

COUNCIL

AGENDA



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<http://www.braintree.gov.uk/Braintree/councildemocracy/committees/Council>

Date: Wednesday 15th February 2012

Time: 7:15pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB

Membership:

Councillor J E Abbott	Councillor J S Allen	Councillor M J Banthorpe
Councillor P R Barlow	Councillor J Baugh	Councillor J C Beavis
Councillor D L Bebb	Councillor E Bishop	Councillor R J Bolton
Councillor G Butland	Councillor C A Cadman	Councillor S Canning
Councillor T G Cunningham	Councillor J G J Elliott	Councillor Dr R L Evans
Councillor A V E Everard	Councillor J H G Finbow	Councillor M J Fincken
Councillor L B Flint	Councillor T J W Foster	Councillor M E Galione
Councillor C Gibson	Councillor P Horner	Councillor S A Howell
Councillor H D Johnson	Councillor S C Kirby	Councillor M C M Lager
Councillor D J Louis	Councillor C Louis	Councillor D Mann
Councillor J T McKee	Councillor R G S Mitchell	Councillor J M Money
Councillor Lady P Newton	Councillor J O'Reilly-Cicconi	Councillor I C F Parker
Councillor J A Pell	Councillor R P Ramage	Councillor D M Reid
Councillor D E A Rice	Councillor W J Rose	Councillor V Santomauro
Councillor W D Scattergood	Councillor W Schmitt	Councillor A F Shelton
Councillor L Shepherd	Councillor C Siddall	Councillor G A Spray
Councillor J S Sutton	Councillor J R Swift	Councillor P Tattersley
Councillor C M Thompson	Councillor M Thorogood	Councillor L S Walters
Councillor R G Walters	Councillor S A Wilson	Councillor B Wright
Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

QUESTION TIME

Immediately after the Minutes of the previous meeting have been approved there will be a period of up to 30 minutes when members of the public can speak about Council business or other matters of local concern. During this period Councillors who have declared a personal and prejudicial interest in any item of business on the agenda may also speak as permitted by the Council's Code of Conduct for members. Whilst members of the public can remain to observe the whole of the public part of the meeting, Councillors with a prejudicial interest must withdraw whilst the item of business in question is being considered. Members of the public wishing to speak should contact the Council's Member Services Team on 01376 551414 or e-mail alastair.peace@braintree.gov.uk prior to the meeting. The Council's "Question Time" leaflet explains the procedure and copies of this may be obtained at the Council's offices.

Members of the Council are requested to attend the above meeting to transact the following business: -

PUBLIC SESSION

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **To receive any announcements/statements from the Chairman of the Council.**
3. **Declarations of Interest.**
 - (a) To declare the existence and nature of any 'personal' or 'personal and prejudicial' interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to paragraphs 8 to 12 (inclusive) of the Code of Conduct for Members in Part 5 of the Constitution and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.
 - (b) Any member with a personal and prejudicial interest to indicate whether he/she intends to make representations in accordance with paragraph 12(2) of the Code of Conduct as part of Question Time

4. **Minutes.** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12th December 2011 (Copy previously circulated).

5. **Question Time.** (See above paragraph)

6. **Resignation of Councillors**

Members are asked to note the resignations of Councillors David Messer, Mrs Claire Sandbrook and Stephen Sandbrook.

The resignations were received on 24th January 2012 with immediate effect.

7. **Policy Recommendations and References – Cabinet – 1st February 2012.**

To consider any policy recommendations which have arisen since the last Council Meeting. – (Page 1)

- Corporate Priorities 2012 to 2016

8. **Cabinet on the Council Budget and Council Tax 2012/13 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 to 2015/16**

- (i). **Recommendations from Cabinet held on 1st February 2012 - Council Budget and Council Tax 2012/13 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 to 2015/16 – (Page 2)**

Cabinet Members and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to bring to this meeting the Cabinet Report Item 6a - Council Budget and Council Tax 2012/13 and MTFS Report previously circulated.

- (ii). **Council Tax Resolution 2011/12. - To consider passing the appropriate Resolution - Report to follow**

9. **Statements by Members.**

To receive any statements by Members of which the appropriate written notice has been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.4(a). ***There are none.***

(Please note that the maximum time set aside for item 7 shall not exceed 30 minutes)

10. **Question Time**

(i) **Statement's from the Leader and Cabinet Members.** To receive the following reports from each Portfolio Holder.

- a) Councillor Butland, Leader of the Council (Page 4)
- b) Councillor Mrs Beavis, Communities (Page 7)
- c) Councillor Lady Newton, Enterprise, Housing and Development (Page 9)
- d) Councillor Mrs Schmitt, Environment (Page 11)
- e) Councillor Siddall, Efficiency and Resources (Page 14)

(ii) Oral questions without notice to the Leader on any non-operational matter in which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the district or its inhabitants. (Procedure rules 18.2 and 18.8 apply) [*The Leader may respond directly, request another Cabinet Member to respond, provide a written response after the meeting or, if the question relates to an operational matter, request that the appropriate officer deals with the issue outside the Council meeting*]

(Please note that the time set aside for this item shall not exceed 30 minutes)

(iii) **Chairmen's Statements.** To receive statements from those Chairmen who have given prior notification in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.7 and to respond to questions on such statements. *None have been received.*

(iv) To raise any matters arising from the minutes of **meetings that have been held in public session** since the last Council meeting on 12th December 2011. (Paper attached – Page 16)

11. To receive reports about and receive questions and answers on the **business of external organisations.**

12. **Annual General Meeting of Full Council – Date of Meeting**

Member to note the date of the Annual General Meeting of Full Council is 26th April 2012.

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.

PRIVATE SESSION

Note: At the time of Publication there are no items for Private Session

13. Statements by Members – Private Session

To receive and give responses to statements by Members which contain confidential or exempt information of which the appropriate written notice has been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.4(a). The Chairman will invite the Leader or relevant Cabinet Member to comment on each statement.

There are no statements

(Please note that the maximum time set aside for item 10 shall not exceed 30 minutes)

14. Question Time - Private Session

- (i) **Leader's Statement** or statement by Cabinet Members containing exempt information on a key issue.
- (ii) **Oral questions** without notice to the Leader on any non-operational matter in which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the district or its inhabitants and which contain exempt information. (Procedure rules 18.2 and 18.8 apply) [*The Leader may respond directly, request another Cabinet Member to respond, provide a written response after the meeting or, if the question relates to an operational matter, request that the appropriate officer deals with the issue outside the Council meeting*]

(Please note that the time set aside for item 11 (ii) shall not exceed 30 minutes)

- (iii) **Chairmen's Statements.** To receive statements containing exempt information from those Chairmen who have given prior notification in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.7 and to respond to questions on such statements - ***There are none.***
- (iv) To raise any matters arising from the minutes of meetings that have been held in private session since the last Council meeting on 12th December 2011.

15. **Private Session Policy Recommendations.** To consider any policy recommendations (in private session) that have arisen within the last meetings' cycle – ***There are none.***

If you are unable to attend the meeting please forward your apologies for absence to Alastair Peace on (01376) 551414 or email alastair.peace@braintree.gov.uk.

The last page of this agenda is numbered 16.

A J REID
Chief Executive

Health and Safety

Any persons attending meetings in the Council offices are requested to take a few moments to familiarise themselves with the nearest available fire exit, indicated by the fire evacuation signs. In the event of a continuous alarm sounding during the meeting, you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by the fire evacuation officer who will identify him/herself should the alarm sound. You will be assisted to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building. Any persons unable to use the stairs will be assisted to the nearest safe refuge.

Mobile Phones

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Agendas, reports and minutes for all the Council's public meetings can be accessed via the internet at <http://www.braintree.gov.uk/Braintree/councildemocracy>

Braintree District Council welcomes comments from members of the public in order to make its services as efficient and effective as possible. We would appreciate any suggestions regarding the usefulness of the paperwork for this meeting, or the conduct of the meeting you have attended.

Please let us have your comments setting out the following information

Meeting Attended

Date of Meeting

Comments.....
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Contact details.....

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET - 1ST FEBRUARY 2012		Agenda No: 7
Corporate Priorities 2012 – 2016.		
Portfolio Area:		Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council.
Background Papers:		Public Report
Officer Contact:	Nicola Beach	
Designation:	Corporate Director	
Ext. No.	2050	
E-mail:	nicola.beach@braintree.gov.uk	

Minute Extract:

CABINET – 1ST FEBRUARY 2012

73. CORPORATE PRIORITIES 2012 - 2016

DECISION: That the Corporate Priorities for 2012 to 2016 set out in the report be recommended to Council.

REASON FOR DECISION: To recommend to Council the Corporate Priorities for the next four years.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET - 1ST FEBRUARY 2012		Agenda No: 8(i)
Council Budget And Council Tax 2012/13 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2012/13 to 2015/16.		
Portfolio Area: Councillor Chris Siddall, Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Resources.		
Background Papers:		Public Report
Officer Contact:	Trevor Wilson	
Designation:	Head of Finance	
Ext. No.	2801	
E-mail:	trevor.wilson@braintree.gov.uk	

Minute Extract:

74. **COUNCIL BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2012/13 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2012/13 TO 2015/16**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Audit Committee on the Treasury Management Strategy from its meeting of 12th January 2012 and the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny from its meeting of 25th January 2012 in respect of the Council Budget and the MTFS.

Councillor Dr Evans asked to know how many homes had become available as a result of the funds being allocated under the New Homes Bonus.

It was agreed that this information would be provide to Councillor Dr Evans.

DECISION: That it be **recommended to Council** that the following be approved:

1. The budget variations to the current base budget for: inflation (section 5 in the report), investment income (section 6) and reduction in specific grants (section 7).
2. The savings as detailed in Appendices F and G.
3. A new three year service level agreement with the Braintree, Witham and Halstead Citizens Advice Bureau and Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency as detailed in section 3.2.
4. The Investment bids detailed in Appendix B.
5. The three investment bids, listed at Appendix C, be funded from the

projected underspend in 2011/12 and from the Business Efficiency Reserve.

6. The unavoidable budget changes detailed at Appendix D.
7. The Council Tax Freeze grant receivable from the Government in 2012/13 be accepted and used to support the General Fund revenue account.
8. The Council's discretionary fees and charges for 2012/13 as detailed in Appendix H.
9. The Council's housing rents and service charges are increased by 6.1% for 2012/13, as detailed in Appendix H
10. That delegated authority is given to the appropriate Cabinet Member to agree variations to Trade Waste and Town Hall Centre fees and charges for commercial purposes.
11. An allocation of £425,185 from the General Fund unallocated balance in 2012/13.

Capital

12. The General Fund Capital bids for 2012/13 listed in Appendix M.
13. The Prudential Indicators and limits set out in Appendix O.
14. The Policy on Minimum Revenue Provision as recommended in Appendix O.
15. The Treasury Management Strategy, including annual investment strategy, for 2012/13.

Council Tax

16. The proposed estimates (producing a budget requirement for council tax purposes of £15,415,888) as detailed in Appendix K and the Council Tax for 2012/13 of £162.81 for a Band D property, having taking into consideration:

- The consultation feedback received;
- The assessment of risks in the budget assumptions;
- The Equalities Impact Assessments and
- The Section 151 Officer's report on the robustness of the estimates and
- the adequacy of balances (Appendix Q to the report).

Efficiency Review

17. The Efficiency Review programme as detailed in Appendix J be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To determine the budget and council tax level proposals for 2012/13 to be submitted to Full Council for consideration, in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM BUTLAND - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Agenda No:10(i)(a)

Report To Council On Portfolio Area of Overall Vision and Strategic Direction for the period ending 31st January 2012

1. Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Meeting – 13th December 2011

I chaired this meeting of the LSP which considered the Council's Draft Corporate Priorities and also received a presentation from Essex County Council on Community Budgeting. Notes of the meeting are available on the Members' Portal.

2. Meeting with Witham Town Council – 20th December 2011

The Chief Executive and I attended a meeting with representatives of the Town Council. We discussed a number of issues relating to Witham. The meeting was extremely constructive and it was agreed to look at ways in which the Town Council could be greater involved in decisions affecting the Town.

3. Braintree Business Council – 9th January 2012

I attended this meeting of the Braintree Business Council to present the Council's draft budget proposals and receive feedback from the business community. There were a number of questions from members and there was general support for the Council's proposals.

4. Meeting with Witham Community Association (WCA) – 10th January 2012

Together with Trevor Wilson I met with three of the trustees of the Witham Community Association to discuss issues relating to the management of the of the Association and its financial relationship with the Council. Agreement, in principle, was reached on the process to be adopted for the WCA to repay the Council the loan that was made to the Association. At the conclusion of the meeting I toured the Spring Lodge Centre with the Centre Manager and was delighted to see how the Council's investment in the building was contributing to community involvement in Witham.

5. Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board – 11th January 2012

Cllr Wendy Schmitt and I attended this meeting with representatives of Essex County Council. The park continues to be a great success and attract visitors from all over the county.

6. Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC) – 11th January 2012

Cllr Joanna Beavis and I met with representatives of BALC to discuss a number of issues including the future funding of local government, the new Standards regime.

7. Braintree Joint Locality Board – 18th January 2012

The second meeting of the Board was held at Causeway House. It was agreed that Economic Development should be the major priority for the coming year. I will publish the notes of this meeting shortly.

8. Meeting with George Kieffer, Chairman of Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) – 19th January 2012

George Kieffer visited Braintree and we discussed issues that are of strategic interest to the Braintree District.

It has also been confirmed that on 29th March an India Event will be held in Braintree. The event is being organised by the Essex Chambers and HGP and will also be supported by the UK India Business Council. The event is being organised by the Essex Chambers and HGP with us paying for it and will also be supported by the UK India Business Council. Members of the High Commission for India will be attending.

9. Meeting with Halstead Town Council – 31st January 2012

The Chief Executive and I met with representatives of Halstead Town Council. We discussed a number of issues relating to Halstead including the progress that the Town Council are making on their plans for a new Community facility in the town.

10. Whole Essex Community Budget Pilot

On 21st December it was announced that Essex has been chosen as one of only four places in England to pilot a 'Whole Place Community Budget'.

By fully embracing this, we have a unique opportunity to fundamentally think about how best to design, fund, commission and deliver outstanding public services, locally and nationally. As CLG has put it "nothing is off the table", although the Prospectus makes it clear that the Community Budget pilots will work 'with the grain' of wider reforms in the public sector, such as the Work Programme, NHS reforms, and Police and Crime Commissioners for example.

HM Government will fund an integrated team, led locally, comprising about eight civil servants from the big spending Whitehall departments, working with a similar complement of staff from local partners (with funding to backfill positions), to lead on the engagement, analysis and innovation required to develop proposals bold enough to inform the operational plan.

Essex Chief Executives and Leaders will be exploring how we can get most value from the Whole Essex Community Budget pilot and the expression of interest makes it quite clear that we will seek to utilise other existing governance mechanisms wherever possible. The Essex 'shadow' Health and Wellbeing Board discussed community budgets at its December meeting, for example.

We are naturally disappointed that our submission for a similar pilot based on Witham was not successful but we will see how we can incorporate some of its objectives in the whole Essex pilot.

Councillor Graham Butland
Leader of the Council

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**COUNCILLOR JOANNE BEAVIS – CABINET MEMBER
FOR COMMUNITIES**

Agenda No:10(i)(b)

**Report to Council on Portfolio Area of Communities for
the period ending January 2012.**

Leisure Contract.

Below is a list of the high level outcomes the bidders will have to address in their tender submissions for the new contract; these outcomes are based on the strategic context of the leisure contract and are supported by the Leisure Project Board:

1. Developing participation in sport and recreation amongst the hard to reach and socially excluded groups. Identified via the community profile.
2. Contributing to the improvement of community health and tackling health inequalities.
3. Providing training and employment opportunities for local people.
4. Increasing adult participation in sport and recreation.
5. Increasing participation by children and young people in high quality sport.
6. Developing opportunities for children and young people to engage in volunteering activities.
7. Developing participation in sport and recreation by older people (60+).
8. Developing participation and providing opportunities for people with disabilities.

New Witham Leisure Centre.

Works have commenced on site in preparation for the new building with the demolition of the old school. An update will be taken to the next Leisure Project Board scheduled for 1st March 2012. My Deputy and I visited Basildon Sporting Village in December to gain an insight into the design and workings of state of the art leisure facilities.

Community Halls.

Dengie Hall, Witham. The day to day management of the hall has been handed over to a newly formed community group.

Halstead Senior Citizens Centre. The Chairman of Age Concern, Halstead area has advised the Council of their group's relocation to a room in the Bull Hotel, Halstead.

Community Safety.

In the last quarter there was a reduction in crime down 10% on last year. The detection rate was the second best in Essex. Anti Social behaviour has reduced by 8% in the past year. Under the new Police Crime Commissioners Office (From November 2012) a five year strategic Police and Crime Plan will be formulated monitored by a Police Crime Panel.

Communities.

Essex Rural Partnership met on the 18th January 2012. The Localism Act and Community Led Planning were the main agenda items. My Deputy and I met with representatives of "100 Parishes". Their overall, long term aim is to enhance the

enjoyment of the rich and diverse heritage in the Eastern Region.

“Mi-Community”. The first stage assessment of the Mi-Community bids is underway. The bids are being assessed to ensure they meet the funding criteria and offer a sustainable social and financial benefit to the community.

Hospital Hopper Bus Service. The District Council was successful in receiving from Essex County Council funding for a new Hospital Hopper. The launch of the service will be in February 2012 and the service will allow elderly, disabled and vulnerable people to get better access to medical services.

Silver End. The District Council has secured approximately £50,000.00 of Olympic Legacy Funding from Sport England. The funding will be used to create a new BMX/Skate Bowl in Silver End. The project is awaiting a planning outcome and, if approved, will commence in March 2012.

OLYMPICS 2012. The District Council’s Cultural Strategy 2010-2015. Priority 1. Through the 2012 Cultural Olympiad and Olympics Games maximize the cultural and leisure legacy for the Braintree District. “Sparks will Fly in Essex” 2012 – a county-wide cultural celebration commissioned by Essex County Council. The community led events, supported in partnership, will run during June and July in our district.

Olympic Torch Relay. Preparations are ongoing to support the Torch Relay coming to Hatfield Peverel in July; we are working with the Parish Council and community.

Further information on the content of this report can be obtained by contacting Councillor Joanne Beavis and Councillor Peter Tattersley.

Councillor Joanne Beavis
Cabinet Member - Communities

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**COUNCILLOR LADY NEWTON – CABINET MEMBER
FOR ENTERPRISE, HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Agenda No: 10(i)(c)

**Report to Council on Portfolio Area of Enterprise,
Housing and Development for the period ending 30th
January 2012**

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Mayland House

Braintree District Council has now agreed terms with Central Essex Community Services (CECS) to lease the ground floor of Mayland House in Witham. Solicitors have now been instructed to prepare and complete the lease documentation within the next four weeks to enable CECS to commence fitting out works with a view to occupying the building by July 2012.

PLANNING POLICY

Site Allocations/Development Management Development Plan Document

There have been a number of Local Development Framework (LDF) panel meetings held to consider the site allocation plans and Parish Council views for the key service villages and some of the smaller villages.

Further LDF panel meetings are planned where the panel will consider the site allocation plans for Braintree, Witham, Halstead, Bocking, Great Notley and Galleys Corner.

The evidence base for the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) is currently being updated. This includes a Retail Update, Employment Review and Care Home Study. Public consultation on the Site Allocations DPD and Development Management DPD is due to take place September – October 2012.

Strategic Growth Location: Land west of A131, Great Notley

The Master Plan for the proposed business park at Great Notley has been prepared by Countryside Properties. Officers consider that the Master Plan is in accordance with Core Strategy requirements.

The Master Plan will be presented to the LDF panel on the 6th February 2012, with a recommendation that it is approved as a material planning consideration.

The plan is proposing four phases of development. Countryside Properties say that a faster delivery will minimise disruption to neighbours and will generate new jobs in the area.

TOWN CENTRES/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Backing Our Towns - Parking Initiative

The Parking initiative commenced on the 21st November. Monitoring of the early data from the ticketing machines up to Christmas indicates that an additional 5564 people used the car parks after 3pm/all day Sunday compared to 2010. There has

also been positive feedback from retailers in welcoming this initiative.

HOUSING

Affordable Housing Development Programme 2011/12

So far 34 new homes have been completed this year. We are now expecting 71 completions for 2011/12; this was previously 86 but 15 of these homes will now be ready in April 2012.

Empty Homes

The council has worked with Colne Housing Society and a bid has just been submitted for funding to the Homes and Communities Agency to help bring ten long term empty homes back into use over the next two years.

Housing Allocations Policy

A Greater Haven Gateway consultation event was held on 20th January. This event was part of our review of the Housing Allocations in response to the Localism Act 2011 and the guidance that will follow the current consultation paper 'Allocation of accommodation for local housing authorities in England'. The council will need to agree the new Allocations Policy in due course.

Supporting People

Essex County Council has announced the award of the new Floating Support Contracts. This follows a competitive tender process. An organisation called One Support will cover the North East and Mid areas of the County (Chelmsford, Maldon, Braintree, Colchester and Tendring)

Floating Support is a free and flexible service providing a range of support to people regardless of their housing situation. This service will build on the success of the current Floating Support Service being delivered across Essex. It will offer increased value for money and service provision across Essex which will significantly help to prevent homelessness, build safer and stronger communities, promote independence, social inclusion and achieve even better outcomes.

The service has been widened to allow support to be provided for up to 5 years, where required. This reflects the fact that there will be some service users who may require support for a longer period in order to achieve outcomes, prevent their needs from escalating or requiring a statutory intervention.

Further information on the contents of this report can be obtained by contacting Councillor Lady Newton.

Councillor Lady Newton
Cabinet Member – Enterprise, Housing and Development

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**COUNCILLOR WENDY SCHMITT - CABINET MEMBER
FOR ENVIRONMENT**

Agenda No: 10(i)(d)

**Report to Council on Portfolio Area of Environment for
the period ending 27th January 2012**

COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Commercial Vehicle Procurement & Maintenance: The joint work that is being undertaken by Braintree in conjunction with Colchester and Uttlesford Councils is nearing completion. Tenders have been received and each Council is going through its governance process to award the contract commencing 1 April 2012. The work completed to date demonstrates the benefits and added value that can be achieved through collaborative working.

Street Cleansing Disposal Contract: The other area of work that Braintree is leading on in conjunction with 12 other Authorities is the collection and disposal of street sweeping arisings. This is progressing and on track for a Framework Agreement to be awarded in early May 2012.

Roundabout Sponsorship: We now have over 50% (13 out of 20) of the District's roundabouts sponsored which has enabled the Council to support local businesses and has also helped to improve the visual appearance of the main thoroughfares throughout the District.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Recycling Performance: We are on track to achieve our recycling target of 56% for 2011/12. Members may be pleased to know that information published by WasteDataFlow (a web based system for municipal waste data reporting by UK local authorities to government) puts Braintree joint 10th overall out of 353 councils.

Cordons Farm: Essex County Council are moving forward with their plans to purchase part of the site to develop a waste transfer station which will be operational from 1 April 2014. Given that BDC has its own facility on this site, the option of having a co-located facility – managed and operated by one service provider – is being considered.

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Cemeteries: Planning approval was obtained for the new extension to Bocking Cemetery, the land has been purchased and work has begun on developing it as a burial ground, public open space and an allotment site. Initial works include fencing, hedge planting and the construction of a new access road through the site. Phase 1 is development of the land as a new burial area. Phase 2 will focus on the public open space and allotment site.

New open space at Mill Park Drive, Braintree: A large open space has just been transferred to BDC. Work has started on cutting new paths around the site

and securing it by erecting some new fencing. This is Phase 1 of a 5 phase transfer of land to BDC to take place over the next year or two.

Bradford Meadows open space: Phase 2 of the new cycle path installation now complete - similar work will now begin on the Bocking Blackwater Local Nature Reserve.

Play Area Refurbishments: A £50,000 project to refurbish the play area at John Ray Gardens, Black Notley has now been completed. The site will also benefit from new litter bins and picnic benches around the park.

ENVIRONMENT

Live Music Bill: A Bill is taking place to amend the Licensing Act 2003 with respect to the performance of live music entertainment; and for connected purposes. It would enable unamplified music to be played anywhere between 8am and 11pm without a licence. Where there are up to 200 people present in a pub or restaurant, or in workplaces such as a hospital or school, live music can also be performed between 8am and 11pm without a licence under the bill.

The Bill had its report stage and third reading on 20 January 2012, according to many sources is likely to make the statute books.

Moving Over to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme: We are adopting the new national scheme which will replace our current rating system (Scores on the Doors). The new scheme is a Food Standards Agency/local authority partnership initiative to provide consumers with at a glance information about hygiene standards in food businesses found during planned inspections.

There are benefits in having a single scheme in place across the whole country; this will lead to consistency for businesses both within and across local authority boundaries. We will be launching the new scheme in April 2012

The only visible difference as far as our residents are concerned is the use of numbers to replace the current stars, but more importantly there is a large benefit for our local Food Businesses, as the scheme is more flexible allowing a business to request re-evaluation of their rating once they can evidence that they have completed the necessary works, this was not possible under the existing scheme.

New Responsibilities from April 2012 to deal with Flooding: As part of the new approach to flooding, from April 2012, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 transfers the enforcement powers currently held by the Environment Agency on to local authorities

The Government considers that local authorities are better placed to take effective action to prevent local flooding. The purpose of ordinary watercourse regulation is to control certain activities that might have an adverse flooding impact i.e. preventing the flow of water through ditches brooks streams and small rivers.

The Council's Flood Investigation Officer will take on these duties.

BBE Regulatory Partnership: A work programme of areas of joint working has been drafted, highlighting projects which could deliver two tier working in the districts and boroughs, this forms the basis of the delivery model for the next three years. Over 30 different projects have been identified where joint working will take place.

This project differs from other regulatory shared services as it does not create structures and merged management etc, but by adopting a more "practical approach" by cutting through the bureaucratic red tape it will deliver real changes to the service.

There is still some work to be carried out on customer engagement but officers are confident that they will deliver the aims of the project over the next three years.

Changes to the Feed in Tariff – Impact on Solar Voltaic installation on Causeway House: The Court of Appeal has upheld a High Court ruling that Government cuts to the Feed-in Tariff (FiT) were unlawful. This means that commercial customers who have had solar panels installed and are registered ahead of the new March 3rd cut-off point will now receive the original 43p rate for 25 years.

I can therefore confirm that we have received quotes from two companies for the supply and installation of the solar panels on Causeway House, as planning permission has been already been granted. Officers are confident that it is possible to install the panels and register them within the timeframe.

As there is still doubt, as no announcement was made about the FiT for Wind Turbines, the wind turbine project will remain on hold.

Jubilee Oaks: 66 trees are scheduled to be planted with a further 5 applications to be processed. To ensure that they are recorded for posterity plans are being developed to compile a commemorative record (plus an online record) to show where the trees were planted, when and by whom. We aim to launch this around the time of the jubilee.

Further information on the contents of this report can be obtained by contacting Councillor Wendy Schmitt.

Cllr Mrs W Schmitt
Cabinet Member for the Environment

Contact:	Cllr Mrs W Schmitt
Designation:	Cabinet Member
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**COUNCILLOR CHRIS SIDDALL – CABINET MEMBER
FOR EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES**

Agenda No: 10(i)(e)

**Report to Council on Portfolio Area of Efficiency and
Resources for the period ending 27th January 2012.**

Treasury Management

The Treasury management budgets as part of medium term forecasts are outlined in the MTFS which is to be presented to the Cabinet meeting on 1st February 2012, I would recommend all members study appendix O for full details on Treasury management activities, this key document highlights both actual results achieved and future projections. Clearly the Council continues to operate in a very low interest environment and this low interest rate situation is expected to continue for some time and directly effects income on Council investments.

Council Budget and Council Tax 2012/13 and MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) 2012/13 to 2015/16

This document is going to the Cabinet meeting on 1st February 2012, if approved at cabinet it will then come to full Council for approval, all members should study this document as it sets out for approval our Financial plans as we move forward into 2012/13 through to 2015/16.

Icelandic Bank investments

Since my last report to full council I have nothing further to add at this stage. Details are highlighted in the MTFS going to Cabinet on 1st February 2012 page 14 6.3.

Causeway House Refurbishment

The project continues to move forward well. The latest phase was completed in December with staff moving into their new space.

Procurement

As reported previously the joint ICT contract was awarded to Capita Secure Information Systems, since then we have moved forward through the final stages of legal and technical clarifications, these have now taken place and the contact was signed in early January 2012.

Along similar lines to the shared ICT project, a Vehicle Procurement & Maintenance Contract, is being proposed to Cabinet on 1st February 2012, again this demonstrates how local councils can work together to gain significant savings when working on projects such as these, I believe this will not only result in considerable cost savings but also in greater resilience.

Annual Audit Letter 2010/11

The Annual Audit Letter was received from PKF the Council's external auditors on 15th December 2011, and the Audit Committee received and considered the letter at their meeting on 12th January 2012, the Audit committee reports "The Letter is positive with no significant issues to be raised with members, key stake holders or members of the public" a full summary of the audit committees statement to Cabinet can be read by members together with a copy of the Audit letter itself in the papers to Cabinet on the 1st February 2012.

HR

Workforce Planning - Retirement Policy Review. Cabinet on 1st February 2012 will be considering recommended changes to the Retirement Policy following the removal of the default retirement age of 65, full details can be read in the Cabinet papers.

Further information on this report can be obtained by contacting
Councillor Chris Siddall and Councillor John O'Reilly-Cicconi.

Cllr Chris Siddall
Cabinet Member – Efficiency And Resources

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LIST OF PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD SINCE LAST COUNCIL MEETING		Agenda No: 10(iv)
Corporate Priority: Not applicable Report presented by: Not applicable Report prepared by: Alastair Peace – Member Services Manager		
Background Papers:		Public Report
Published Minutes of the meetings listed within the report below.		
Options:		Key Decision: No
Report for noting		
Executive Summary: Since the last Council meeting held on 12 th December 2011 the following minutes have been published for the meetings held in public session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Local Development Framework Panel – 7th December 2011 (2) Planning Committee – 20th December 2011 (3) Licensing Committee – 11th January 2012 (4) Audit Committee – 12th January 2012 (5) Planning Committee - 17th January 2012 (6) Local Development Framework Panel - 24th January 2012 (7) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 25th January 2012 (8) Planning Committee – 31st January 2012 (copy to follow) (9) Cabinet – 1st February 2012 (copy to follow) (10) Braintree District Local Highways Panel – 2nd February 2012 (copy to follow) (11) Local Development Framework Panel – 6th February 2012 (copy to follow) 		
Decision: Members are to note the minutes published.		
Purpose of Decision: Not applicable		
Officer Contact: Alastair Peace Designation: Member Services Manager Ext. No. 2602 E-mail: alastair.peace@braintree.gov.uk		