation List, exemptions and reliefs

granted, and provisions for non-collection and rating appeals). Variances are accounted for via the Collection Fund and taken into account when determining future budgets and council tax setting. Fluctuations from those elements which have a direct impact on the General Fund revenue account, e.g. the levy payable on growth or grants received from Government to fund discretionary reliefs, are managed through the Business Rate Retention reserve.

As a participant in the Essex Business Rates Pool the Council is entitled to an additional share of income from business rate growth. The final determination and receipt of the actual amount will be made after year-end returns have been collated by the County Council from each of the participating authorities. An amount of £674,000 has been estimated for 2019/20 based on returns that were submitted by Pool members at the end of Q3. Sums received from this arrangement are held in the Business Rate Retention reserve pending decisions on how this resource is to be utilised.

Other external income for which the Council had budgeted £15.824 million came from a variety of sources that were subject to external demands and other influences, meaning these were more susceptible to variations against budget. At the year-end, services overachieved their income budgets by a net £577,000, as shown in the table below:

Service	Updated Budget £000	Joint Fin. Other Reimburs.	Sales, Fees & Charges	Rents	Other Income	Total	RAG status
		4,721	6,300	3,127	1,676	15,824	
		<i>Adverse (Positive) Variance £000 against Budget :</i>					
Asset Management	3,308	(6)	(13)	(46)	(7)	(72)	G
Community Services	223	(1)	11	-	(13)	(3)	G
Corporate Management Plan	-	(9)	-	-	3	(6)	G
Economic Development	3	-	-	-	(3)	(3)	G
Environment & Leisure	1,140	36	(5)	-	(83)	(52)	G
Finance	2,464	(18)	-	-	(334)	(352)	G
Governance	243	(5)	-	-	(20)	(25)	G
Housing	63	-	(16)	(1)	-	(17)	G
Human Resources	5	-	(2)	-	-	(2)	G
ICT & Facilities	15	(1)	-	-	-	(1)	G
Marketing & Communications	196	21	10	-	(18)	13	A
Operations	5,499	(13)	71	23	(122)	(41)	G
Strategic Investment	273	-	-	-	(18)	(18)	G
Sustainable Development	1,748	9	161	-	-	170	R
Service Total	15,180	13	217	(24)	(615)	(409)	G
Corporate Financing	644	(131)	-	-	(38)	(168)	G
Total	15,824	(118)	217	(24)	(653)	(577)	G

RAG Status: G = positive or nil variance, A = up to 5% adverse variance or <£50k, R = adverse variance greater than 5% and >£50k at Individual Business Plan level

Joint Financing & Other Reimbursements

Actual income for the year was £4.839 million against a budget of £4.721 million, an additional £118,000.

The main sources of this income were:

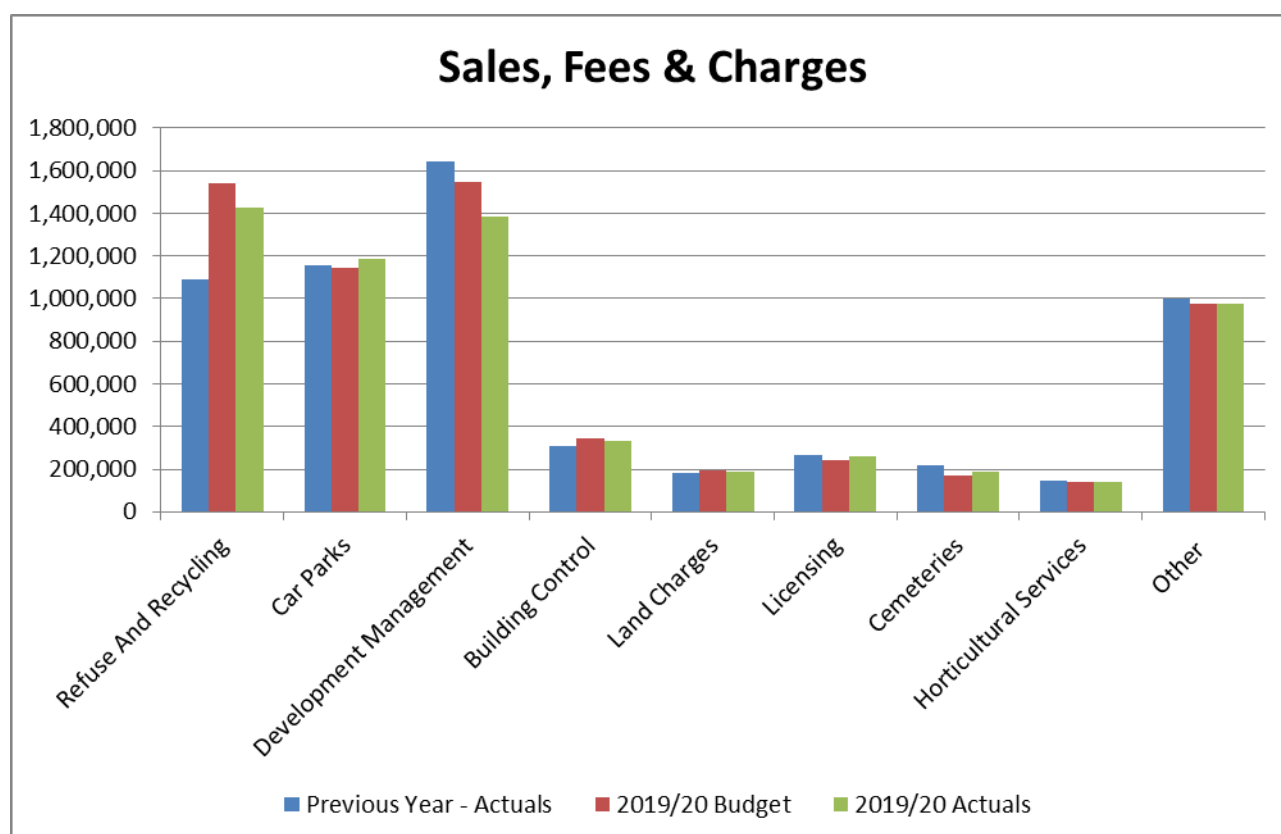
- **Essex County Council** which contributed £2.446 million through a number of arrangements covering waste management, horticultural services, community transport, and public health & livewell initiatives.
- **Council Tax Sharing and Investment Agreement** (£689,000) whereby performance on collection of council tax and the additional income generated for major precepting

authorities is shared with the Council. Funding was also provided to support various anti-fraud and other collection initiatives. A correction of an error in the calculation methodology, found during the year, benefitted the billing authorities and the estimated impact of a reduction in the share agreed with the preceptors did not materialise which meant that the amount received was higher than budget by £128,000.

- **Benefit overpayments, administrative penalties, and costs recovered** – these are amounts that are being recovered due to benefit overpayments relating to claimant error or fraud, and also local tax recovery costs levied when taxpayers are in default. In total the amount collected in the year was £749,000.
- **Procurement Hub** – subscriptions from four Essex local authorities for services provided, along with supplier rebates obtained as a result of third parties using the Hub's procurement frameworks. Total income for the year was £221,000.
- **Business rates collection allowance** – under the business rate retention scheme the Council is allowed to retain £189,000 of income as a contribution towards the cost of collection. The amount is set by Government based on a formula.
- **Other costs recovered** – (£545,000), included: Local Plan costs shared with other local authorities (£122,000); shared payroll service income (£61,000); developer contributions towards revenue costs (£70,000); and many other recoveries and contributions across all service areas (£292,000).

Sales, Fees & Charges

Income from sales, fees and charges totalled £6.083 million, an overall shortfall of £217,000 from the amount budgeted. The following chart shows the main income streams:



Commentary on Fees and Charges:

- **Refuse and Recycling:** The budget included income to be generated from the sale of recycling material based on a weighted basket, the value of which was then offset against costs paid to the processing contractor. The weighted basket price reduced at each quarterly review – with the price applied for the final quarter lower by almost 37% from

that used in the budget. Consequently, income for the year was lower than budget by £147,000. This was partially offset by reductions in processing costs, along with other income improvements from various service activities.

- **Car Parks:** A slight increase in income in February offset the marked downturn late in March as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. Income was slightly higher than last year (+£29,000). The original budget included a provision for potential loss of income as a consequence of the proposed Manor Street regeneration project; however, due to the delay in work commencing on-site this meant the car park operated longer than anticipated and overall income from car parking was higher than budget by £40,000.
- **Development Management:** The original budget provided for an increase in planning application fee income of £156,560, with a further in-year increase to budget of £128,500 taking the overall budget to £1.397million. Actual income was £1.239 million, a shortfall of £158,000 against the revised budget and lower than the previous year outturn by £368,000. As well as a marked drop in application income there was also a refund in the final quarter of £50,000 relating to a prior year major application. Income from Pre-application Advice and Planning Performance Agreements was also lower than budget by £38,000, although this was largely offset by increased income from Street Naming and Numbering service (+£35,000).
- **Building Control:** The service achieved slightly higher income this year than the previous year due in part to the transfer of work in progress from another external service provider that ceased trading. However, overall income was still slightly below budget by £10,000 or 3%, although more than offset by savings on staffing and other expenditure.
- **Local Land Charges:** As a result of a reduction in the number of chargeable searches being requested, the income budget was reduced by £78,000 for the 2019/20 budget. Full searches processed have been down compared to numbers for the previous year. However, in December a bulk request for 96 searches was received from Greenfields Community Housing which improved the overall income achieved and taking full year income to £191,000, against a budget of £194,000.
- **Other Income** – Includes income from the following services or activities: Community Transport (£81,000); the Town Hall Centre (£108,000); Commercial Property service charges and other Asset Management income (£275,000); and income received from the Leisure Management operator (£194,000). Overall income was slightly higher than the budget at £978,000 against a budget of £976,000. Income in 2018/19 was higher due to a one-off retrospective adjustment in relation to advertising rights on council-owned bus shelters.

Rental Income

The budget for rental income from land & property was £3.127million – mainly generated from the Council's commercial property portfolio, local markets, housing properties, and other let properties. The outturn for the year was a net overachievement of £24,000.

Commentary on Rental Income:

- **Asset Management:** The commercial property budget for rental income was increased by £284,000 to £2.987 million. This reflected the transfer back to the Council of the management of the Braintree Enterprise Centre and Corner House, along with new commercial property: the completed grow-on units at Springwood Drive; and new acquisitions at Osier House, Sible Hedingham, and premises in Silver End. The outturn position was an overachievement of income of £46,000, as overall void levels remained below the level of provision allowed.
- **Operations – Local Markets:** As predicted throughout the year, income was down against budget by £24,000 as free pitches were provided at Witham as an incentive to prospective traders, and the Braintree market continued to suffer from a general reduction

in the number of traders, exacerbated by the COVID-19 restrictions that came into effect in late March.

Other Service & Corporate Income

Total budgeted Other Income was £1.676 million of which £588,000 related to internal recharges, including staffing costs that were expected to be charged against capital projects – originally budgeted to be £451,000 whereas the actual amount capitalised was £516,000. Other external income was overachieved by £588,000.

Other external income includes the following streams:

- **Investment & Other Interest Income:** The total amount of income earned from treasury management activities was £1.281 million, an overachievement of £250,000. The reasons for the increased income was a combination of higher cash balances being held (a result of increased balances and reserves and later spending on capital projects), improvement in interest rates for most of the year; and an increase in the amount held in long-term pooled investments. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance Management agreed as part of the carry forwards that this overachievement should be added to the Treasury Management reserve to provide further contingency against an anticipated downturn in income as pooled fund dividends reduce and interest rates have been cut as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Additional interest of £41,000 was also generated from a mixture of service loans and deferred payment arrangements.
- **Solar Panel Feed-in-Tariffs:** income achieved was £107,000 (Budget £93,000) and which stems from past investment in solar panels at various Council facilities.
- **Manor Street Income Provision:** the original budget included a provision for the potential reduction of income on car parking and Town Hall bookings as a result of the Manor Street regeneration works. The commencement of these works were delayed and consequently the majority of the provision was unutilised generating a positive variance of £103,000.

Other variances include a number of unbudgeted government grants, or grants that were higher than originally anticipated, giving an overall positive variance of £75,000.

Treasury Management

The Council's treasury management activity across the year is summarised in the table below:

Amount Invested at start of the year	Activity to the end March		Amount Invested at end of the year
	New Investments	Investments Sold or Matured	
£46.97m	£125.50m	£119.35m	£53.12m
Average amount invested for the year			£63.64m
Highest amount invested in the year			£73.26m

The total amount invested in long-term pooled funds was increased to £19 million spread across seven funds. The remaining investments have been in short-term instruments including call accounts and term deposits with UK and Non-UK financial institutions, loans to other local authorities and the UK Government, and investments in highly liquid Money Market Funds (MMF).

Interest and dividends earned for the year are summarised in the table below:

Investments	Average Amount Invested	Interest & Dividends Earned	Annualised Income Return %
Long-Term Pooled Funds	£18.47m	£922,622	4.98%
Short-Term	£45,17m	£358,351	0.79%
Total	£63.64m	£1,280,973	2.01%

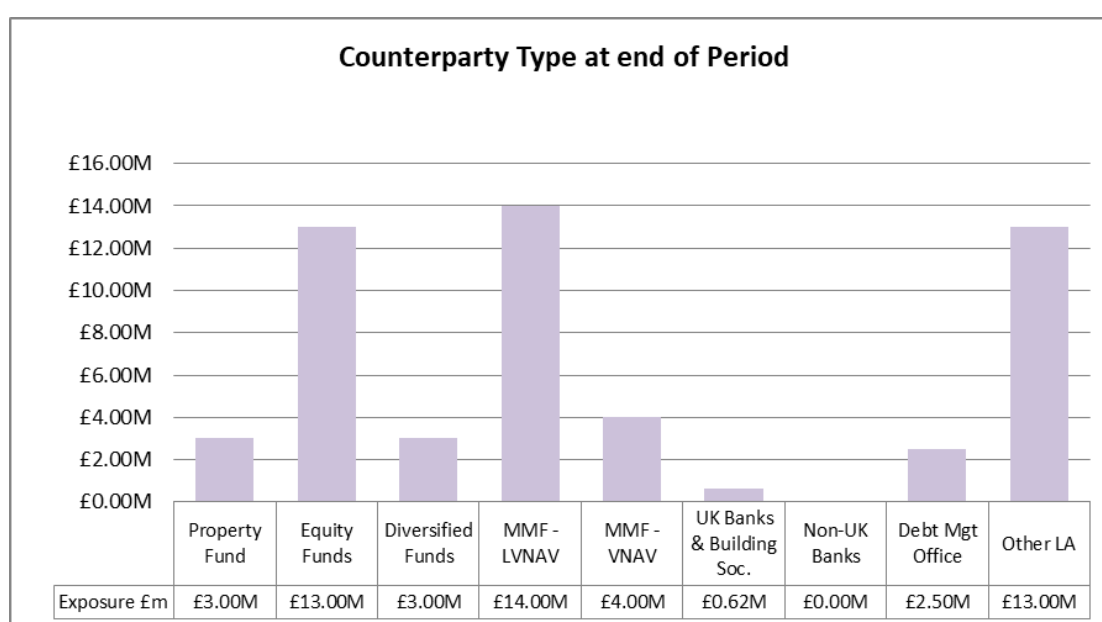
Investment returns have been increased by the dividend income earned from long-term investments. However, being exposed to equities and property, the value of these funds fluctuate based on prevailing market conditions. As a result of the world-wide coronavirus pandemic, financial markets fell in value significantly during the final quarter of the financial year, resulting in marked reduction in the values across all the Council's long-term pooled funds. At the year-end the total valuation for all funds was £16.744 million, an unrealised loss of £2.256 million. This reduction in value is currently held in an unusable reserve and would only be realised if the investments were to be sold.

Market Commentary

Financial markets sold off sharply during the final quarter as the impact from the coronavirus worsened. After starting positively in 2020, the FTSE 100 fell over 30% at its worst point with stock markets in other countries seeing similar huge falls. In March sterling touched its lowest level against the dollar since 1985. The measures implemented by central banks and governments helped restore some confidence and financial markets have rebounded in recent weeks but remain extremely volatile. The flight to quality caused gilts yields to fall substantially. The 5-year benchmark falling from 0.75% in April 2019 to 0.26% on 31st March. The 10-year benchmark yield fell from 1% to 0.4%, the 20-year benchmark yield from 1.47% to 0.76% over the same period. 1-month, 3-month and 12-month bid rates averaged 0.61%, 0.72% and 0.88% respectively over the year.

The Bank of England, which had held policy rates steady at 0.75% through most of 2019/20, moved in March to cut rates to 0.25% from 0.75% and then swiftly thereafter brought them down further to the record low of 0.1%.

At the end of the year the Council's investments were allocated as follows:



LVNAV = Low Volatility Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value is expected to remain fairly constant

VNAV = Variable Net Asset Value i.e. the Fund value can fluctuate meaning that investors may receive back more or less than invested

COVID-19 Expenditure

As a consequence of the world-wide coronavirus pandemic and the resultant restrictions put in place by the Government, with lockdown introduced from 23 March, additional unbudgeted expenditure was incurred during March totalling £101,710. Most of this expenditure related to the acquisition of ICT equipment to facilitate the rapid introduction of homeworking across services. Under the Council's capitalisation policy £100,028 of this expenditure was met from capital resources, leaving £1,682 charged to the General Fund revenue account.

In addition, the Council received a first tranche of Government funding amounting to £61,411. This has been used to meet the additional revenue expenditure, with the balance transferred to the Capital reserve to partially replenish the resources used to finance the ICT equipment.

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.

The movement on the General Fund balance for the year is summarised below:

	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2019	5,787
Add:	
Budgeted addition	128
Pension Fund triennial payment	1,411
Outturn budget variance	565
Prior year carry forwards returned to unallocated balances	13
Less:	
One-off investment	(622)
Carry forward requests approved	(149)
Transfer to the Treasury Management reserve	(250)
Balance at 31 March 2020	6,883

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

- The budget approved by Council included an anticipated addition to balances of £127,947, reflecting savings anticipated being made in advance of future years' budget shortfalls.
- In 2017/18 the Council made a one-off payment to the Essex Pension Fund covering the period April 2017 to March 2020, which was in part funded from General Fund balances. A repayment back into balances was expected in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- The Outturn variance for the year would mean an additional £564,966 being added to balances (before carry forwards).
- A review of prior year carry forwards by service managers identified a balance of £12,521 that was no longer required and has therefore been transferred to the unallocated balance.
- An allocation from General Fund balances was approved by Full Council in February 2019, to meet one-off budget requirements: £500,000 to replenish the Planning Appeals reserve; and a total of £122,000 provision for potential loss of income during redevelopment of Manor Street. As reported, the delay in the start of the Manor Street

project meant that the reduction in income was a lot lower in this financial year, the difference being reflected in the outturn variance.

- Requests to carry forward underspends from 2019/20 totalling £149,153 were considered by Management Board and subsequently approved on 21 May 2020, by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance Management under delegation. The Cabinet Member also approved to transfer the overachieved income generated from treasury management activities to reserve as further contingency against an expected downturn in this source income in 2020/21.

Earmarked Reserves

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

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

The outturn position reported is after a net withdrawal from reserves of £1.080 million made in accordance with the purposes for which the each reserve was originally established.

A further £149,000 was added to reserves for items approved to be carried forward from the 2019/20 budget outturn, offset by £13,000 of prior year balances that were deemed to be no longer required for the purposes for which they were originally carried over. In addition, £250,000 was added to the treasury management reserve from the overachieved income in the year.

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

	Additions	Withdrawals	Transfer to unallocated balances	Net Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Movement on earmarked reserves	4,505	(5,585)	-	(1,080)
Carry forwards & Treasury Management	399	-	(13)	386
Total	4,904	(5,585)	(13)	(694)

The total amount held in earmarked reserves at the 31st March 2020 was £21.931 million.

Risks and Assumptions

The outturn is subject to finalisation of the Council's Statement of Accounts which is scheduled to be completed by the end of June, following which the Council's external auditors, BDO LLP will carry out their audit. The outcome of the audit could lead to changes in the outturn, details of which will be reported to the Corporate Governance Group at its meeting in October and subsequently Cabinet when receiving the final audited financial statements.

The outturn will be reviewed to ensure that any on-going issues have either been/ will be addressed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy as detailed planning commences for the 2021/22 budget.

Capital Investment

Taking into account projects which were in progress and carried forward from earlier years, new projects approved as part of the Budget agreed in February 2019, and the subsequent decisions taken by Council on some major growth and infrastructure projects, the overall capital programme at the end of March totalled £52.6million. Delivery of significant projects will span a number of years, therefore, the amount expected to be spent in the current year was £8.224 million. The following table shows actual spend against this profiled budget.

	Profiled Spend 2019/20 £000	Outturn Spend 2019/20 £000	Outturn Spend as % of Profile
Commercial and investment property	1,108	1,062	96%
Horizon 120	2,000	1,395	70%
Manor Steet regeneration	1,359	1,548	114%
Town Centre improvements	150	84	56%
Springwood Drive business units and parking	137	126	92%
Planned maintenance to Council premises	563	368	65%
Replacement vehicles and plant	85	32	38%
Information technology systems & equipment	323	357	111%
Play areas, parks and open spaces	427	317	74%
Environmental improvements	25	18	72%
Paths, cycleways, and other infrastructure	92	-	0%
Operational equipment	327	262	80%
Sports and leisure facilities improvements	101	83	82%
Cordons Farm waste transfer station	23	23	100%
Grants to registered social landlords	13	12	92%
Disabled facilities grants	847	796	94%
Capitalised interest	193	-	0%
Capital salaries	451	516	114%
Total	8,224	6,999	85%

The profiled spend for the year reduced from that at Q3 by a net £1.442 million. At Q3 the programme assumed that £1.002 million of costs for replacement refuse freighters would be capitalised. However, following a financial appraisal of options, the Corporate Director (Finance) determined leasing as being the preferred means of financing, the impact of which will be covered in the Fleet Management annual revenue budget. Other changes to the programme profile included deferment of the Council's contribution towards superfast broadband (-£356,000) which is payable to ECC on achievement of project milestones; and slower rate of spend on sites identified as potential housing land (-£261,000). Various other changes increased the profiled spend by +£177,000.

Total spend for the year was £6.999 million, leaving a balance against profiled budget of £1.225 million. Spend in the year for some projects was higher than profiled which largely reflected the estimated nature of profiles and at this stage was not implying an overall project overspend.

Additional ICT costs were incurred in response to the need to provide staff with the necessary equipment to enable homeworking in line with COVID-19 restrictions.

The majority of the budget remaining at the year-end (£1.009 million) will be carried over as it is required to complete those projects that are in progress, leaving a net underspend of £216,000 for the year. The main reason for this underspend relates to capitalised interest, which was allowed for within the budget for a number of the Council's strategic projects. However, thus far, any borrowing requirement relating to these projects has been internalised using the Council's own cash balances. On this basis the capital programme has underspent against this allowance, with the opportunity cost reflected in the Council's treasury management income. This arrangement provides the most economic means of financing the Council's borrowing requirement for the time being.

Capital resources

The original estimate was to generate £4.976 million of capital resources from the sale of council-owned assets. However, one site completed earlier than expected, with a capital receipt of £2.520 million being received in the previous financial year. A sale of land was completed in June generating capital income of £1.317 million, and the expected income from the sale of serviced land plots at Horizon 120 will now be later than originally assumed due to changes in the overall timescales for this project. A further disposal which was expected to complete in the year is still subject to planning matters. A number of small receipts totalling £74,000 were also received in relation to a deed of easement and repayment of housing grants.

Estimated resources to be generated in the year included £1 million from preserved right-to-buy (RTB) receipts. Greenfields confirmed 15 RTB sales were completed in the year generating £1.878 million for the Council. This compares to 27 sales completed last year which generated £3.756 million for the Council. An additional amount of £75,000 was also received being an amount due to the Council from the sale of land by Greenfields.

Receipt generated by the VAT shelter agreement with Greenfields were £246,000 for the year, slightly lower than last year's amount of £252,000.

The Council received £931,000 grant from the Better Care Fund, which has largely been used to fund the Council's expenditure on disabled facilities grants. This was an increase of £68,000 over that originally anticipated for the year and increased the resources available for this programme of work.