

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Wednesday, 7th December 2016 at 07:15 PM

Council Chamber, Braintree District Council, Causeway House,
Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
(Please note this meeting will be audio recorded)
www.braintree.gov.uk

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.

Councillor Mrs M Cunningham

Councillor J Goodman

Councillor P Horner

Councillor D Hufton-Rees

Councillor G Maclure

Councillor D Mann (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor R Ramage

Councillor F Ricci

Councillor Miss V Santomauro

Councillor P Schwier

C Siddall (Chairman)

Vacancy

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence to the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

N BEACH
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest

Any member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest must declare the nature of their interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Members must not participate in any discussion of the matter in which they have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other Pecuniary Interest or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting. In addition, the Member must withdraw from the chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless the Member has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.

Question Time

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes when members of the public can speak. Members of the public wishing to speak are requested to register by contacting the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk no later than 2 working days prior to the meeting. The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register to speak if they are received after this time. Members of the public can remain to observe the public session of the meeting.

Please note that there is public Wi-Fi in the Council Chamber, users are required to register in order to access this. There is limited availability of printed agendas.

Health and Safety

Any persons attending meetings in the Council offices are requested to take a few moments to familiarise themselves with the nearest available fire exit, indicated by the fire evacuation signs. In the event of an alarm you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by officers. You will be assisted to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that your mobile phone is switched to silent during the meeting in order to prevent disturbances.

Webcast and Audio Recording

Please note that this meeting will be audio recorded only.

Documents

Agendas, reports and minutes for all the Council's public meetings can be accessed via www.braintree.gov.uk

We welcome comments from members of the public to make our services as efficient and effective as possible. If you have any suggestions regarding the meeting you have attended, you can send these via governance@braintree.gov.uk

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Member Declarations

1. To declare the existence and nature of any interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.
2. To declare the existence and nature of any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any Councillor who is a member of that group as to how that Councillor shall speak or vote on any matter before the Committee or the application or threat to apply any sanction by the group in respect of that Councillor should he/she speak or vote on any particular matter

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd November 2016 (copy previously circulated).

4 Public Question Time

(See paragraph above)

5 Scrutiny Review into Employment Sites and Premises - Terms of Reference and Introduction

5 - 9

6 Decision Planner

To consider the Decision Planner for the period period of 1st January 2017 to 30th April 2017 (previously circulated).

7 Urgent Business - Public Session

To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

8 Exclusion of the Public and Press

To agree the exclusion of the public and press for the consideration of any items for the reasons set out in Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

At the time of compiling this agenda there were none.

PRIVATE SESSION

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9 Urgent Business - Private Session

To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered in private by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Scrutiny Review into Employment Sites and Premises - Terms of Reference and Introduction		Agenda No: 5
Portfolio	Economic Development	
Corporate Outcome:	<p>A sustainable environment and a great place to live, work and play A well connected and growing district with high quality homes and infrastructure A prosperous district that attracts business growth and provides high quality employment opportunities A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers</p>	
Report presented by:	Janet Whyte, Economic Development Officer, Infrastructure	
Report prepared by:	Janet Whyte, Economic Development Officer, Infrastructure	
Background Papers:	Public Report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braintree District Employment Land Needs Assessment (August 2015) • Essex Grown-on Space Feasibility Study - SQW Ltd/BBP Regeneration (November 2016) 	Key Decision: No	
Executive Summary:		
<p>At its meeting on the 8th June 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the next Scrutiny Review topic would be Employment Sites and Premises in the Braintree District. The Scrutiny Review will take place from November 2016 to March 2018.</p> <p>This report aims to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of the studies undertaken relating to employment land and grow-on space • Recommend organisations whom the Committee may wish to invite to attend future meetings. 		
Recommended Decision:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For Members to note the current position 2. Agree the list of speakers to be invited to attend future meetings 		

Purpose of Decision:

1. To ensure the delivery of the Committee's work programme.
2. To decide on the schedule of outside speakers for future meetings.

Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail.

Financial:	None arising out of this report
Legal:	None arising out of this report
Safeguarding:	None arising out of this report
Equalities/Diversity:	None arising out of this report
Customer Impact:	None arising out of this report
Environment and Climate Change:	None arising out of this report
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None arising out of this report
Risks:	None arising out of this report
Officer Contact:	Janet Whyte
Designation:	Economic Development Officer, Infrastructure
Ext. No:	2582
E-mail:	Janet.whyte@braintree.gov.uk

1. Terms of Reference – Review into Employment Sites and Premises

1. Does current provision meet the growth needs of current businesses and potential inward investors?
 - a) To consider and understand the employment premises needs of the District with respects to towns, villages and rural areas
 - b) To identify how business grow and move to new or larger premises
 - c) To identify how we attract inward investment of new business into the District
2. What will be the future need for employment sites and premises to meet Local Plan growth aspirations (Employment Land Needs Assessment and economic growth priorities)
 - a) How will the employment need change in relation to the new Local Plan and pending growth in the District?
 - b) How should we develop our offer to attract specific sectors and clusters?
3. How can we meet future needs?
 - a) What is the mismatch between current provision and future need?
 - b) What are the barriers to delivery?
 - I. To understand what are the barriers to the delivery of allocated employment areas and how we can unlock them
 - II. To consider and determine what are the necessary requirements to delivering a successful business site
4. What is the Council's role in overcoming barriers to delivery:
 - a) Identify the role/opportunities available to the Council in investing or facilitating growth

2. Background

2.1 Braintree District Employment Land Needs Assessment

- 2.1.1 Braintree District Council commissioned AECOM Infrastructure and Environment UK Ltd (AECOM) to undertake an Employment Land Needs Assessment (ENLA) for the District, contributing to the evidence base of the new Local Plan.
- 2.1.2 The ELNA assesses the quantity and quality of the District's employment land to form an evidence base to inform the approach to the provision, protection, release or enhancement of employment land and premises over the long term, covering the new Local Plan period of 2015-2033
- 2.1.3 The report identified that the District has a low rate of self-containment: more residents leave the District to work elsewhere than are retained as part of the workforce population. Common destinations for out-commuters include other key employment sites in Essex, such as Chelmsford, Colchester and London Stansted Airport, whilst the largest export of workers is to London. Of the jobs in the District, approximately two-thirds are taken up by residents.
- 2.1.4 The ELNA concludes that there is a net additional requirement (in addition to the employment sites already allocated in previous plans) for between 7.5ha to 11ha of industrial land and between 53,400m² to 66,800m² of office floorspace over the plan period to 2033.

2.2 SQW Ltd Report

- 2.2.1 Essex County Council commissioned SQW Ltd (SQW) in June 2016 to undertake an assessment of the need for grown-on space in Essex; taking into account the range of property requirements and spatial characteristics in different parts of the county. SQW were also asked to advise how any such gaps might be filled
- 2.2.2 As part of the report a desktop review of national and regional policy in the South East, and the consultants' experience elsewhere confirmed that few public policy initiatives have been formulated to address the need for grow-on space. Apart from Braintree, Castle Point and Maldon, there is no direct mention of grow-on space in most districts' latest Local Plan evidence bases or draft Local Plans.
- 2.2.3 From the data available it is clear that there is a mismatch between the supply of, and demand for, grow-on space across Essex, for both office and industrial.
- 2.2.4 There are various reasons posited as to why there is a shortage. Essentially, there is a market failure in Essex, whereby the development of grow-on space is not an attractive proposition for the private sector as the returns on their investment are more favourable with other types of development and the risks are perceived to be relatively high, as smaller, often younger, businesses look for short tenancies.
- 2.2.5 In addition, a shortage of available land, and focus on housing development, has in many places pushed up land values up to the extent that development of this space would not be viable in much of Essex.
- 2.2.6 The report also noted that much of the grow-on industrial and office space which is available is in older grade B property. Little new space is being built and the result is a lack of the quality space which growing firms look for. This is not only about the fabric of the buildings in question, but also the facilities, including digital infrastructure and parking.

3. **Current Actions**

3.1 Grow-on Units

- 3.1.1 On the 5th September Council approved the development of 4 commercial grow-on units at the rear of the current Centre Enterprise Centre including additional car parking.
- 3.1.2 As part of the business case the Council sought independent advice from a local commercial agent, Joscelyne Chase, to assess the viability of the proposed scheme.
- 3.1.3 The report advised that in Braintree and along the A120 corridor between Braintree and Bishops Stortford, there was currently a shortage of industrial/warehouse buildings, irrespective of size or age, with Springwood Industrial Estate being the largest industrial area in Braintree with virtually no space available.

- 3.1.4 In Joscelyne Chase's view developers are not interested in constructing units below 2,000 sq.ft. This is due to the additional construction costs, more dividing walls and services. Generally they are not keen on young or 'start up' companies without a reasonable financial 'track record'.
- 3.1.5 The planning application for the 4 grow-on units and additional car park was submitted on the 24th October and has a target decision date of the 19th December. An Employers Agent has been appointed and we are looking to commence on site in April 2017.

3.2 Sectors

- 3.2.1 The Haven Gateway Partnership is commissioning an evidence base of the growth sectors that exist and are emerging in the wider Haven Gateway geography to understand their strengths and weaknesses and where public sector interventions should be made. The lack of detailed information in this area has led to Braintree and Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils agreeing to buy into this work to gain a more detailed understanding of the sectors in their geographies to identify growth and/or declining sectors and what interventions the public sector can make.
- 3.2.2 Another aspect of this work is that it will help to identify the appropriate infrastructure in the right locations that will need to be created to support the sectors, for example the exact nature of accommodation (e.g. office and workshops) required for the best outcomes to the economy.

4. **Suggested Speakers for Future Meetings**

It is suggested that the following speakers are invited to attend future meetings to provide additional information to the committee

- Anita Thornbury, Haven Gateway
- Joel John, Principal Economic Growth & Regeneration Officer, Essex County Council
- Planning Policy – Local Plan
- Local businesses