

Council AGENDA

Monday, 17 October 2016 at 7:15 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 webcast and audio recorded)
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Members of the Council are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.

Membership:-

Councillor J Abbott	Councillor P Horner	Councillor F Ricci
Councillor Mrs J Allen	Councillor D Hufton-Rees	Councillor B Rose
Councillor M Banthorpe	Councillor D Hume	Councillor Miss V Santomauro
Councillor J Baugh	Councillor H Johnson	Councillor Mrs W Scattergood
Councillor Mrs J Beavis	Councillor Mrs A Kilmartin	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt
Councillor D Bebb	Councillor S Kirby	Councillor P Schwier
Councillor K Bowers	Councillor G Maclure	Councillor C Siddall
Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint	Councillor D Mann	Councillor Mrs G Spray
Councillor G Butland	Councillor J McKee	Councillor P Tattersley
Councillor S Canning	Councillor R Mitchell	Councillor Miss M Thorogood
Councillor J Cunningham	Councillor Mrs J Money	Councillor R van Dulken
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham	Councillor Lady Newton	Councillor Mrs L Walters
Councillor T Cunningham	Councillor J O'Reilly-Cicconi	Councillor Mrs S Wilson
Councillor M Dunn	Councillor Mrs I Parker	Vacancy
Councillor J Elliott	Councillor Mrs S Paul	Vacancy
Councillor J Goodman	Councillor Mrs J Pell	
Councillor A Hensman	Councillor R Ramage	

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 demse@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 demse@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

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Documents

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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 demse@braintree.gov.uk

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|-----------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 2 | To receive any announcements/statements from the Chairman and/or Leader of the Council. | |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest
To declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest 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. | |
| 4 | Minutes of the Previous Meeting
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5th September 2016 (copy previously circulated). | |
| 5 | Public Question Time
(See paragraph above). | |
| 6 | Presentation of the Anglia in Bloom Award
To present to the Chairman of the Council the Anglia in Bloom Award for Halstead Public Gardens. | |
| 7 | Dates for Meetings of Full Council for Civic Years 2017-18 and 2018-19 | 6 - 10 |
| 8 | Recommendations from Cabinet - 12th September 2016 - Treasury Management Annual Report 2015-16 | 11 - 26 |
| 9 | Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 21st September 2016 - Task and Finish Group Scrutiny Review into Bus Services and Community Transport | 27 - 39 |
| 10 | Recommendations from Governance Committee - 28th September 2016 - Appointment of External Auditors | 40 - 49 |

11 Reports from the Leader and Cabinet Members

To receive the following reports from each Portfolio Holder.

Oral Questions to the Cabinet:

Members are reminded that following the presentation of each Cabinet Member's report, Members may put questions to the Cabinet Member on matters relating to their portfolio, the powers and duties of the Council or the District. Questions are not restricted to the contents of the Cabinet Member's report.

Where a verbal response cannot be given, a written response will be issued to all Members. (Council Procedure Rules 29.1 to 29.4 apply).

A period of up to 1 hour is allowed for this item.

11a	Councillor G Butland - Leader's Report to Council	50 - 54
11b	Councillor D Bebb - Finance and Performance	55 - 56
11c	Councillor T Cunningham - Economic Development	57 - 58
11d	Councillor J Mckee - Corporate Services and Asset Management	59 - 60
11e	Councillor Lady Newton - Planning and Housing	61 - 63
11f	Councillor P Tattersley - Health and Communities	64 - 66
11g	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt - Environment and Place	67 - 69
12	List of Public Meetings held since last Council Meeting	70 - 71

13 Chairmen's Statements

To receive statements from those Chairmen who have given prior notification in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 33.1 and to respond to questions on such statements.

- Councillor Mrs Wendy Scattergood, Chairman of the Planning Committee - Statement on the Planning Committee's Scheme of Delegation

14 Exclusion of Public and Press: - To give consideration to adopting the following Resolution: -

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

There is no business for private session.

Dates for Meetings of Full Council for Civic Years 2017/18 and 2018/19		Agenda No: 7
Portfolio	Overall Corporate Strategy and Direction	
Corporate Outcome:	A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers	
Report presented by:	Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Report prepared by:	Emma Wisbey, Governance and Member Manager	
Background Papers:	Public Report	
<u>Constitution – Part 2 – Council Procedure Rules</u>	Key Decision: No	
Executive Summary:		
<p>The Constitution (Council Procedure Rules 1.1, 1.3.6 and 2.1) reserves the setting of the dates of the ordinary meetings of Full Council to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Traditionally, the dates set are limited to those ordinary meetings of Full Council for that civic year and the following AGM.</p> <p>In order to advance the process for setting down dates for the ordinary meetings of Full Council and its Committees and to enable planned decision making across civic years, Members are asked to agree the dates of the ordinary meetings of Full Council for the civic years 2017/18 and 2018/19 and the dates of the AGMs for 2018/19 and 2019/20. The date of the AGM for 2017/18 was agreed by Full Council on 25th April 2016.</p> <p>Agreeing the dates in advance of the AGMs will enable the Council to give greater notice of the dates of ordinary meetings of Full Council and the AGMs, which are often referred to by other Authorities including Town and Parish Councils when setting their own timetable of meetings.</p> <p>It is not proposed to set dates beyond 2018/19 as this is beyond the period of the current administration and there are District Council Elections on 2nd May 2019.</p> <p>Dates for 2017/18 and 2018/19 are set out in Appendix A. For completeness the remaining dates for Full Council for 2016/17 are also included, but do not require agreement.</p> <p>To ensure compliance with the Constitution, the dates for the ordinary meetings of Full Council will be re-confirmed at the respective AGM of Full Council for 2017/18 and 2018/19. The Council may still call special meetings of Full Council should they be required, or alter the dates of meetings should there be a business need to do so, subject to Constitutional provisions.</p>		

Set out in Appendix B are the dates for the meetings of Cabinet for the civic years 2017/18 and 2018/19. Dates for Cabinet do not need to be agreed by Full Council and are set by the Leader of the Council having regard to the requirements of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities)(England) Regulations 2000 and the Local Government Act 1972. These have been included to give advance notice.

It is proposed that a timetable of meetings for the civic years 2017/18 and 2018/19 will be published on the Council's website.

Recommended Decision:

To agree the timetable of the ordinary meetings of Full Council for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and the AGMs for 2018/19 and 2019/20 as set out in Appendix A.

Purpose of Decision:

To enable early agreement of the dates of the ordinary meetings of Full Council and AGMs in order to prepare a timetable of meetings for the remainder of the current administration.

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

Financial:	None arising out of this report.
Legal:	Council Procedure Rule 2.4 provides that no alterations to the dates or times of ordinary meetings of Council shall take place unless the Chairman of the Council, after consultation with the Chief Executive and the Group Leaders, concurs with either a cancellation or an alternative date or time. All Councillors will be notified by email, and the changes will be confirmed to the public by way of notification on the Council's website.
Safeguarding:	None arising out of this report
Equalities/Diversity:	Council Procedure Rule 2.2 provides that the Council will give at least five clear working days notice of a meeting to all Councillors and to the public by posting details of the meeting at the Council's main office and on its website.
Customer Impact:	If the dates are agreed, a timetable of meetings for 2017/18 and 2018/19 will be published on the Council's website setting out the dates of the meetings of Full Council and its Committees.
Environment and Climate Change:	None arising out of this report.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Council procedure Rule 2.4 provides that no alterations to the dates or times of ordinary meetings of Council shall take place unless the Chairman of the Council, after consultation with the Chief Executive and the Group Leaders, concurs with either a cancellation or an alternative date or time. All Councillors will be notified by email, and the changes will be confirmed to the public by way of notification on the Council's website.
Risks:	None.
Officer Contact:	Emma Wisbey
Designation:	Governance and Member Manager
Ext. No:	2610
E-mail:	emma.wisbey@braintree.gov.uk

Appendix A

Timetable of ordinary meetings of Full Council for 2016/17 (remainder), 2017/18 and 2018/19 including Annual General Meetings

Civic Year 2016/17 (remainder)

12 th December 2016	(Monday)	Council (Budget)
7 th February 2017	(Tuesday)	Council – Special Meeting of Council for the Local Plan
22 nd February 2017	(Wednesday)	Council (Budget)
27 th March 2017	(Monday)	Council

Civic Year 2017/18

24 th April 2017	(Monday)	COUNCIL - Annual General Meeting for 2017/18
5 th June 2017	(Monday)	Council
24 th July 2017	(Monday)	Council
9 th October 2017	(Monday)	Council
11 th December 2017	(Monday)	Council (Budget)
19 th February 2018	(Monday)	Council (Budget)
26 th March 2018	(Monday)	Council

Civic Year 2018/19

23 rd April 2018	(Monday)	COUNCIL - Annual General Meeting for 2018/19
4 th June 2018	(Monday)	Council
23 rd July 2018	(Monday)	Council
8 th October 2018	(Monday)	Council
10 th December 2018	(Monday)	Council (Budget)
18 th February 2019	(Monday)	Council (Budget)
25 th March 2019	(Monday)	Council

Civic Year 2019/20

23 rd May 2019	(Thursday)	COUNCIL - Annual General Meeting for 2019/20
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Appendix B

Timetable of meetings of Cabinet for 2016/17 (remainder), 2017/18 and 2018/19

Civic Year 2016/17 (remainder)

29 th November 2016	(Tuesday)	Cabinet
9 th February 2017	(Monday)	Cabinet
13 th March 2017	(Monday)	Cabinet

Civic Year 2017/18

15 th May 2017	(Monday)	Cabinet
10 th July 2017	(Monday)	Cabinet
11 th September 2017	(Monday)	Cabinet
27 th November 2017	(Monday)	Cabinet
5 th February 2018	(Monday)	Cabinet
12 th March 2018	(Monday)	Cabinet

Civic Year 2018/19

14 th May 2018	(Monday)	Cabinet
9 th July 2018	(Monday)	Cabinet
10 th September 2018	(Monday)	Cabinet
26 th November 2018	(Monday)	Cabinet
4 th February 2019	(Monday)	Cabinet
11 th March 2019	(Monday)	Cabinet

<p>Recommendation from Cabinet – 12th September 2016</p> <p>Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16</p>	<p>Agenda No:8</p>
<p>Background Papers:</p> <p>Report and Minutes – Governance Committee – 30th June 2016 Report and Minutes – Cabinet – 12th September 2016</p>	<p>Public Report</p> <p>Key Decision: No</p>
<p>Minute Extract:</p> <p>Cabinet – 12th September 2016</p> <p>39 <u>RECOMMENDATION FROM GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 30TH JUNE 2016</u></p> <p>INFORMATION: The Council's treasury management activities were regulated by statutory requirements and by a Code of Practice ("the Code") issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA). One of the key elements of the Code was that, along with an annual strategy to be approved prior to commencement of the financial year, the Council should also receive an annual report after the financial year-end.</p> <p>The Council invested substantial sums of money and continued to hold legacy borrowing and was therefore exposed to a range of financial risks. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk were therefore central to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.</p> <p>The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) was approved annually by the Council in February 2016 as part of the Budget and Council Tax Setting for the forthcoming financial year.</p> <p>DECISION: Cabinet accepted the Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16 prior to its submission to Full Council.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: To recommend to Cabinet before submission to Full Council with the benefit of any proposed changes or comments from the Governance Committee.</p>	
<p>Recommended Decision:</p> <p>That Full Council accepts the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2015/16.</p>	

Recommendation from Governance Committee 30th June 2016	Agenda No: 8c
Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16	
Background Papers:	Public Report
Minutes of Governance Committee 30th June 2016 Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16	

Minute Extract:
<p>GOVERNANCE – 30TH JUNE 2016</p> <p>14 <u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16</u></p> <p>INFORMATION: The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) was approved by the Council in February 2016 as part of the overall Budget and Council Tax setting for the forthcoming financial year. The treasury management position acknowledged two loans totalling £6million owed by the Council. These loans were taken out for capital purposes when the Council was still in control of housing stock in the District. A further £1million was owed to Essex County Council as a result of funding given to the Council in relation to the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS).</p> <p>It was noted that uncertainty persisted ahead of the outcome of the US presidential election and also the consequences of the UK referendum on membership of the European Union. The Bank Rate remained at 0.5% for its eighth consecutive year as of March 2016. Members were reminded of the Council's decision to approve borrowing limits within the TMSS, including an Operational limit to cover potential borrowing and other liabilities. For 2015/16, the Operational borrowing limit was set at £11million. An Authorised limit was also set which could not be breached without prior Council approval. This was set at £15million for 2015/16, and was increased to £25million for 2016/17.</p> <p>Over the 2015/16 year, cash balances for investment averaged £45.99million, an increase on the previous year of £7.47million, and operated within a range of daily totals of between £35.52million and £55.50million. During 2015/16, £159million of investments were made by the Council, with £150.69million having matured or sold. Interest and dividends earned on investments was £694,000, equating to an overall average rate of return of 1.51%. The annual return on pooled funds stood at 4.84%. An increase to the amount held in</p>

equity funds was being considered going forward, with other investment directions being explored, and borrowing was to be utilised. The Council's investment strategy had not been amended as a result of reported changes to credit ratings, but daily updates regarding this were being monitored.

DECISION: Members decided to recommend to Cabinet the acceptance of the Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16 prior to its submission to Full Council.

REASON FOR DECISION: To recommend to Cabinet before submission to Full Council with the benefit of any proposed changes or comments from the Governance Committee.

RECOMMENDED DECISION:

1. To consider the Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/2016
2. Refer the Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/2016 to Full Council

Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16

1. Background

- 1.1. The Council's treasury management activities are regulated by statutory requirements and by a Code of Practice ("the Code") issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA).
- 1.2. One of the key elements of the Code is that, along with an annual strategy to be approved prior to commencement of the financial year, the Council should also receive an annual report after the financial year-end.
- 1.3. The Council invests substantial sums of money and continues to hold legacy borrowing and is therefore exposed to a range of financial risks. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are therefore central to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

2. Treasury Management Strategy

- 2.1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) is approved annually by the Council in February as part of the Budget and Council Tax Setting for the forthcoming financial year.
- 2.2. The TMSS approved in February 2015, reflected the following circumstances:
 - A fully funded capital programme, largely reliant on capital receipts.
 - The availability of cash balances for investment – the assumption was that whilst these would remain significant there was an expectation that cash balances would be lower than in previous years.
 - No new borrowing would be required other than via lease type arrangements for vehicles and plant obtained through the Riverside Truck Rental (RTR) contract.
 - Diversification and maintaining a longer-term view on investments to counter the risks associated with banking regulatory changes and other credit conditions.

3. Treasury Management Position

- 3.1. The treasury management position at the year-end (with the previous year shown for comparison) is set out below:

	31 Mar 2015 Principal £'000	31 Mar 2016 Principal £'000
Market Loans	6,000	6,000
Finance Lease Liabilities	3,759	3,526
Other Long-Term Liability	1,000	1,000
Financial Liabilities	£10,759	£10,526

	31 Mar 2015 Principal £'000	31 Mar 2016 Principal £'000
Investments and Deposits	25,000	35,500
Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) Repayable Advance	2,000	2,000
Cash & Cash Equivalents	2,901	648
Escrow Account	72	-
Impaired Deposit	30	19
Financial Assets	£30,003	£38,167
Net Financial Assets	£19,244	£27,641

- 3.2. Market loans comprise two Lender's Option, Borrower's Option (LOBO) type loans of £3 million each, which give the lender the option to vary the interest rate at six month intervals, subject to the Council then having the option to repay the loans without penalty. To date the lender has not sought to exercise this option – the loans currently run at an average interest rate of 4.7% and have 26 years remaining until maturity. The opportunity to redeem earlier (at a negotiated penalty) is kept under review.
- 3.3. Finance Lease Liabilities relate to the outstanding principal element of leases used to acquire property, vehicles, and plant. Annual payments are made to repay these liabilities over the lease term. A new lease was recognised in 2015/16 relating to the provision of a replacement vehicle through RTR.
- 3.4. Other Long-Term Liability relates to funding previously received from Essex County Council's towards the Braintree Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS). A deposit of £2 million was made to the LAMS provider (Lloyds Bank) which is shown under Financial Assets.
- 3.5. Investments and Deposits include amounts placed with UK and Non-UK banks and building societies; and Pooled Funds and other Money Market Funds.
- 3.6. Cash and Cash Equivalents is money held in call accounts with immediate access, balances held on the Council's current bank accounts, and petty cash floats.
- 3.7. The Escrow account related to the sterling equivalent of distributions made by the insolvent Icelandic bank, Glitnir. These funds were transferred to a third party during the year with the Council receiving an agreed settlement.
- 3.8. Impaired deposit relates to the carrying value of amounts still expected to be received from the insolvent Icelandic bank, Kaupthing, Singer and Friedlander. A further dividend of £12,860 was received in the year.

4. External Context to the 2015/16 Financial Year

4.1. **Appendix A** provides an economic and market commentary covering the 2015/16 financial year written by Arlingclose, the Council's treasury management advisors.

4.2. In summary:

- UK growth slowed in 2015 and inflation remained low hovering around zero percentage with deflationary spells in April, September, and October.
- The slowdown in the Chinese economy added to the global economic risks and heightened volatility in the equity markets. Uncertainty persists with the outcome of the US presidential election and the consequences of the UK referendum on membership of the EU.
- The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee made no change to policy, maintaining the Bank Rate at 0.5% (its eighth consecutive year in March 2016), and asset purchases (Quantitative Easing) at £375bn. On interest rates the Bank has continued to stress that future rate movements will be gradual and lower than previous economic cycles.
- UK Government Gilt yields across all periods ended the year lower than at the start of the year with the upward trend in the first quarter being reversed due to the global uncertainties and consequential impacts on stock markets and the price of oil and other commodities.

4.3. The table below summarises market interest rates during the financial year:

	Bank Rate	Overnight LIBID	7-day LIBID	1-MTH LIBID	3-MTH LIBID	6-MTH LIBID	12-MTH LIBID
Average	0.50	0.38	0.45	0.43	0.54	0.76	0.99
Maximum	0.50	0.48	0.58	0.57	0.66	0.92	1.02
Minimum	0.50	0.17	0.35	0.43	0.51	0.55	0.84
Spread	-	0.31	0.23	0.14	0.15	0.37	0.18

LIBID = London Interbank Bid Rate

5. Capital Financing Requirement

5.1. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is a balance sheet derived amount which measures the extent to which the Council has invested in capital but has not resourced it from internal resources (e.g. capital receipts from asset sales, grants etc.). It is therefore a measure of the amount of borrowing the authority could potentially justify as being required to meet its capital expenditure requirements. Actual borrowing may differ from the CFR, e.g. if the Council has used its own cash balances instead of borrowing, and therefore where the CFR differs to actual borrowing the circumstances should be understood.

5.2. The change in CFR is shown in the table below:

	2015/16 Actual £'000s
CFR at start of the year	8,823
Capital expenditure in the year	5,127
Resourced by:	
Capital receipts	(2,287)
Capital grants and contributions	(1,838)
Sums set aside from revenue	(889)
Sub-total resources applied	(5,014)
Change in Long-Term Debtor	(2)
Minimum Revenue Provision	(505)
Net decrease in CFR in the year	(394)
CFR at end of the year	8,429

5.3. The CFR reduced as capital expenditure was largely funded from internal resources other than one new lease entered into for a replacement vehicle. Minimum revenue provision included £159,000 repayment of internal borrowing on past invest to save projects, with the balance represented by the principal element of lease repayments.

5.4. The comparison of the CFR with actual debt is shown below:

	2015/16 Actual £'000s
Closing CFR	8,429
Actual borrowing and other liabilities	10,526
Difference between actual debt and CFR	2,097

5.5. Whilst actual debt is greater than the CFR, over the last few years this gap has been reducing in line with the Council's policy of utilising its cash balances for invest to save projects, rather than investing in banks and financial institutions. This approach has resulted in an improved rate of return on cash balances whilst also mitigating credit risk. Excluding outstanding finance lease liabilities of £3.526 million, the comparison between the borrowing CFR and debt is negative by £1.429 million providing some headroom to incur additional capital expenditure without the requirement to charge a Minimum Revenue Provision (or MRP) – a statutory sum set aside to repay debt - to the General Fund revenue account.

5.6. Taking account of the balance of investments at 31 March 2016, the Council's net investment position is £27.641 million meaning that the Council complies with the requirement that net borrowing should not exceed the CFR.

6. Borrowing and Finance Lease Liabilities

6.1. The following table shows the change in actual borrowing and other liabilities in the 2015/16 financial year.

	Borrowing	Finance Leases	Other Long-Term Liability	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance 1 April 2015	6,000	3,759	1,000	10,759
Additions	-	114	-	114
Repayments	-	(347)	-	(347)
Balance 31 March 2016	6,000	3,526	1,000	10,526

6.2. In 2016/17 the estimated amount of debt to be repaid is £325,000, being the principal element of finance lease rentals.

6.3. The Council approved borrowing limits within the TMSS, including an Operational limit to cover potential borrowing and other liabilities – the limit for 2015/16 was set at £11 million. Actual debt could fluctuate around this limit. An Authorised limit was also set which could not be breached without prior Council approval. This limit was set at £15 million for 2015/16. Actual debt was contained within these limits.

7. Investments

7.1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement includes the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS), approved by Council in accordance with statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The AIS sets out the parameters used by the Council when selecting suitable counterparties for investment along with any limits on duration and amounts.

7.2. The AIS is based on investment priorities being:

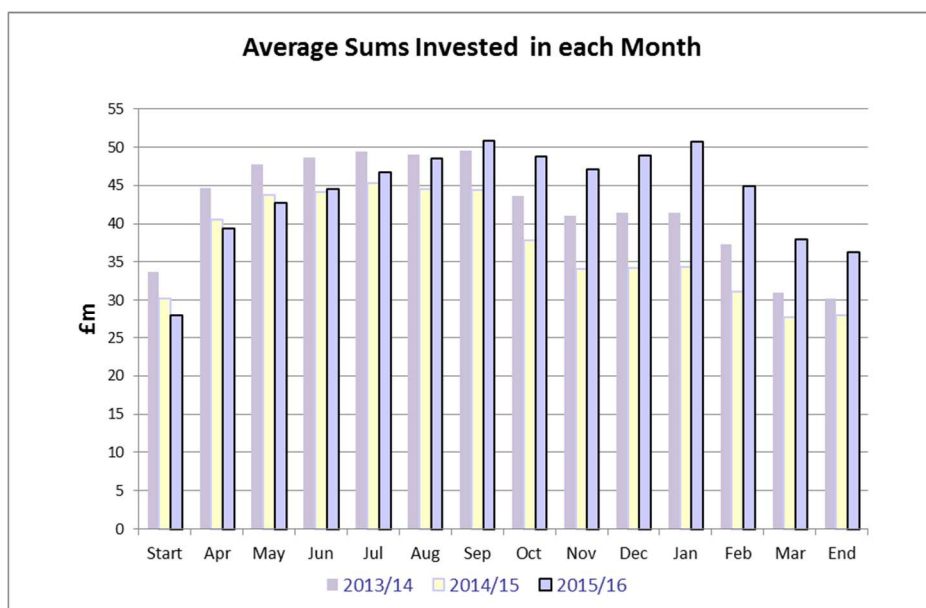
- Security – minimising the risk of cash not being repaid
- Liquidity - having cash available when it is required

7.3. Only when having ensured these two priorities are met is highest yield considered.

Cash Balances for Investment

7.4. Investment activity is dependent upon the level of cash balances and requirement for liquid funds to meet day-to-day spending needs. A level of “core” cash is available for the medium-longer term, reflected in revenue and capital reserves.

7.5. Over the 2015/16 year, cash balances for investment averaged £45.99 million (an increase on the previous year of £7.47 million), and operated within a range of daily totals of between £35.52 million and £55.50 million:



7.6. Cash balances have increased through a combination of re-profiling of capital programme spending, underspends (over achievement of income) against the revenue budget, and a general increase in provisions and reserves, including New Homes Bonus.

Investment Policy

7.7. The investment policy sets the parameters over what types of investments will be used by the Council, what criteria potential counterparties must meet, and what limits (amounts/ duration) will be applied.

7.8. The policy was approved at Full Council in February 2015.

7.9. Applying the investment policy, funds placed during the year were typically:

- Fixed term deposits with the major UK and non-UK banks and building societies, which met the Council's criteria of "high credit quality".
- Deposits on call or instant access accounts with major UK banks
- AAA rated Constant Net Asset Value (CNAV) Money Market Funds, where the value of principal invested is expected to remain constant – funds used are: Standard Life Liquidity, Deutsche Managed Sterling, and Goldman Sachs Asset Management.
- A new Variable Net Asset Value (VNAV) Money Market Fund, where small fluctuations in the principal invested can occur – the fund used is with Royal London Asset Management
- Pooled Funds – equity and property funds (see paragraphs 7.14 to 7.16 below)

- Direct with the UK Government via the Debt Management Office for short-term deposits to accommodate timing differences between receipt and payment of monies
- Lloyds Bank held in current accounts as the main banking services provider.

Investment Activity & Returns

7.10. The change in investment balances¹ during 2015/16 is shown in the table below.

	Investments:			
	Balance 01/04/15	Made	Mature d/ Sold	Balance 31/03/16
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Pooled Funds (Equity and Property)	10,000	2,000	-	12,000
<i>Fixed Term Deposits:</i>				
UK Banks & Building Societies	5,000	41,000	-34,000	12,000
Non UK Banks	-	12,000	-12,000	-
Debt Management Office	-	82,500	-82,500	-
Sub-Total	5,000	135,500	-	12,000
<i>Instant Access Deposits:</i>				
Money Market Funds – CNAV	10,000	16,500	-19,000	7,500
Money Market Funds – VNAV	-	4,000	-	4,000
UK Banks Call Accounts	2,000	1,000	-3,000	-
Lloyds Current Account*	960	-	-190	770
Sub-Total	12,960	21,500	-22,190	12,270
Total	27,960	159,000	-	36,270
			150,690	

*Net Movement

7.11. Interest and dividends earned on investments was £694,000 equating to an overall average rate of return of 1.51%. The return comprised the following:

	Average Invested during the year £000	Interest & Dividends £000	Annualise d Return %
Pooled Funds	10,520	509	4.84%
UK Banks & Building Societies	12,030	74	0.61%
Non-UK Banks	3,710	22	0.60%
Debt Management Office	2,540	6	0.25%
Money Market Funds – CNAV	11,260	50	0.44%
Money Market Funds – VNAV	3,300	22	0.67%
UK Banks Call Accounts	980	4	0.41%
Lloyds Current Account	1,650	7	0.41%
Total	45,990	694	1.51%

¹ For this purpose investment balances excludes the deposit for LAMS, escrow account and impaired deposit, and bank accounts held for operational reasons and other petty cash.

7.12. Investment income was higher than the updated budget of £596,000 by £98,000 due to cash balances being higher than originally anticipated.

7.13. The continued rate of return on the Council's short-dated money market investments continues to reflect the prevailing low interest rate environment.

Pooled Funds

7.14. In 2014/15 the Council invested £10million into four Pooled Funds to achieve a greater diversified portfolio of underlying securities than the Council could individually manage at a reasonable price. These investments were made on the basis that, if held for the medium-long term, they would offer the potential for enhanced returns whilst recognising there could be short-term volatility in their market pricing. The distributing share class was selected for each of the funds in order to receive regular income.

7.15. A further £2million was added to Pooled Funds after Full Council approved an increase in the limit on long-term investments of £5million, taking to the total limit to £15million. The position for each fund is shown in the table below:

Fund	Initial Invested £000	Amount Added £000	Total Invested 31/3/16 £000	Market Value 31//3/16 £000	Dividend Income £	Income Yield %
Schroder UK Income Maximiser: Seeks to provide income and capital growth with target income of 7% p.a. by investing in mainly UK equities	£2,500	-	£2,500	£2,226	£183,243	7.3%
Threadneedle UK Equity Income: Steady growth in income and acceptable capital growth. Aims for a yield greater than 110% of the FTSE All Share	£3,000	£1,000	£4,000	£4,127	£135,068	4.1%
M&G Global	£2,500	-	£2,500	£2,450	£78,126	3.1%

Fund	Initial Invested £000	Amount Added £000	Total Invested 31/3/16 £000	Market Value 31/3/16 £000	Dividend Income £	Income Yield %
Dividend Fund: Aims to deliver income yield above market average and aims to grow distributions over the long-term.						
CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund: Aims to provide long-term capital and income return. The fund must pay out the income it generates.	£2,000	£1,000	£3,000	£3,015	£112,915	5.0%
All Funds	£10,000	£2,000	£12,000	£11,818	£509,352	4.84%

7.16. At the end of the year the Pooled Funds had an overall market valuation of £11.818 million which represents a net unrealised loss of £182,000. This comprised two funds with a total positive market valuation of +£142,000 and two with a total negative market valuation of -£324,000. Market valuations will fluctuate in response to changing market conditions and may vary between funds as each fund operates to its own stated objectives.

8. Credit Developments and Credit Risk Management

8.1. Counterparty credit quality was assessed and monitored with reference to credit ratings; credit default swaps; GDP of the country in which the institution operates; the country's net debt as a percentage of GDP and share price. The minimum long-term counterparty credit rating set by the Council has been A- based on the three leading rating agencies: Fitch, Standard & Poor's (S&P), and Moody's. This is supplemented by other market intelligence.

8.2. The transposition of two European Union Directives into UK legislation placed the burden of rescuing failing EU banks disproportionately onto unsecured institutional investors which include local authorities. During the year, all three credit rating agencies reviewed their ratings to reflect the loss of government support for most financial institutions and the potential for loss given default as a result of new bail-in

regimes. Despite reductions in government support many institutions saw upgrades due to an improvement in their underlying strength and an assessment that the level of loss given default is low.

- 8.3. In July, the Council's treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, advised an extension of recommended durations for unsecured investments in certain UK and European institutions following improvements in the global economic situation and the receding threat of another Eurozone crisis. A similar extension was advised for some non-rated UK building societies and non-European banks in September.
- 8.4. In December the Bank of England released the results of its latest stress tests on the seven largest UK banks and building societies which showed that the Royal Bank of Scotland and Standard Chartered Bank were the weakest performers. However, the regulator did not require either bank to submit revised capital plans, since both firms had already improved their ratios over the year.
- 8.5. The first quarter of 2016 was characterised by financial market volatility and weakening outlook for global economic growth. In March 2016, following publication of many banks' full-year results, Arlingclose advised the suspension of Deutsche Bank and Standard Chartered Bank from the counterparty list for unsecured investments. This change did not affect the Deutsche Sterling Money Market Fund which is ring-fenced from the parent Bank.
- 8.6. The end of bank bail-outs, the introduction of bail-ins, and the preference being given to depositors other than local authorities means that the risk of making unsecured deposits continues to be elevated relative to other investment options. The Council has therefore continued to favour diversified alternatives such as Money Market Funds and other Pooled Funds over unsecured bank and building society deposits.
- 8.7. The Council's counterparty credit quality has remained fairly consistent as demonstrated by the Credit Score Analysis² summarised below.

Quarter Ending	Value Weighted Average Credit Rating	Time Weighted Average Credit Rating	Average life of portfolio (days)
31/03/2015	A+	A	17
30/06/2015	A+	A	23
30/09/2015	A+	A+	68
31/12/2015	A+	A	39
31/03/2016	A+	A	80

- 8.8. The value and time weighted credit ratings are based on the following range of investment ratings:

AAA*	AA+	AA	AA-	A+	A	A-	BBB+	BBB	BBB-
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* Highest credit rating achievable

² Excludes Pooled Funds which are not credit rated.

9. **Treasury Management Advisors**

- 9.1 The Council has continued to employ Arlingclose as treasury management advisors. Regular communications and updates on related matters have been received by officers during the year and a strategy meeting held involving Members.

Appendix A - Economic and Market Commentary

Growth, Inflation, Employment: The UK economy slowed in 2015 with GDP growth falling to 2.3% from a robust 3.0% the year before. CPI inflation hovered around 0.0% through 2015 with deflationary spells in April, September and October. The prolonged spell of low inflation was attributed to the continued collapse in the price of oil from \$67 a barrel in May 2015 to just under \$28 a barrel in January 2016, the appreciation of sterling since 2013 pushing down import prices and weaker than anticipated wage growth resulting in subdued unit labour costs. CPI picked up to 0.3% year/year in February, but this was still well below the Bank of England's 2% inflation target. The labour market continued to improve through 2015 and in Q1 2016, the latest figures (Jan 2016) showing the employment rate at 74.1% (the highest rate since comparable records began in 1971) and the unemployment rate at a 12 year low of 5.1%. Wage growth has however remained modest at around 2.2% excluding bonuses, but after a long period of negative real wage growth (i.e. after inflation) real earnings were positive and growing at their fastest rate in eight years, boosting consumers' spending power.

Global influences: The slowdown in the Chinese economy became the largest threat to the South East Asian region, particularly on economies with a large trade dependency on China and also to prospects for global growth as a whole. The effect of the Chinese authorities' intervention in their currency and equity markets was temporary and led to high market volatility as a consequence. There were falls in prices of equities and risky assets and a widening in corporate credit spreads. As the global economy entered 2016 there was high uncertainty about growth, the outcome of the US presidential election and the consequences of June's referendum on whether the UK is to remain in the EU. Between February and March 2016 sterling had depreciated by around 3%, a significant proportion of the decline reflecting the uncertainty surrounding the referendum result.

UK Monetary Policy: The Bank of England's MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) made no change to policy, maintaining the Bank Rate at 0.5% (in March it entered its eighth year at 0.5%) and asset purchases (Quantitative Easing) at £375bn. In its *Inflation Reports* and monthly monetary policy meeting minutes, the Bank was at pains to stress and reiterate that when interest rates do begin to rise they were expected to do so more gradually and to a lower level than in recent cycles.

Improvement in household spending, business fixed investment, a strong housing sector and solid employment gains in the US allowed the Federal Reserve to raise rates in December 2015 for the first time in nine years to take the new Federal funds range to 0.25%-0.50%. Despite signalling four further rate hikes in 2016, the Fed chose not to increase rates further in Q1 and markets pared back expectations to no more than two further hikes this year.

However central bankers in the Eurozone, Switzerland, Sweden and Japan were forced to take policy rates into negative territory. The European Central Bank also announced a range of measures to inject sustained economic recovery and boost domestic inflation which included an increase in asset purchases (Quantitative Easing).

Market reaction: From June 2015 gilt yields were driven lower by the a weakening in Chinese growth, the knock-on effects of the fall in its stock market, the continuing fall in the price of oil and commodities and acceptance of diminishing effectiveness of central bankers' unconventional policy actions. Added to this was the heightened uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the UK referendum on its continued membership of the EU as well as the US presidential elections which culminated in significant volatility in equities and corporate bond yields.

10-year gilt yields moved from 1.58% on 31/03/2015 to a high of 2.19% in June before falling back and ending the financial year at 1.42%. The pattern for 20-year gilts was similar, the yield rose from 2.15% in March 2015 to a high of 2.71% in June before falling back to 2.14% in March 2016. The FTSE All Share Index fell 7.3% from 3664 to 3395 and the MSCI World Index fell 5.3% from 1741 to 1648 over the 12 months to 31 March 2016.

Money Market Data

Table: Bank Rate, Money Market Rates

Date	Bank Rate	O/N LIBID	7-day LIBID	1-month LIBID	3-month LIBID	6-month LIBID	12-month LIBID
01/04/2015	0.50	0.35	0.46	0.43	0.51	0.76	0.97
30/04/2015	0.50	0.35	0.48	0.43	0.52	0.74	0.98
31/05/2015	0.50	0.43	0.50	0.43	0.52	0.75	0.98
30/06/2015	0.50	0.35	0.45	0.43	0.52	0.79	0.99
31/07/2015	0.50	0.32	0.43	0.43	0.53	0.79	1.01
31/08/2015	0.50	0.42	0.40	0.43	0.54	0.82	1.02
30/09/2015	0.50	0.37	0.41	0.43	0.54	0.74	1.00
31/10/2015	0.50	0.36	0.41	0.43	0.54	0.77	1.00
30/11/2015	0.50	0.30	0.42	0.43	0.54	0.88	1.00
31/12/2015	0.50	0.43	0.35	0.43	0.54	0.76	1.01
31/01/2016	0.50	0.43	0.42	0.43	0.54	0.71	0.99
29/02/2016	0.50	0.25	0.43	0.43	0.54	0.73	0.99
31/03/2016	0.50	0.30	0.44	0.52	0.62	0.71	0.93
Average	0.50	0.38	0.45	0.43	0.54	0.76	0.99
Maximum	0.50	0.48	0.58	0.57	0.66	0.92	1.02
Minimum	0.50	0.17	0.35	0.43	0.51	0.55	0.84
Spread	--	0.31	0.23	0.14	0.15	0.37	0.18

<p>Recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 21st September 2016</p> <p>Task and Finish Group Scrutiny Review into Bus Services and Community Transport</p>	<p>Agenda No: 9</p>
<p>Background Papers:</p> <p><u>Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 21st September 2016</u></p>	<p>Public Report</p> <p>Key Decision: No</p>
<p>Minute Extract:</p> <p>28 <u>REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP - BUS SERVICES AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT</u></p> <p>INFORMATION: Councillor Mrs I Parker, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group - Bus Services and Community Transport, presented the final report on the work of the Task and Finish Group. The Group had reviewed the provision of these services in the Braintree District as part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2015/16. The Group had made eight recommendations following the review and these were set out in the report.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the Members of the Task and Finish Group for their work and he congratulated them on the clarity of the report and its recommendations.</p> <p>DECISION: That the report of the Task and Finish Group - Bus Services and Community Transport be approved and the following eight recommendations contained within it be referred to Full Council on 17th October 2016 and Cabinet on 29th November 2016 for consideration:-</p> <p><u>Demand Responsive Transport (DaRT)</u></p> <p>This has replaced some Essex County Council subsidised bus routes including the Shopper Bus service. DaRT was introduced in parts of the Braintree District in April 2016.</p> <p>We will need to see what impact this has on the District's Community Transport Scheme, particularly on the social car scheme in the DaRT 2 and 3 areas. Residents with a bus pass will be able to use this on the DaRT Transport, whereas the social car scheme costs the passenger 60p per mile. It may be that it will not be necessary to operate the social car scheme in these areas, although DaRT will not replace the service provided by the minibus hire scheme.</p> <p>Recommendation 1 The Council should follow the implementation of the service in the District by attending relevant Essex County Council meetings. This is in order to understand how the service is operating in practice and to assess any possible impact on the</p>	

Community Transport Service.

Total Transport Review for Essex and Suffolk

Recommendation 2

We need to follow this review which looks at services in rural areas and has a relevance to the Braintree District.

Community Transport

Community Transport helps meet the needs that are not met by conventional public transport. The service supports primarily older people and people with physical disabilities. It enables access to essential services such as health related appointments and shopping, but also has a significant role in preventing social isolation by supporting people to visit friends and other social trips.

The service is dependent on annually determined grant support from Essex County Council and funding from Braintree District Council. Braintree District Council will undertake a review of the service in 2016/17 and financial aspects of the service will be included in the review. The fact that funding is only provided on an annual basis does make it difficult to plan over a longer term, in particular it makes it difficult to make investment decisions and bid for contracts. Funding for a two year period, or longer would be preferable.

There is a need for continued discussion with the NHS Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, community hospitals, GP surgeries, social prescribers and Citizens Advice to raise awareness of the Community Transport Service and there may be the potential for some direct services.

Volunteers are essential to this service and there is also an ongoing need to promote the need for volunteers.

The Community Transport Scheme can register and operate bus routes and this may sometimes be a possibility where a commercial route may no longer be viable. It may be possible to operate a limited service, although Braintree District Council will need to be confident that drivers are available to operate a service. If registered bus routes do not run there are both reputational risks and also fines to be paid.

Recommendation 3

There is a need to look at the issues regarding future funding of the District's Community Transport Scheme as part of the review of Community Transport in 2016/17. The review should consider whether it would be possible to provide funding for a period which is longer than one year.

Recommendation 4

There should be further engagement with health providers to raise awareness of the Community Transport Service and build ongoing relationships with the NHS Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, local GPs and social prescribers to enable the different services to work more closely together.

Recommendation 5

The Community Transport Service currently offers transport only one way to Broomfield Hospital or Colchester Hospital for outpatient appointments. It is recommended that the provision of a return journey either by using Community Transport or another provider should be thoroughly explored.

Recommendation 6

To review how the Community Transport Service is promoted to both potential users of the service and people who may be interested in volunteering. This should include the NHS Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, community hospitals, GP surgeries, social prescribers and Citizens Advice and should also include the possibility of advertising via social media. The review should bear in mind the need to balance demand for the service with the number of volunteers.

To look at internal resources to assist with the marketing and promotion of the Braintree District Community Transport Service.

Increased Awareness by Providers and Customers of the Range of Transport Services Available

This issue was raised in relation to a range of transport matters and it was recognised that it can be challenging to promote public transport particularly:-

Community Transport

Non-Emergency Hospital Transport

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

The Pilot Parking Scheme at the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride

Recommendation 7

That the Council contacts the local hospitals, Clinical Commission Groups and Essex County Council to share this report with them and to look at ways of jointly promoting these services.

School Transport

We have identified the issue of transport for children of 16 plus who remain in education and transport costs having to be met by parents. It is now compulsory for children between 16 and 18 to remain in education or training.

Recommendation 8

That the Council notes this issue and asks Essex County Council whether they would consider providing free transport to school or college for this age group. If Essex County Council declines, that the Council writes to its local Members of Parliament on the provision of free transport to school or college for 16 to 18 year olds.

REASON FOR DECISION: To approve the report of the Task and Finish Group - Bus Services and Community Transport and to enable the report to be referred to Council and Cabinet.

Recommended Decision:

To refer the Task and Finish Groups' Scrutiny Review Report Bus Services and Community Transport to Cabinet on 29th November 2016 for consideration and response.

Braintree District Council

Report of the Bus Services and Community Transport Task & Finish Group

July 2016

At the request of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee a Task and Finish Group was established to review Bus and Community Transport in the district.

Task and Finish Group Membership

Cllr. Iona Parker (Chair)
Cllr. Julia Allen
Cllr. Mary Cunningham
Cllr. John Goodman
Cllr. Andrew Hensman
Cllr. Jackie Pell
Cllr. Lyn Walters
Cllr. Sue Wilson

1. Agreed Terms of Reference

Members agreed that the terms of reference for the Bus and Community Transport Task & Finish Group would be as follows:-

- 1.1 To develop a clear understanding about the interactions between relevant bodies in developing and running passenger bus services:-
 - (a) Essex County Council (Passenger Transport)
 - (b) Private bus companies
 - (c) The District Council; particularly with respect to Community Transport
- 1.2 To consider the development of and outcomes of the Essex County Council Passenger Transport Strategy.
- 1.3 Consider the public bus links within the district with a focus on:-
 - (a) Links from and to major centres
 - (b) Links to key facilities / and other transport
 - (c) Rural connections
 - (d) Hospital transport
- 1.4 Consider where there are key gaps in the provision of passenger transport and overlap.
- 1.5 With respect to the Community Transport Scheme:-
 - (a) To understand the service currently delivered, including its scope service volumes, range of operation and the cost.
 - (b) To consider whether it is (or is capable of) meeting the gaps in passenger transport provision.
 - (c) Suggestions for publicity/improve awareness.

2. **Meeting Dates**

29 October 2015
2 December 2015
23 February 2016
19 April 2016

3. **Presentations on three subject areas were received from:-**

Tracey Corcoran, Community Transport Manager, Braintree District Council
Rachael Price, Area Review Manager (Uttlesford and Braintree), Essex
County Council
Matt Carter - Mid Essex CCG Commissioning Manager
Nadia Kelsey - Contract and Commissioner Support Team CCG
Kerri de Longe - ERS Medical Account Manager

4. **Braintree District Council's Community Transport Service**

4.1 Community Transport Schemes operate across the country, many operate as independent charities usually supported with funding from Councils.

4.2 In the Braintree District the Community Transport Scheme is run by the District Council, with 2016/17 budgeted income totalling £214,990 including an annual revenue grant from ECC of £105,541, an anticipated income of £5,000 Bus Services Operators Grant from The Department of Transport and £104,450 raised from fees and charges from service users. The controllable operating costs of the service are budgeted at £250,970 (mainly salaries and vehicle running costs). BDC owns seven mini buses which need replacing about every eight years requiring capital funding of around £40,000 each.

4.3 There are 7 staff employees, 5 office based staff (4FTE's) and two staff drivers and approximately 50 volunteer drivers. The service is always seeking new volunteer drivers and sometimes cannot meet all journey requests. When this is the case, priority will be given to essential journeys such as GP appointments and shopping. Journeys have to be booked 2 days in advance by ringing the Community Transport Team at BDC.

4.4 The scheme offers fully accessible transport services for residents who are unable to access conventional public transport due to:-

- A disability, temporary or permanent
- Restricted mobility
- Difficulties getting on and off a bus
- Rural/social isolation
- Needs are not met by existing public transport services

4.5 The service can mainly be used for:-

- Shopping
- Local health related appointments including return trips to Halstead and Braintree community hospitals
- One way trips to Broomfield and Colchester hospitals

- Visits to family and friends
- Visits to social and day care centres
- Further education
- Rehabilitation classes
- Lunch clubs

4.6 In 2014/15 the Scheme made over 60,000 passenger journeys, in 2015/16 there was a decline in passenger journeys and 56,673 were made. Across Essex, around 8 schemes are experiencing a fall in passenger journeys, and 5 Schemes an increase.

4.7 Services offered in 2015/16 comprise of:-

Social Car Scheme for individuals: This involves passengers making a contribution towards the cost of their trip. The majority of the trips are for the minimum cost of £3.00 each way for any journey up to five miles. Journeys in excess of five miles are charged at 60p a mile. Volunteer drivers use their own cars and mileage costs of 45p per mile are met by the passenger and/or subsidised by Community Transport. The Scheme operates primarily on weekdays with a skeleton service offered at the weekend. It takes longer to assist those passengers who have dementia or Alzheimer's.

2014/15 28,299 passenger journeys were made

2015/16 27,409 passenger journeys were made

Minibus Hire Scheme for groups: Groups pay a cost of £1.25 a mile or £25 minimum fare and hire the Council's minibuses for social events, clubs, day trips and support groups. Groups can use one of the Council's volunteer drivers or their own driver. Approximately 200 groups are registered with the scheme.

2014/15 25,707 passenger journeys were made

2015/16 23,775 passenger journeys were made

Dial-a-ride Scheme for wheelchair users: These types of journeys use one of the Council's fully accessible minibuses operated by staff drivers. The usage and cost of this scheme is the same as the Social Car Scheme.

2014/15 2,489 passenger journeys were made

2015/16 1,722 passenger journeys were made

Membership Fees:

There is an annual membership fee of £15 for individuals who use the social car scheme and/or the dial a ride scheme. For mini bus hire, the group membership fee is £20 per annum.

Shopper Bus: This was independently funded by ECC with 7 set routes in the most rural areas. Each route ran one day per week enabling access to the nearest town and its services. Passengers were able to use their concessionary bus pass or pay a flat fare of £4 for a return journey. In 2014/15 4,553 passengers used this Scheme and in 2015/16 3,767 passengers used this scheme. The service has now ceased with the

introduction of a new Demand Responsive Transport Scheme in April 2016. BDC continue to run the Stisted Shopper Bus Service on a Wednesday under contract to ECC and every other Saturday in an arrangement with the local parish.

- 4.8 BDC has to provide monitoring information to ECC. ECC are prepared to subsidise up to £5.00 per passenger journey. The ECC subsidy to Braintree Community Transport for 2015/16 was £1.85 per passenger journey. Volunteers give approximately 1,600 hours per month and this equates to around 11 full time drivers.
- 4.9 It is over 5 years since BDC last reviewed the service and now intends to carry out a comprehensive review of the service in 2016/17.
- 4.10 This is a link to a film made in 2015 that was made to promote the need for volunteers for the service:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYJOSvj1KAU>

5. **Essex County Council – Their Role in Bus Transport**

Public Passenger Transport - In Essex 85% of local bus services are provided commercially and around 15% are supported by ECC. The Council runs a tender process and pays for services with money from taxpayers and fare payers. The total spend for this amounts to £64 million a year.

Statutory Services - ECC, in accordance with its statutory duty, will provide free home to school transport for children of compulsory school age to the nearest available school, provided the school is 2 miles or more away for children below the age of 8 and 3 miles or more away for children aged eight and above. There are also statutory requirements for some adult social care work and for looked after children and to consider local bus services and transport information. ECC stated that there is no statutory responsibility for home to school travel for 16 to 18 year olds and the cost for parents is £900 per year, although ECC have a discretionary scheme where assistance may be available with half of the cost for low income families. The group noted that it is now compulsory for 16 to 18 year olds to stay in education or training.

Discretionary Services - Under the Transport Act 1985 s63 ECC has a continuing statutory duty to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the Council considers it appropriate where there are gaps in the network of services provided by commercial operators. The main services provided by ECC include evenings, Sundays and services to rural areas. The total spend of this amounted to £8.3 million annually.

English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (bus passes) - Members were advised that the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme is a national scheme jointly funded by the Government and ECC. The funding had been distributed across Essex to assist in the transportation of older people. The total funding amounted to £19 million a year.

Review of Essex County Council's Local Bus Strategy – ECC conducted a review of Local Bus Strategy in September and October 2015. The proposals for revising contracted local bus services in Essex (those funded by the County Council) were approved by Cabinet on 19 November 2015. Services were tendered and awarded in February 2016. This revised network started on 10 April 2016. This is a link to the Bus Review and contains details of route changes and also comments from residents in each district on the proposals.

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Getting-Around/Bus/Bus-review.aspx>

Demand Responsive Transport - As part of the Bus Review, demand responsive transport is now replacing some routes in some of the most rural villages in the Braintree District. This is being operated by Arrow Taxis. The demand responsive services in the Braintree District are the DaRT2 and DaRT3 service. Leaflets regarding the services are attached below. Passengers book the service by telephone and can be collected from their home and taken to and from anywhere in the DaRT area as well as to the local towns and health facilities. The service is available for use by anyone but those without bus passes have to pay. Further details can also be found at the following link:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Getting-Around/Bus/Demand-Responsive-Transport-DaRT.aspx>



DaRT 2 Leaflet.pdf



DaRT 3 Leaflet.pdf

6. NHS Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group – Non Emergency Hospital Transport Commissioning

- 6.1 Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) for Mid Essex is now commissioned by Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (Mid Essex CCG). Mid Essex CCG has entered into a contract with ERS Medical to provide NEPTS. ERS Medical has 30+ vehicles solely for the use of the Mid Essex contract; bookings are made via a national call centre.
- 6.2 Each CCG has their own NEPTS Provider, with varying models of provision; there is an increasing shift towards only offering the service to patients registered with GP Practices within the CCG area.
- 6.3 For transport from hospital, it is now hospital's responsibility to contact the relevant CCG to ascertain which NEPTS Provider is to undertake journeys for each patient.
- 6.4 Mid Essex CCG currently arranges transport for patients registered outside of their catchment area, then they identify the correct CCG and send an invoice in order to recover the costs, a procedure known as recharging.

- 6.5 Transport can be refused on safety grounds and the contract states that transport should not be delivered after midnight; however there are exceptions to this due to extenuating circumstances.
- 6.6 All transport vehicles are fitted with standardised medical equipment.
- 6.7 Challenges include varying eligibility criteria across CCGs and the CCG boundaries not being coterminous with Community Transport/ District Council boundaries.
- 6.8 Budgets for NEPTS are unpredictable. The Mid Essex CCG has a Block Contract with ERS Medical based on an assumed level of activity. There is a fixed amount allocated of £1.5 - £2 million per annum for this activity. This does not include Extra Contractual activity or recharging from other CCGs.
- 6.9 There are Specialist Centres across the UK commissioned by NHS England but these do not have a budget for NEPTS.
- 6.10 Journey types covered by the contract include:-
- Outpatient: for those patients attending outpatient clinics, diagnostic departments and treatment areas within the acute and community sites of Mid Essex (and Colchester Hospital and the Patient Care Centre at Colchester). Patients are collected from their place of residence, taken to their appointment and returned to their place of residence.
 - Day Care: as above but where the treatment is likely to be more than 4 hours in duration.
 - Discharges: usually from a hospital ward, to a place of residence or to a designated on-going care facility, such as a Care Home.
 - Admissions: usually from a place of residence within Mid Essex to an acute or community hospital within mid Essex.
 - Transfer: where a patient is to be transferred between two medical facilities, such as acute and community hospitals or specialist hospitals for further treatment.

Patients outside the scope of the NEPTS contract include:-

- Any patient being collected from outside the Mid Essex CCG area unless registered with a Mid Essex GP Practice (where they reside outside the CCG boundaries).
- An appointment for treatment outside of the Mid Essex CCG area (other than Colchester Hospital and the Patient Care Centre at Colchester).
- A transfer from a Mid Essex site to a hospital or treatment facility outside the Mid Essex area.
- A transfer from a hospital outside Mid Essex to a hospital or treatment facility within Mid Essex.

- 6.11 **Eligibility for NEPTs** - Eligibility for NEPTS focuses solely on mobility and does not take into consideration age, distance and financial circumstances. There is no cost to the patient for this service as the NHS is free at the point of access.
- 6.12 In Mid Essex certain patient cohorts are automatically eligible; these include patients in receipt of renal care and oncology, patients with tracheotomies, and patients requiring stretchers.
- 6.13 The Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme is available to patients that are mobile and therefore not eligible for NETPS but who are financially challenged. See link for full details:-

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Travelcosts.aspx>
- 6.14 CCGs are not responsible for Primary Care transport, for example getting to and from a local GP appointment.
- 6.15 **The Braintree District Community Transport Scheme and getting people to hospital appointments** – The Scheme can provide transport one way only to either Broomfield Hospital or Colchester Hospital. This would be either via the social car scheme or sometimes in a mini bus. The passenger needs to be member of the Community Transport Scheme and the current cost of each trip is 60p per mile plus an additional 60p per mile back to the district border, which is around half the price of a taxi.
- 6.16 The Scheme is largely dependent on volunteer drivers to provide this service. The reason why only one way transport can be offered is that there are not the volunteer resources for the driver to sit and wait for the passenger.
- 6.17 The Community Transport Team are aware about the eligibility for NEPTS and the Healthcare Travel Costs scheme so that customers only use Community Transport for trips to hospital where they are not eligible for NEPTS and claim travel costs where they can.

7. **Other Matters Raised During the Review**

- 7.1 **Total Transport Review** - A successful joint bid by Suffolk County Council and Essex County Council went to The Department for Transport in February 2015 for funding to carry out a review. Letters of support for the bid were received from the operators, CCGs, West Suffolk Hospital and West Suffolk College. Total Transport Pilot Fund Futuregov were the organisation appointed to carry out the review of getting around in rural communities. The areas included in the review are South Waveney (centred on the Ilketshalls and All Saints) Uttlesford, Stowmarket, Tendring, Rural hinterland of Bury St Edmunds, Colchester and Sudbury. This review is due to report in the near future.
- 7.2 **Chelmer Valley - Broomfield Hospital Park and Ride Shuttle Bus (Pilot service)**
Essex County Council and Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust are currently piloting a service between Chelmer Valley Park and Ride and

Broomfield Hospital from 30 November 2015 for a period of 12 months.
The group raised concerns about how this is being promoted both at the Park and Ride site and Broomfield Hospital.

7.3 Cabinet – 14th June 2010 - Report on the outcomes from the Recommendations of Bus and Rail Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish group also had regard to this 2010 report.

7.4 The Coggeshall Community Bus – This service was started in 1982, and is totally run by volunteers. It provides a unique service, which provides morning and evening commuter runs to and from Kelvedon Station, as well as local midday runs to provide an invaluable transport link around Coggeshall and to Kelvedon. The service operates on a not-for-profit basis, and is completely self-financing.

<http://www.coggeshallbus.co.uk/>

7.5 Travel Aid for Parents of Sick Children (TAPS) – A small local scheme offering help with travel costs to hospital for parents with an ill child. The contact to find out more about this scheme is Halstead Town Council. This is for families in Halstead.

8. Summary and Recommendations

8.1 Demand Responsive Transport (DaRT)

This has replaced some Essex County Council subsidised bus routes including the Shopper Bus service. DaRT was introduced in parts of the Braintree District in April 2016.

We will need to see what impact this has on the District's Community Transport Scheme, particularly on the social car scheme in the DaRT 2 and 3 areas. Residents with a bus pass will be able to use this on the DaRT Transport whereas the social car scheme costs the passenger 60p per mile. It may be that it will not be necessary to operate the social car scheme in these areas although DaRT will not replace the service provided by the minibus hire scheme.

Recommendation 1

The Council should follow the implementation of the service in the district by attending relevant Essex County Council meetings. This is in order to understand how the service is operating in practice and to assess any possible impact on the Community Transport Service.

8.2 Total Transport Review for Essex and Suffolk

Recommendation 2

We need to follow this review which looks at services in rural areas and has a relevance to the Braintree District.

8.3 Community Transport

Community Transport helps meet the needs that are not met by conventional public transport. The service supports primarily older people and people with physical disabilities. It enables access to essential services such as health related appointments and shopping but also has a significant role in preventing social isolation by supporting people to visit friends and other social trips.

The service is dependent on annually determined grant support from Essex County Council and funding from Braintree District Council. Braintree District Council will undertake a review of the service in 2016/17 and financial aspects of the service will be included in the review. The fact that funding is only provided on an annual basis does make it difficult to plan over a longer term, in particular it makes it difficult to make investment decisions and bid for contracts. Funding for a two year period or longer would be preferable.

There is a need for continued discussion with the CCG, community hospitals, GP surgeries, social prescribers and Citizens Advice to raise awareness of the Community Transport Service and there may be the potential for some direct services.

Volunteers are essential to this service and there is also an ongoing need to promote the need for volunteers.

The Community Transport Scheme can register and operate bus routes and this may sometimes be a possibility where a commercial route may no longer be viable. It may be possible to operate a limited service although Braintree District Council will need to be confident that drivers are available to operate a service. If registered bus routes do not run there are both reputational risks and also fines to be paid.

Recommendation 3

There is a need to look at the issues regarding future funding of the District's Community Transport Scheme as part of the review of Community Transport in 2016/17. The review should consider whether it would be possible to provide funding for a period which is longer than one year.

Recommendation 4

There should be further engagement with health providers to raise awareness of the Community Transport Service and build ongoing relationships with the CCG, local GPs and social prescribers to enable the different services to work more closely together.

Recommendation 5

The Community Transport Service currently offers transport only one way to Broomfield Hospital or Colchester Hospital for outpatient appointments. It is recommended that the provision of a return journey either by using Community Transport or another provider should be thoroughly explored.

Recommendation 6

To review how the Community Transport Service is promoted to both potential users of the service and people who may be interested in volunteering. This should include the CCG, community hospitals, GP surgeries, social prescribers and Citizens Advice and should also include the possibility of advertising via social media. The review should bear in mind the need to balance demand for the service with the number of volunteers.

To look at internal resources to assist with the marketing and promotion of the Braintree District Community Transport Service.

8.4 Increased awareness by providers and customers of the range of transport services available.

This issue was raised in relation to a range of transport matters and it was recognised that it can be challenging to promote public transport particularly:-

Community Transport
Non-Emergency Hospital Transport
The Healthcare Travel Costs scheme
The Pilot Parking Scheme at the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride

Recommendation 7

That the Council contacts the local hospitals, clinical commission groups and Essex County Council to share this report with them and to look at ways of jointly promoting these services.

8.5 School Transport

We have identified the issue of transport for children of 16 plus who remain in education and transport costs having to be met by parents. It is now compulsory for children between 16 and 18 to remain in education or training.

Recommendation 8

That the Council notes this issue and asks Essex County Council whether they would consider providing free transport to school or college for this age group. If ECC declines, that the Council write to its local Members of Parliament on the provision of free transport to school or college for 16 to 18 year olds.

<p>Recommendation from Governance Committee – 28th September 2016</p> <p>Future Appointment of External Auditors</p>	<p>Agenda No: 10</p>
<p>Background Papers:</p> <p><u>Report and Minutes of the Governance Committee – 28th September 2016</u></p>	<p>Public Report</p> <p>Key Decision: No</p>
<p>Minute Extract:</p> <p>23 <u>FUTURE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS</u></p> <p>INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on arrangements for the future appointment of external auditors.</p> <p>Members were advised that in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the responsibilities of the Audit Commission had ceased and transitional arrangements had been established for the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for all local government and National Health Service bodies in England. The Council's current external auditor is Ernst and Young LLP and the contract, which includes the audit of the 2017/18 accounts, is now managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA).</p> <p>It was reported that when the current transitional arrangements end on 31st March 2018, the Council would move to the local appointment of its external auditor. There are three options available. These are: to make a stand-alone appointment and to establish an Auditor Panel with the whole, or a majority of its members being independent; to set up a Joint Auditor Panel/local joint procurement arrangements with other authorities with the whole, or a majority of the Panel's members being independent; or to opt-in to a Sector Led Body (SLB) which would be able to negotiate contracts with national firms in order to maximise opportunities for the most economic and efficient procurement of external audit services for the whole sector. PSAA has been authorised to act as an 'appointing person' for auditor appointments to principal local government bodies and is working on the details of the arrangements required to award contracts to audit firms by June 2017.</p> <p>The Council has until December 2017 to appoint an external auditor, but should have one of the three options in place by Spring 2017 to enable a contract negotiation process to be carried out during 2017.</p> <p>DECISION: That it be <u>Recommended to Full Council</u> that the 'Opt-in to a Sector Led Body' option with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited for the procurement of future external audit contracts be agreed.</p>	

REASON FOR DECISION: To inform Members of changes to the arrangements for appointing external auditors following the closure of the Audit Commission; the end of transitional arrangements at the conclusion of the 2017/18 audit; and the need to consider the options available and to put in place new arrangements in time to make a first appointment by 31st December 2017.

Recommended Decision:

That Full Council accepts the recommendation of the Governance Committee and agrees the 'Opt-in to a Sector Led Body' option with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited for the procurement of future external audit contracts.

Future Appointment of External Auditors		Agenda No:
Portfolio	Finance and Performance	
Corporate Outcome:	A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers	
Report presented by:	Trevor Wilson, Head of Finance	
Report prepared by:	Trevor Wilson, Head of Finance	
Background Papers:		Public Report
Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 brought to a close the Audit Commission and established transitional arrangements for the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for all local government and NHS bodies in England. On 5th October 2015 the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) determined that the transitional arrangements for local government bodies would be extended by one year to also include the audit of the accounts for 2017/18. 2. The Council's current external auditor is Ernst & Young LLP, this appointment having been made under a contract let by the Audit Commission. Following closure of the Audit Commission the contract is currently managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA), a transitional body set up by the Local Government Association (LGA) with delegated authority from the DCLG. 3. During recent years the Council has benefited from a reduction in fees compared with historic levels. This has been the result of a combination of factors including new contracts negotiated nationally with the firms of accountants and savings from the closure of the Audit Commission. 4. When the current transitional arrangements come to an end on 31st March 2018 the Council will be able to move to local appointment of its external auditor. 5. There are three broad options open to the Council under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. To make a stand-alone appointment. The Council will need to set up an Auditor Panel. The members of the Panel must be wholly or a majority of independent members as defined by the Act. 		

<p>II. Set up a Joint Auditor Panel/local joint procurement arrangements. The Council would join with other authorities to establish a Joint Auditor Panel. Again this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees.</p> <p>III. Opt-in to a Sector Led Body (SLB). The SLB has the ability to negotiate contracts with the firms nationally, maximising the opportunities for the most economic and efficient approach to procurement of external audit on behalf of the whole sector.</p> <p>6. The Council has until December 2017 to make an appointment. In practical terms this means that one of the options outlined in this report will need to be in place by Spring 2017 in order that the contract negotiation process can be carried out during 2017.</p> <p>7. On 17th August 2016 the Council received notification that the PSAA has been successful in its application to be specified as an appointing person for auditor appointments at principal local government bodies.</p> <p>8. The PSAA, as the SLB, is currently working on the details of the scheme. The date by which councils will need to opt into the appointing person arrangement has not as yet been finalised. However, the PSAA's aim is to award contracts to audit firms by June 2017, giving six months to consult on appointments with authorities before the 31 December 2017 deadline. The PSAA anticipates that invitations to opt in will be issued before December 2016.</p>
<p>Recommended Decision:</p> <p>To Recommend to Full Council that the 'Opt-in to the Sector Led Body' option, with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, for the procurement of future external audit contracts be agreed.</p>
<p>Purpose of Decision:</p> <p>To inform Members of changes to the arrangements for appointing external auditors following the closure of the Audit Commission, the end of the transitional arrangements at the conclusion of the 2017/18 audits and the need to consider options available and put in place new arrangements in time to make a first appointment by 31st December 2017.</p>

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

Financial:	<p>The cost of establishing a local or joint Auditor Panel outlined in options 1 and 2 will need to be estimated and included in the Council's budget. This will include the cost of recruiting independent appointees, servicing the Panel, operating a bidding and tender evaluation process, letting a contract and paying fees and allowances.</p> <p>Opting-in to a national SLB provides maximum opportunity to limit the extent of any increases by entering in to a large scale collective procurement arrangement and would remove the costs of establishing an Auditor Panel.</p>
Legal:	<p>Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) requires a relevant authority to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31st December in the preceding year. Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the authority must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor.</p> <p>Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor. In this event the authority must immediately inform the Secretary of State, who may direct the authority to appoint the auditor named in the direction or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the authority.</p> <p>Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an 'appointing person' specified by the Secretary of State. This power has been exercised in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (SI 192) and this gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a Sector Led Body to become the appointing person.</p>
Safeguarding:	None
Equalities/Diversity:	None
Customer Impact:	None
Environment and Climate Change:	None
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None

Risks:	There is no immediate risk to the Council, however, early consideration by the Council of its preferred approach will enable detailed planning to take place so as to achieve successful transition to the new arrangement in a timely and efficient manner.
Officer Contact:	Trevor Wilson
Designation:	Head of Finance
Ext. No:	2801
E-mail:	Trevor.wilson@braintree.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of changes to the arrangements for appointing external auditors following the closure of the Audit Commission, the end of the transitional arrangements at the conclusion of the 2017/18 audits and the need to consider options available and put in place new arrangements in time to make a first appointment by 31st December 2017.

2. Information and Analysis

- 2.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 brought to a close the Audit Commission and established transitional arrangements for the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for all local government and NHS bodies in England. On 5th October 2015 the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) determined that the transitional arrangements for local government bodies would be extended by one year to also include the audit of the accounts for 2017/18.
- 2.2 The Council's current external auditor is Ernst & Young LLP, this appointment having been made under a contract let by the Audit Commission. Following closure of the Audit Commission the contract is currently managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA), a transitional body set up by the Local Government Association (LGA) with delegated authority from the DCLG.
- 2.3 The PSAA is an independent, not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. It carries out a number of functions in relation to auditor appointments under powers delegated by the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government. However, those powers are time-limited and will cease when current contracts with audit firms expire with the completion of the 2017/18 audits for local government bodies, and the completion of the 2016/17 audits for NHS bodies and smaller bodies.
- 2.4 During recent years the Council has benefited from a reduction in fees compared with historic levels. This has been the result of a combination of factors including new contracts negotiated nationally with the firms of accountants and savings from the closure of the Audit Commission. The Council's external audit fee for 2016-17 is £52,756 and £13,778 for Housing Benefit Subsidy claim certification work.
- 2.5 When the current transitional arrangements come to an end on 31st March 2018 the Council will be able to move to local appointment of its external auditor.
- 2.6 There are a number of routes by which this can be achieved, each with varying risks and opportunities. Current fees are based on discounted rates offered by the firms in return for substantial market share. When the contracts were last negotiated nationally by the Audit Commission they covered NHS and local government bodies and offered maximum economies of scale.
- 2.7 The scope of the audit will still be specified nationally, the National Audit Office (NAO) is responsible for writing the Code of Audit Practice which all firms appointed to carry out the Council's audit must follow. Not all accounting firms

will be eligible to compete for the work, they will need to demonstrate that they have the required skills and experience and be registered with a Registered Supervising Body approved by the Financial Reporting Council. The registration process has not yet commenced and therefore the number of firms is not known, but it is reasonable to expect that the list of eligible firms may include the top 10 or 12 firms in the country, including our current auditor. It is unlikely that small, local independent firms will meet the eligibility criteria.

3. Options for local appointment of External Auditors

3.1 There are three broad options open to the Council under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act):

3.2 Option 1 - To make a stand-alone appointment

3.2.1 In order to make a stand-alone appointment the Council will need to set up an Auditor Panel. The members of the Panel must be wholly or a majority of independent members as defined by the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, this excludes current and former Members (or officers) and their close families and friends. This means that Members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing which firm of accountants to award a contract for the Council's external audit. A new independent auditor panel established by the Council will be responsible for selecting the auditor.

3.2.2 Advantages/benefits

Setting up an auditor panel allows the Council to take maximum advantage of the new local appointment regime and have some local input to the decision.

3.2.3 Disadvantages/risks

Recruitment and servicing of the Auditor Panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract is estimated by the LGA to cost in the order of £15,000 plus on-going expenses and allowances.

The Council will not be able to take advantage of reduced fees that may be available through joint or national procurement contracts.

The assessment of bids and decision on awarding contracts will be taken by independent appointees and not solely by Members.

3.3 Option 2 - Set up a Joint Auditor Panel/local joint procurement arrangements

3.3.1 The Act enables the Council to join with other authorities to establish a Joint Auditor Panel. Again this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees. Further legal advice will be required on the exact constitution of such a Panel having regard to the obligations of each Council under the Act and the Council would need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement.

3.3.2 Advantages/benefits

The costs of setting up the Panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract will be shared across a number of authorities.

There is greater opportunity for negotiating some economies of scale by being able to offer a larger, combined contract value to the firms.

3.3.3 *Disadvantages/risks*

The decision making body will be further removed from local input, with potentially no input from Members where a wholly independent Panel is used or possible only one Member representing each Council, depending on the constitution agreed with the other bodies involved.

- 3.3.4 The choice of auditor could be complicated where individual councils have independence issues. An independence issue occurs where the auditor has recently or is currently carrying out work such as consultancy or advisory work for that council. Where this occurs some auditors may be prevented from being appointed by the terms of their professional standards. There is a risk that if the Panel choose a firm that is conflicted for this Council then the Council may still need to make a separate appointment with all the attendant costs and loss of economies possible through joint procurement.

3.4 **Option 3 - Opt-in to a sector led body**

- 3.4.1 Councils will be able to 'opt-in' to a Sector Led Body (SLB), which has been specified as an appointing person by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The SLB has the ability to negotiate contracts with the firms nationally, maximising the opportunities for the most economic and efficient approach to procurement of external audit on behalf of the whole sector.

3.4.2 *Advantages/benefits*

The costs of setting up the appointment arrangements and negotiating fees would be shared across all opt-in authorities.

By offering large contract values the firms would be able to offer better rates and lower fees than are likely to result from local negotiation.

Any conflicts at individual authorities would be managed by the SLB who would have a number of contracted firms to call upon.

The SLB will act in the collective interests of the 'opt-in' authorities.

3.4.3 *Disadvantages/risks*

Individual Members will have less opportunity for direct involvement in the appointment process other than through the LGA and/or stakeholder representative groups.

- 3.5 In order for the SLB to be viable and to be placed in the strongest possible negotiating position the SLB will need councils to indicate their intention to opt-in before final contract prices are known.

4. The Way Forward

- 4.1 The Council has until December 2017 to make an appointment. In practical terms this means that one of the options outlined in this report will need to be in place by Spring 2017 in order that the contract negotiation process can be carried out during 2017.
- 4.2 On 17th August 2016 the Council received notification that the PSAA has been successful in its application to be specified as an appointing person for auditor appointments at principal local government bodies. In preparing its application to the DCLG the PSAA had received expressions of interest from over 200 local authorities supporting the approach.
- 4.3 The PSAA is currently working on the details of the scheme. The date by which councils will need to opt into the appointing person arrangement has not as yet been finalised. However, the PSAA's aim is to award contracts to audit firms by June 2017, giving six months to consult on appointments with authorities before the 31 December 2017 deadline. The PSAA anticipates that invitations to opt in will be issued before December 2016.
- 4.4 The PSAA has published a prospectus for the new scheme: a copy of this can be viewed on its website <http://www.psaa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PSAA-A5-web-portrait-August-2016.pdf>.
- 4.5 From a best value perspective it is recommended that the Council agrees to the 'Opt-in to the Sector Led Body' option, with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, for the procurement of future external audit contracts. The Council to respond accordingly to the invitation to opt-in with the PSAA when received later this calendar year.

**LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL
OVERALL CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DIRECTION**

Agenda No: 11a

Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Meeting held on 8th September 2016

I attended this meeting with the Chief Executive. The main agenda item was a presentation and discussion on the Government's Business Rates Retention consultation which closed on the 26th September 2016. At this stage it is a high level consultation on the principles of the scheme and the associated fair funding review; it is not getting into the detail of percentage splits between authorities etc. There was broad agreement that Essex should submit a joint response to the consultation as well as individual authorities making their own submissions (which Braintree DC has done). I attach below the Essex response that was submitted by the Chairman of the Leaders' Group, Cllr Neil Stock, Tendring DC, and I am pleased to say this was supported by all fifteen authorities across Greater Essex.

Other agenda items were presented by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) providing an update on the proposed Police and Fire Service Collaboration for which a business case is being developed; presentation on the draft Police and Crime Plan (copy available on the PCC website <http://www.essex.pcc.police.uk/police-and-crime-plan-2016-engagement-and-online-survey/>) and discussion on Unauthorised Encampments / Traveller Incursions; a roundtable discussion was held on the 26th September 2016 which the Chief Executive attended. An action plan is being developed to ensure a fair and consistent approach across Greater Essex to dealing with these matters with the partnership of police, PCC, Essex Countywide Travellers Unit and local authorities.

MPs briefing on Local Plans and Proposed New Settlements

On the 9th September 2106, I attended a meeting with Leaders and officers from Braintree, Colchester, Tendring and Essex County Councils to brief three MPs (Priti Patel, Bernard Jenkin and Will Quince) on joint work between the four authorities on local plans and proposed new settlements. We discussed rail and road connections and the engagement of other key partners such as the NHS. (Braintree MP James Cleverly was briefed separately the following week).

Devolution

I have no further update to present since my last report to Council in September. As it stands to date, there has been no change in Government policy regarding the requirement for mayor-led combined authority deals, although there is still debate in the media. The consultation on the East Anglia deal (now split between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area and Norfolk and Suffolk area) has now closed

<p>and the results have been published and are available on https://www.eastangliadevo.co.uk/https://www.eastangliadevo.co.uk/</p>	
<p>Councillor Graham Butland Leader of the Council</p>	
Contact:	Councillor Graham Butland
Designation:	Leader of the Council
E-mail:	cllr.gbutland@braintree.gov.uk

Business Rates Retention Consultation
Local Government Finance
Department for Communities and
Local Government
2nd Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 4DF

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Tel: (01255) 686583
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26 September 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

Essex Authorities' Response to the DCLG Consultation on BRR September 2016

Essex local authorities welcome the reform of Business Rates and the opportunity to engage in consultation, alongside our voice on the national Steering Group and work-streams. We are supportive of this strong collaboration between local government, LGA and DCLG, and share the aspiration that this will enable us to develop the best and most equitable financial system to support the commissioning and provision of services to meet the needs of the people and businesses within our communities.

We particularly welcome the opportunity to better connect business rates to those activities that support and enable economic growth, such as skills and transport. We want the fair funding review to deliver a better and fairer deal for the people and businesses of Essex – alongside the live consultations on early years and schools funding formula. Any such changes, however, must ensure that it is not Councils alone who share the financial risks of economic downturn. Financial sustainability and certainty must form part of any proposals and recognition be built into future calculations/baselines of revenue from the long term contractual commitments of local authorities. Similarly the non-revenue generating implications of growth should be recognised e.g. increased social care costs.

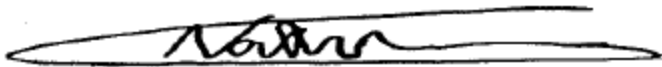
Each Essex authority may submit their individual response to the detailed set of consultation questions, but Essex Leaders have seven key asks:

1. Future unfunded or underfunded pressures should be overtly recognised and prioritised; If Government requires Authorities to undertake new functions these should be fully funded and the basis of such funding should be transparent
2. The devolution of new responsibilities must not exacerbate the pressures we already face; devolved responsibilities must be financially sustainable; Whilst we fully accept the need for Local Authorities to undertake new responsibilities we believe that these should not be demand led in nature unless funding is forthcoming to keep pace with demand.

3. All local authorities should have the opportunity to enhance economic growth through the devolution of skills and transport responsibilities, regardless of whether or not there is a Devolution Deal;
4. Infrastructure funding should not be restricted through the application of an increase to the multiplier to areas that adopt a directly elected mayor; fairly provide growth-enabling powers to all local authorities to release the substantial economic contribution of non-metropolitan areas and contribute to national prosperity;
5. Support a high retention of the growth in business rates in the areas that generate it to both incentivise growth and reward it whilst recognising the need for partial resets to ensure that those who are at the top of their growth cycle are not disproportionately disadvantaged
6. The allocation of future funding should be based on the key cost drivers within Local Government and not solely on past spending as this can represent an Authority's capacity to spend.
7. Control over locally raised taxes should be equal for all local authorities irrespective of their local governance and the Government should give Authorities flexibility over discounts rather than imposing mandatory relief for business rates and Council Tax.

Local authorities are facing some of the most significant funding reductions across the whole public sector to 2020. The fact sheet attached demonstrates some key issues for shire county areas. I understand that the two unitary authorities in the Greater Essex area, Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea Councils, support the seven key asks above and will also be making their own detailed responses. We want to grasp the opportunities afforded through Business Rates reform to devolve powers, stimulate growth and provide a fair deal to the people and businesses of Essex.

Yours faithfully



Cllr Neil Stock

Leader of Tendring District Council and Chairman of the Essex Leaders Group

Signed on behalf of the Essex authorities listed below:

Basildon Borough Council
 Braintree District Council
 Brentwood Borough Council
 Castle Point Borough Council
 Chelmsford City Council
 Colchester Borough Council
 Epping Forest District Council
 Essex County Council
 Harlow District Council
 Maldon District Council
 Rochford District Council
 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
 Tendring District Council
 Thurrock Council
 Uttlesford District Council

Facts about the Population and Economy of shire county areas

- Shire county areas cover 83% of total England land mass (44,000 sq miles).
- 47% of the population live in shire county areas.
- Households in these areas are expected to increase by 18% by 2035.
- Shire counties contribute 49% of income tax, 41% of stamp duty and £8.4 billion of business rates.
- Shire county economics account for 41% of GVA, or £565 billion.
- There are 10.7 million jobs in shire county areas – amounting to some 43% of total jobs
- Shire county areas are home to 55% of those aged 65+.
 - Over the next five years, the elderly population in shire county areas is projected to rise at an average annual rate of 2.0%, compared to the England average of 1.8%. This is also faster than the London boroughs (1.9%), other unitary authorities (1.9%) and metropolitan boroughs (1.5%).
 - Demand for social care services measured by the number of referrals made and subsequent contacts with local authorities increased by 8.5% since 2013/14.
- Yet, county health and social care commissioners have, on average, £78 less per head of the over 65+ population to spend than other sectors.
- Overall, shire county areas get considerably less per capita than other areas of the country, although they cover the largest population grouping (47%) and geographical areas (83%)
 - In 2016-17 total funding in shire county areas amounts to £741.70 per head; this is 6% less than the national average; 5% less than Metropolitan Districts and a massive 24% less than residents in London.
 - Shire county areas receive 7% less than the national average per dwelling; 6% less than metropolitan districts and a huge 31% less than London.
 - Shire county areas received 44% less cash funding per head from central government compared to the national average, 61% less than London Boroughs and 53% less than Metropolitan Boroughs.

**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF
FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE**

Agenda No: 11b

Tax Collection rates as at end of August 2016

Council Tax – The running total collected was 49.64% (compared to 49.32% at the same time last year), and amount collected was £39.7million

Business Rates – The running total collected was 48.87% (48.78%), and amount collected £21.7million.

New Rateable Values: The Valuation Office Agency will publish the new rateable values on 1st October. The Business Rates Team will begin updating the business rates system with the new values which will be applicable from 1st April 2017. Whilst there will be no overall increase in the amount of business rates collectable nationally as a result of this revaluation there will be increases and decreases at individual authority level. The Government is currently consulting on proposals to adjust the business rate tariffs and top-ups to cancel out, as far as is practicable, the impact on local authorities.

Business Rates Retention:

Consultation has commenced on the Government's proposal for local government to retain 100% of business rates by the end of the current Parliament. This is a major change for the funding of local government and is coupled with the phased withdrawal of the Revenue Support Grant by 2019/20. Responses have been made to the Government's initial consultations: 'Self-sufficient local government: 100% Business Rates Retention' and 'Business Rates Reform – Fair Funding Review: Call for evidence on Needs and Redistribution'. Further consultations are expected over the next 18 months as the proposals are developed.

Housing Benefit performance:

Average time taken to process new claims – 19.04 days (target 18 days)

Average time taken to process changes in circumstances – 6.34 days (target 6 days)

Performance missed target in the month due to an increase in volume of both new claims and changes in circumstances received and was also impacted by summer holiday staffing shortages and the system being unavailable for 2 days. Although volumes have not reduced the performance is back on track for September.

Audit:

The Council has received an unqualified audit report in respect of its 2015/16 Accounts. The report and accounts were received by the Governance Committee on 28 September.

The Audit Manager Ernst & Young was particularly complimentary about the audit of the Council's 2015/16 Statement of Accounts, and in particular the completeness of the working papers, timeliness of responses to questions, the fact that all staff were approachable and extremely helpful, and that no reportable errors were found. The Governance Committee was informed by the Audit Manager that it was one of the best audits she had ever undertaken.

Investments

Following consultation with Arlingclose, Treasury management advisors, it was agreed to invest a further sum of £2million in Equity Funds. This takes the Council's total investment in Equity and Property Funds to £14million; the limit in the current Treasury Management Strategy for these investments is £15million.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Efficiency Plan agreed by the Cabinet on 12 September has been submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Acceptance of the Plan by the DCLG will mean the Council will receive the amounts of Revenue Support Grant as provided in the 4-year settlement issued in February 2016.

First Quarter Performance: projects and performance indicators

In the first quarter of the year, the Council has performed well completing two projects in relation to the Council achieving the Customer Service Excellence Standard and the publication of a new Housing Allocations Policy. A further 42 projects are on track and there are three projects that have been delayed due to dedicated resource not being available in the first quarter of the year.

Of the 18 performance indicators used to measure the success of our priorities, 14 have achieved target, one performance indicator has just missed target and three performance indicators have missed their target by more than 5%.

Financial Performance:

As at the end of June an overall positive variance for the year is forecast of £204,000 (-1%) against the budget of £13.107million. Income is forecast to be overachieved by £98,000; and there is a projected net underspend of £106,000 on staffing and other expenditure.

Councillor David Bebb
Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Agenda No: 11c

Enterprise Centres

Ignite Business Enterprise Limited has now been operational from Ignite House for three months and the units continue to be taken up by potential tenants. Ignite House has provided the venue for meetings with Springwood Drive businesses and Braintree District Council continues to work with Ignite to promote the councils objectives and offer opportunities to showcase the excellent training and conference facilities.

On the 18th July, Cabinet approved the development of 4 commercial grow-on units at the rear of the current Centre and the funding was agreed at Full Council on 5th September. These proposals include additional car parking to enable Ignite to market and promote the new training and conference facilities. The proposals will be funded through Growth Area Fund (GAF) monies, and from the District Investment Fund. It is proposed that the new car park will be leased to Ignite. The new workshop units will be managed by BDC to provide employment opportunities and deliver a revenue income to contribute to the funding of essential council services. These grow on units will ensure a logical progressive churn of enterprises through the Springwood Drive Centre, helping encourage and give the opportunity for small business to progress from start up to small/medium enterprises in larger operating units.

We continue to work on plans for the new Enterprise Centre in Witham and seek to bridge the funding gap. The Section 106 land contribution has been agreed and outline County Council capital funding of £1.8m has been agreed, as well as our own £500,000 New Homes Bonus commitment.

We are also working with the developer on the Rural Business Hub proposal as part of the Premdor development in Sible Hedingham and hope to be able to update Members with more information shortly.

Industrial Estates Improvement Programme

We are working with the Springwood Drive Industrial Estate to understand if there are any further improvements we can undertake. In addition, we are planning some resurfacing works, signage improvements and we have completed some repairs and improvements to lighting in some areas.

Officers have also been liaising with Witham Industrial Watch over additional funding for a range of improvement works in Witham, including possible options for funding improvements to grass verges on in Crittall Road.

In Halstead officers have been contacting landowners on the Bluebridge Industrial Estate to discuss other potential works and improvements.

Broadband

Phase 2 of the Superfast Essex programme is now underway across Essex with engineers already undertaking upgrading works. Working with Superfast Essex we anticipate that by the end of this phase in 2019 an additional 14,916 premises will be upgraded in our district, bringing our superfast broadband coverage levels to 92%.

Superfast Essex has also announced Phase 3 of the programme which will bring coverage levels to a minimum of 95% of the District by 2020 (running alongside Phase 2 from next year). In order to plan where the Phase 3 investment can be allocated, Superfast Essex has undertaken an Open Market Review asking broadband operators to respond to advise of their existing broadband coverage and plans over the next three years. The technology that will be used in Phase 3 is yet to be determined, however Superfast Essex is looking at variety of options that could be used to address different the connectivity issues in different areas of the county.

Business Engagement

On the 2nd of September the Essex Chambers of Commerce held their “Open Business Forum” with Police and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst, which I was very pleased to attend.

We are working on an updated programme of events, working with the Civic Office, Essex Employment and Skills Board, and Superfast Essex.

Town Teams

A meeting with all town team chairs will be held imminently to discuss the priorities and objectives of the teams in the coming year.

Town Centre Regeneration

We continue to progress plans for Witham and Halstead Town Centres and vital background work is taking place to address Highways concerns and issues of traffic flows. We hope that this key work will be completed before the end of the year and we will then update key local stakeholders and both District and County Members for the respective areas. A public consultation on the updated proposals will then take place.

We are working with colleagues in Essex County Council to kick-start the master planning process for Braintree town centre and will be hosting collectively a series of visioning workshops to capture all the views on how we can regenerate the area for the best impact for businesses and the local communities. It is anticipated that Essex County Council will provide match-funding for this activity.

Councillor Tom Cunningham
Cabinet Member for Economic Development

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF
CORPORATE SERVICES AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Agenda No: 11d

ASSET MANAGEMENT

There has been significant progress on a number of investments that form part of our overall investment strategy. As a result of this reports were approved at Council on 5th September 2016 on the Braintree Town Centre Scheme, The St. Lawrence surgery relocation, and the Springwood drive scheme.

The freehold purchase of Block B, Braintree College and simultaneous grant of a lease to Virgin Care Services Ltd for the St Lawrence Surgery relocation is nearing completion. In addition, other valuable income generating property investment opportunities are being pursued.

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

We have now completed a major project to upgrade our ICT infrastructure to a modern virtualised environment. We are in the process of finalising an upgrade of the network which will improve the performance and speed of our infrastructure and ensure that supports the future needs of the organisation.

Following this we will be reviewing the improvements to allow us to update our business continuity and disaster recovery planning, improving the technical resilience of the authority.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Customer Satisfaction

Every year we monitor Customer Satisfaction levels to identify customers perceptions around; the area as a place to live; BDC offering value for money and keeping people informed; satisfaction rates with services and the way council runs things. The 2016/17 Customer Satisfaction Survey is now in progress.

Internal Communications Review

As part of our internal communications review a Staff Engagement Survey was conducted, 213 staff responded representing a 45% response rate. The results of which showed:

- 86% feel very satisfied/satisfied with the Council as an employer
- 85% speak positively about the Council
- 90% feel up to date with corporate news and information

HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The new apprentice cohort started with the organisation on 26th September. They will be going through their induction over the next four weeks, learning about our role as a Council and understanding more about the services that they are working in.

Councillor John McKee

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Asset Management

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF
PLANNING AND HOUSING**

Agenda No: 11e

INFRASTRUCTURE

Essex County Council is continuing to work on the options for a new or improved route for the A120 from Braintree to the A12. The next round of forums will be discussing the consultation early next year, what information will be provided, where and when the consultation events could take place and what additional information might be useful to provide to the public. The intention is that the events for both the A12 and the A120 will be run at the same times and at the same locations. I attended the A120/A12 Members' Forum on 16th September 2016, and officers will be attending the Community Engagement Forum on 26th September 2016 and the A120 Environment Forum on 29th September 2016. This work will be completed and full public consultation undertaken by April 2017 with a preferred option put to the Secretary of State by September 2017.

Highways England has confirmed that after protracted discussions with Tesco it has finally approved the funding necessary to carry out the remedial works to the Marks Farm roundabout. Highways England will now be instructing its service provider, Amey, to arrange the construction resources necessary and to programme the works which include the following:-

- A new lane destination sign, together with additional and amended road markings, on both the A131 southbound and Coggeshall Road westbound approaches to Marks Farm roundabout;
- Additional hatched road markings on the roundabout circulatory carriageway; and
- Realignment of the kerb line, verge and footway between the A131 southbound and A120 eastbound. The District Council awaits a timetable from Highways England on when these works will be completed.

Housing Development Strategy

On 12th September 2016 Cabinet approved the resources to develop a full business case relating to the establishment of a Housing Development Company (HDC). The proposed HDC has the potential to bring forward a robust delivery programme of new homes across the District, to include a range of tenures, such as private sale, affordable rent, private rent, keyworker and starter homes. It would also contribute to wider objectives, including the generation of a financial return, the development of under-utilised Council-owned land and employment opportunities through on-site developments.

PLANNING POLICY

Just over 3,050 responses to the Local Plan from over 1,200 individuals have now been processed and are available on the consultation portal at

www.braintree.gov.uk/consultLP. The final few responses are expected to be added to the system by the end of September.

Just over 50 new sites have also been submitted during the consultation and are available to view on the interactive mapping on the website www.braintree.gov.uk/callforsites. These are required to be assessed and considered in the same way as sites already submitted.

The Local Plan Sub Committees in October, November and December will be considering the responses to the consultation and the new sites that have been submitted.

HOUSING

Development Programme

This year's development programme has been badly affected by the loss of 42 affordable homes at the Premdor site in Sible Hedingham, following the successful appeal by Bloor Homes. The Team reports that we expect to provide 51 new affordable homes this year.

Greenfields' developments at Forest Road, Witham and several sites in Kelvedon are scheduled for completion next year, together with Colne Housing's new scheme at Crossman House, Braintree. It is likely that there will be around 150 completions in 2017/18.

Digby's Court

The new housing scheme on Rayne Road, Digby's Court, opened during September 2016. Digby's Court is owned and managed by Family Mosaic Housing Association and helps us to meet the rising demand for temporary accommodation from homeless households waiting to find alternative housing. It was facilitated by a £640,000 Council grant, paid in three stages to enable the original land purchase, and then at the beginning and end of the build process.

The 20-unit scheme is very flexible and allows us to meet the needs of a wide range of households and to cope with varying needs at different times. For example, there are bedsits that can be joined with connecting doors to house a family, 'crash pads' which can be used for 16 and 17 year olds, a fully wheelchair accessible ground floor flat and a 2 bed flat as well as one bed flats large enough for a small family for a short period.

The scheme replaces Craig House in Manor Street which is now closed. Staff from Family Mosaic are exploring how the building and/or the site could be used in the future.

Contracts for Housing Related Support

Virtually all of the supported housing schemes in the District receive funding from Essex County Council. The funding stream used to be known as 'Supporting People' funding. It was absorbed into the Social Care budget when the 'ring fence' for funding was removed in 2010.

Most of the contracts that provide the funding for support to young and homeless households, to people at risk of losing their tenancies and to older people in sheltered housing are due for renewal this year or next. The outcome of current consultation and discussions will shape what can be provided locally for many years to come.

At the same time, a private members bill that appears to be gaining significant support is set to extend the duties of Councils towards homeless households and the Government has announced its intention to change how supported housing services are funded in the future.

We are therefore working with Essex County Council to try to make sure that we make the best possible use of the resources available for supported housing and try to protect the provision we have locally.

Councillor Lady Patricia Newton
Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF HEALTH
AND COMMUNITIES**

Agenda No: 11f

Leisure and Sport

Fusion Lifestyle

1. *Fusion Annual Review 2015/16*

The annual review of the Council's leisure partner, Fusion Lifestyle, has shown an overall increased throughput at the Leisure Centres which appears to be contrary to national trends. This is due in no small part to the increased involvement and support of local community groups using the centres.

In reviewing participation levels, there has been a fall in the BME Group (black and minority ethnic) using the Council's facilities. Fusion Lifestyle will place new emphasis on understanding the cause of this fall. In addition, I have asked Fusion Lifestyle to seek to increase participation levels in the under 16 group, to complement the work that the Council will be undertaking as part of the "Livewell Child" project, which is looking to tackle the rising increase in childhood obesity in the District.

Leisure Participation Levels 2015/2016

Target Group:	Target:	Actual:
Overall participation	5%	11.5% increase
Users under 16 years	2%	28.6% increase
BME	2%	9.2% decrease
Disabled users	2%	7.3% increase
Users 55+ and 60+	2%	107.8% increase
Women and girls	2%	11.7% increase

2. *Braintree Pool Refurbishment*

Consultations are taking place to determine what arrangements, including appropriate timings, will be put in place for the Braintree Swimming Pool to be closed in order to remedy the problematic tiled surface to the pool sides and bottom. Members and users will be notified once the dates, length of closure, etc. have been finalised.

3. *Sport in Leisure Centres*

Witham Leisure Centre held its first Agewell afternoon in August. Over 40 participants over 60 years old had the opportunity to try out activities such as table tennis, squash, swimming, tennis and low impact exercises. There was plenty of positive feedback and a call from the participants to provide more of these sessions.

4. *Sport outside Leisure Centres*

The Council's policy of encouraging sport outside of the formal leisure centre setting has developed well this summer.

Walking Football launched at Witham sports ground in August in a contest between the Active Braintree Network, Fusion, Greenfields and the Essex County Football Association. The 8 week pilot has attracted both men and women over 60 years old trying the lower paced version of football.

Witham Boys Brigade had a very successful Community Games event during the summer school holidays. Young people aged between 5 and 15 living in Council estates around Witham had the opportunity to try out sports such as hockey, tag rugby, archery, triathlon, squash and mini football culminating in a September grand final day held at Witham Leisure Centre.

The Council ran a programme through the summer holidays encouraging residents to utilise the Council's free outdoor gyms located at Coldnailhurst Avenue, Braintree and Spa Road, Witham as part of its "get you outdoors campaign". Fusion provided a Personal Trainer instructor for 4 weeks to run sessions for all abilities to show the range of exercises you can do on the equipment. Across the 4 weeks we had over 16 new participants to exercise.

On the back of the success of walking football, the Active Braintree District Network is funding the setting up of walking Netball in Braintree. Several outdoor sessions have been held at Great Notley Country park and further session will be held indoors at Alec Hunter in October.

Braintree Sports Awards

The annual Braintree District Sports Awards 2016 are to be held on Monday 7th November 2016 at the College at Braintree.

Nominations are now open for a variety of categories celebrating sport and activity in the district. Communities are being encouraged to nominate local clubs, organisations and individuals.

Encourage Independent and Resilient Communities

Children Centre Provision

The new model of Children's Centre provision for the district has been put on to the Council's member hub, and this will come into effect from 1st April 2017. The schemes include:-

- Healthy child programme - 0 to 19 years of age
- Healthy schools
- Family nurse partnerships
- Sure start children centres

4Children, the charity that delivered a number of services for children and families in

Essex including children's centres has announced it has ceased trading and the services are transferring to Action for Children. We have been advised that Action for Children has committed that there is a swift takeover to ensure continued support for children and families.

Councillors' Community Grant Scheme

The first grant has been approved for the Witham Luncheon Club for £200 for a new freezer.

Town Hall Centre

Ongoing promotion of the Town Hall has shown an increased use for wedding ceremonies (from 13 in 2015 to 20 this year to date) particularly the recently introduced community priced weddings (51 this year to date).

BDVSA

The annual assembly of the BDVSA was held on 23rd September 2016. About 60 representatives of the District's voluntary organisations attended and it was satisfying to see the ongoing support for the voluntary sector including the number of ex Councillor colleagues still volunteering their time and expertise in this important area.

Blandford Patients Forum

The Blandford Patients Forum raised concerns about the future health provision in the District arising from the Council's local plan targets. The Council's policies with regard to supporting new doctors' surgeries and the proposals for garden communities' infrastructure were well received.

Councillor Peter Tattersley
Cabinet Member for Health and Communities

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF
ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE**

Agenda No: 11g

OPERATIONS

Waste Management: All residents should now have received their waste and recycling calendars with an advisory leaflet. Collection dates are also available to view on the Council's website.

Recycling Sacks: We are coming to the end of the annual delivery of recycling sacks. This year we included a card with the sacks reinforcing the fact that they are to be used for recyclable waste only and not for general household waste in the black bin.

Essex Recycling Partnership - DCLG funded Flats & Schools Recycling Project: From April – June 2016, 80 blocks of flats (2,500+ properties) signed up to the dry recycling scheme and have received their recycling bins. During this period, a further 6 schools joined the food recycling scheme, bringing the total number of participating schools to 32. In Braintree and Tendring where the scheme is fully underway, both Districts reported an increase in recycle collected: Braintree experienced a significant increase of approximately 2,650 tonnes and Tendring a more modest increase of c. 200 tonnes.

Traffic Regulation Orders (NEPP): The North Essex Parking Partnership has implemented several Traffic Regulation Orders including waiting restrictions at Eastways and Freebournes Industrial Estates; Witham, junction protection at Forest Road/Yew Close, Witham and parking restrictions at St Peter's Road, Braintree, to improve the flow of traffic and address commuter parking issues.

Flood Alleviation Scheme: The scheme at Oak Road, Rivenhall, commenced on Monday, 5 September and is nearing completion. Works include ditch clearance/re-profiling and repairs to existing sections of surface water drainage.

Car Parking: In September, work started on the redecoration works at George Yard Multi-storey car park which is part of the 3-yr Improvement Plan arising from the last major car parking review. This is Phase 1 of planned works which involves repainting of the walls, iron work and fire doors in the stairwells.

Parks and Open Spaces: Anglia in Bloom: I was absolutely delighted to hear that Halstead in Bloom won another Gold Award for "Best Town" and "Overall Winner" in the Anglia in Bloom 2016 competition. I was even more delighted to learn that Halstead Public Gardens, which is owned and maintained by Braintree District Council, received a Gold Award and 'Best Medium Park' (5-10 acres) this year. This is a credit to all partners, volunteers and the Council's staff in the way they have maintained such high standards of planting, cleanliness and grounds maintenance which complements the Council's own corporate objectives under the Environment and Place portfolio.

Cemetery improvements: The toilets in Halstead and Witham Cemeteries have been redecorated and the standpipes at Halstead Cemetery are due to be refurbished and

relocated to the operational areas of the Cemetery to make for easier public access.

Path resurfacing works at Braintree and Witham Cemeteries and on three open spaces across the District have gone out to tender and the works are due to be carried out this Autumn.

Unauthorised Encampments (Travellers): All travellers have left the BDC sites and additional drop bollards and heavy duty gates were installed at Marshalls Park following their departure. Operations were asked by Gt. Notley Parish Council to carry out preventative work to restrict access to the open spaces within the Garden Village. This work was funded by the Parish Council and was completed in September.

Enforcement: The Council was successful in taking legal action against a woman for dropping a cigarette butt in Market Square, Braintree, last December. The woman, who failed to pay a £75 fixed penalty notice for littering, was taken to court and found guilty in her absence. She was fined £150 and ordered to pay the Council costs of £475 and pay a £20 victim surcharge.

The Council also prosecuted a woman who allowed an unauthorised person to remove waste from her property which was then fly tipped in Hatfield Peverel, contrary to Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The waste originated from a property in Westcliff-on-Sea. The woman pleaded guilty and was given a 12 month conditional discharge, ordered to pay £400 towards our costs and pay a £15 victim surcharge.

Following Cabinet's decision on 5 September to adopt the new enforcement powers for small-scale fly-tipping, this has now been implemented and we are therefore likely to see more fixed penalty notices where offenders are identified.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Community Safety Partnership and the Licensing Team have launched a project to install CCTV into licensed taxis in the District. Grants are available up to £300 per vehicle and are available to licence holders. The project is aimed at improving the safety of licensed drivers and passengers.

LANDSCAPES AND COUNTRYSIDE

Essex Wildlife Trust: The Council has now been a corporate member of the Trust for 25 years and I was very happy to receive a commemorative certificate from their Chief Executive. They continue to undertake partnership working on a number of projects including further habitat management projects on the local nature reserve at Bocking Blackwater. Work started in September to improve the bankside and prevent further erosion; there has also been some selective coppice of the alder trees to promote ground flora. It is hoped that a further river corridor project can be started on the River Brain within the Hoppit mead Local Nature Reserve later this year with funding secured by the Trust.

Cuckoo Wood, Great Notley: Boundary and woodland management will take place over the winter months mostly with a contractor but with some assistance from local volunteers. Improvements to the bridge and some pond restoration work will also be undertaken as part of the ongoing management of this ancient semi-natural woodland.

Tree and Woodland Management: Further pro-active management works will take place over the winter months on the Council's tree stock, particularly on the open space and woodland areas in Great Notley and Mark's Farm in Braintree, where the

focus will be on maintenance of retained field boundaries and woodland margins.

Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt
Cabinet Member – Environment and Place

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List of Public Meetings Held Since Last Council Meeting		Agenda No: 12
Portfolio:	Not applicable	
Corporate Outcome:	Not applicable	
Report presented by:	Not applicable	
Report prepared by:	Chloe Glock, Governance and Members Officer	
Background Papers:	Public Report	
Published Minutes of the meetings listed within the report below.	Key Decision: No	
Executive Summary:		
Since the last Council meeting held on 27 th June 2016, the following Minutes have been published for meetings held in public session:		
(1) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 24 th August 2016		
(2) Cabinet – 12 th September 2016		
(3) Planning Committee – 13 th September 2016		
(4) Licensing Committee – 14 th September 2016		
(5) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 21 st September 2016		
Recommended Decision:		
Members are invited to note the Minutes published.		
Purpose of Decision:		
Not applicable.		

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

Financial:	Not applicable
Legal:	Not applicable
Safeguarding:	Not applicable
Equalities/Diversity:	Not applicable
Customer Impact:	Not applicable
Environment and Climate Change:	Not applicable
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Not applicable
Risks:	Not applicable
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