

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND THIS MEETING



Please note this meeting will be audio recorded.

Date: Wednesday, 29th May 2013

Time: 7.15pm

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

Membership:

Councillor P R Barlow	Councillor F Ricci
Councillor C A Cadman	Councillor W J Rose
Councillor Dr R L Evans (Chairman)	Councillor A F Shelton
Councillor P Horner	Councillor J S Sutton
Councillor S A Howell	Councillor J R Swift
Councillor R P Ramage	

Members are requested to attend this meeting, to transact the following business:-

- 1 **Apologies for Absence.**
- 2 **Member Declarations.**
 - i. To declare the existence and nature of any interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.
 - ii. To declare the existence and nature of any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any Councillor who is a member of that group as to how that Councillor shall speak or vote on any matter before the Committee or the application or threat to apply any sanction by the group in respect of that Councillor should he/she speak or vote on any particular matter.
- 3 **Question Time.** (See paragraph below).
- 4 **Minutes.** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13th March 2013 (copy previously circulated).

- 5 **Task & Finish Group – Review of Braintree Halstead & Witham Citizens Advice Bureau and Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency.** To receive the report of the Task and Finish Group (report attached page 1)
- 6 **Task and Finish Group – Affordable Housing.** To receive a brief update (report attached page 29).
- 7 **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Scrutiny Review of the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership.** To consider the Committee's report (report attached page 31).
- 8 **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Annual Work Programme 2013-14.** To consider the Committee's Annual Work programme (report attached page 45).
- 9 **Decision Planner.** To consider the Decision Planner for the period 1st June 2013 to 30th September 2013 (copy to follow).
- 10 **Urgent Business.** To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.
- 11 To agree the exclusion of the public and press for the consideration of any items for the reasons set out in Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

At the time of compiling the agenda there were none.

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

A PEACE
Member Services Manager

The last page of this Agenda is numbered 47.

Contact Details

If you require any further information please contact Alastair Peace on 01376 552525 extension 2602 or e-mail alastair.peace@braintree.gov.uk

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.

Members of the public wishing to speak should contact the Council's Member Services on (01376) 552525 or email chloe.glock@braintree.gov.uk 2 working days prior to the meeting.

Members of the public can remain to observe the whole of the public part of the meeting.

Health and Safety

Any persons attending meetings at Causeway House 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 a Council 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.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that your mobile phone is either switched to silent or switched off during the meeting.

Comments

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:

Task & Finish Group Review of Braintree Halstead and Witham Citizens Advice Bureau and Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency		Agenda No: 5
Corporate Priority: Everyone can enjoy a healthy lifestyle		
Report presented by: Cllr.Sue Wilson, Chairman Task and Finish Group		
Report prepared by: Angela Verghese		
Background Papers:		Public Report
Options:		Key Decision: NO
Executive Summary:		
<p>The purpose of the Report prepared by the Task & Finish Group is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the issues that BDVSA and the CAB face: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Through their work in the community ○ Through their relationship with the council • Determine the options arising from 1 & 2 above • Recommendations arising from the options <p>The full Report is attached and the recommendations are as follows:</p> <p>BRAINTREE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU:</p> <p>Recommendations For Braintree District Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Support: To continue to provide its core funding contribution and to maintain close partnership working with the CAB. This funding and support is essential for the CAB to provide its services to benefit local residents, who are amongst some of the most vulnerable people in the District. • Non Financial Support: To identify ways to increase its non-financial support to the CAB including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition to the Council's representative on the Trustee Board a deputy should be available to make sure BDC is always represented by one/two people. Both of these Representatives to have voting rights. ○ In kind support eg PR advice, administrative assistance ○ To provide a Member representative on the Essexwide Group of Citizens Advice Bureaux ○ • Partnership Working: To continue to work in partnership with the CAB and to seek opportunities to develop joint solutions to meet emerging needs. 		

- **Awareness Raising:**
 - To increase Parish Councils awareness of the scope and limitations of the CAB's services
 - To increase Members' awareness of the scope and limitations of the CAB's services through wider dissemination of its Monitoring information and through the Members' Portal, Member Induction Training and Members' Evenings.

2. **Recommendations For Braintree Halstead & Witham Citizens Advice Bureau:**

- **Gateway Assessment Process:** To implement this process for handling enquiries as quickly as possible with the support of all staff and volunteers. This was strongly supported by the Task & Finish Group who felt that this new procedure should be able to be implemented as quickly as possible and would seem to be the way forward to progress the future increase in enquiries in a shorter amount of time.
- **Volunteers:** To investigate opportunities to recruit volunteers for appropriate tasks that do not require extensive, lengthy training as advisers, eg administrative tasks.
- **Fundraising:** They should develop a fundraising strategy to enable the Bureau to identify potential sources of funding and achieve increased income from a wider range of sources.
- **Opening Hours:** To investigate whether it is feasible to extend opening hours for appointments at weekends, and/or evenings in order to increase access.
- **Premises:** To seek a satisfactory solution to the problems arising from the Braintree premises through further discussions with the Council's Estates Department

BRAINTREE DISTRICT VOLUNTARY SUPPORT AGENCY

Recommendations For Braintree District Council (to Cabinet)

- **Financial Support:** To continue to provide its core funding contribution and to maintain close partnership working that sustains and values both BDVSA and the local voluntary sector.
- **Non Financial Support:** To identify ways in which it could provide non-financial support to BDVSA including:
 - In addition to the Council's representative on the Executive Committee a deputy should be available to make sure BDC is always represented by one/two people. Neither of these Representatives would have voting rights.
 - To make representations on BDVSA's behalf to support them in securing funding from Essex County Council and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.

- **Awareness Raising:**
 - To increase Members' awareness of the services BDVSA provides through wider dissemination of its Newsletter, Monitoring
 - Information and through Member Induction Training and Members' Evenings.
 - To provide more information and improved links to BDVSA on the Council's website.

2. Recommendations For BDVSA (through Cabinet)

- **New Premises:** To investigate alternative premises to provide a higher standard of accommodation and a more positive environment. This would greatly enhance BDVSA's image, presence and working conditions for its staff. It is the Task & Finish Group's opinion that this could help to re-energize the organisation and encourage it to be more proactive in promoting its services to the voluntary sector. It will enable staff to work more productively in less cramped conditions, with room for volunteers to be used to undertake work to support or expand the activities of BDVSA, eg volunteers working on publicity and promotion. Possible accommodation options to be investigated include:
 - The Council's property portfolio: an initial discussion has taken place between the Chair of the Task & Finish Group and Andrew Epsom, Asset Manager
 - Accommodation at Greenfields Community Housing offices: The Chair of the Task & Finish Group has met Greenfields' Community Empowerment Manager who will make further enquiries.
 - Empty shop premises in a town centre.
 - Creation of a community hub for a variety of voluntary organizations (including BDVSA) to operate from.

However, it is noted that BDVSA may struggle to secure adequate premises without incurring additional costs (rent, heat, etc) as they enjoy a peppercorn rent of £620 per annum, excluding electricity, at their current premises.

- **Profile Raising/Publicity:** To consider ways to ensure that more organizations that could benefit from their services are made aware of them eg use of in kind specialist advice and/or volunteer support for publicity campaigns.

Decision:

1. That the report, the work of the Task and Finish Group and the recommendations be noted
2. That the report be referred to Council and Cabinet.

Purpose of Decision: To consider the Task & Finish Group's Report and findings

Corporate implications	
Financial:	none
Legal:	none
Equalities/Diversity	none
Customer Impact:	none
Environment and Climate Change:	n/a
Consultation/Community Engagement:	n/a
Officer Contact:	Angela Verghese
Designation:	Community Wellbeing Manager
Ext. No.	2329
E-mail:	angve@braintree.gov.uk

Task & Finish Group Report – Braintree Halstead & Witham Citizens Advice Bureau and Braintree Halstead & Witham Citizens Advice Bureau

BACKGROUND

Braintree District Council has for some years provided funding for both Braintree Halstead & Witham Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency (BDVSA) under Service Level Agreements (**Appendix 1: CAB Service Level Agreement, Appendix 2: BDVSA Service Level Agreement**). The current 3 year Service Level Agreements run from April 2012–March 2015. In both Agreements the Council's funding contributes towards the organisations' core costs or running expenses. Three year funding enables the organisations to lever in additional funding from other sources and provides stability and sustainability to facilitate forward planning.

Funding from Braintree District Council is provided as follows:

CAB:

Year	Grant	In Kind	Use
1 st April 2012-31 st March 2013	£147,830		Core services
	£ 24,000		Halstead &Witham Premises
		£5,448	Braintree Premises
1 st April 2013-31 st March 2014	£147,830		Core services
	£ 24,000		Halstead &Witham Premises
		£5,448	Braintree Premises
1 st April 2014-31 st March 2015	£147,830		Core services
	£ 24,000		Halstead &Witham Premises
		£5,448	Braintree Premises

The total income received by the CAB for the year 2011/12 was: £224,329 (excludes funding for Halstead & Witham premises)

BDVSA:

Year	Grant	In Kind	Use
1 st April 2012-31 st March 2013	£22,720	Nil	Core Services
1 st April 2013-31 st March 2014	£22,720	Nil	Core Services
1 st April 2014-31 st March 2015	£22,720	Nil	Core Services

The total income received by BDVSA for the year 2011/12 was: £140,410

The core services to which the Service Level Agreements relate are as follows:

CAB:

a) General Help:

- Diagnosing the client's problems
- Giving information and explaining options
- Identifying further action the client can take

- Giving basic assistance, eg filling in forms, helping The client draft letters and contacting third parties to seek information on the client's behalf

b) Assisted Information:

- Staff are available to help clients access information and to identify where a client needs further information or advice

BDVSA

a) Support

- Provide services and resources that are accessible and relevant to the needs of local voluntary and community sector (vcs)

b) Development

- Identify unmet needs and work with local vcs to build their capacity to meet these needs

c) Liaison

- Facilitate effective communication that reflects the diversity of local voluntary and community action

d) Representation

- Ensure that the consultative mechanisms and processes used enable representation that is appropriate to the whole of the vcs

e) Strategic Partnership Work

- Ensure the vcs play an active part in the development of strategic partnerships

HOW THE REVIEW WAS CARRIED OUT

The original brief from Overview & Scrutiny was as follows:

“As regards the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency, the scrutiny review should understand the work, pressures, issues and benefits to the community of both organizations. The review should also identify what sort of information and how members would like to receive that information.”

After further discussion the Task & Finish Group set the following Terms of Reference which were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28th November 2012:

- “1. Determine the issues that BDVSA and the CAB face:
 - Through their work in the community
 - Through their relationship with the council
2. Determine the options arising from 1 & 2 above
3. Recommendations arising from the options”

The Task & Finish Group met 6 times between September 2012 and April 2013

The Task & Finish Group received the following information about both organizations:

- Service Level Agreements with BDC (2012-2015)
- Monitoring Reports April –September 2012 (required under Service Level Agreements)
- Annual Reports 2011/12

- Final Accounts 2011/12
- Councillor Representatives' End of Year Reports to Council 2011/12
- Judy Cuddeford, Chief Officer, BDSA and Don Smith, Chair, Paul Hart, Manager and Richard Jones, Operations Manager of the CAB attended a meeting of the Task & Finish Group to give short presentations followed by question and answer sessions.

Members of the Task & Finish Group visited the offices of BDVSA and the CAB and met staff and volunteers.

A first draft Report was then produced on which BDVSA and the CAB were invited to comment. Where appropriate, the points they raised have been incorporated into this final Report.

This Report now comprises two further sections, the first relating to the CAB and the second relating to BDVSA.

SECTION 1:

BRAINTREE, HALSTEAD AND WITHAM CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

DETERMINE THE ISSUES THAT THE CAB FACES:

1. Through their work in the community

- Currently the CAB cannot meet demand for their services and, even if they received additional funding, they would not immediately be able to increase their services for the following reasons:
 - Additional volunteers would need to be recruited and trained, with training taking approximately 12-18 months
 - Additional paid staff would need to be recruited to maintain the correct ratio of staff to volunteers (a condition of the CAB's accreditation under CitA, the umbrella body for Citizens Advice Bureaux)
 - Expansion of numbers of staff and volunteers is limited by size of premises, availability of additional equipment, computers, etc.
- They are endeavoring to realign resources to better meet increased demand. For example, by increasing use of a 'Telephone Gateway process' whereby clients problems, and their ability to manage these themselves, are assessed at the point of initial enquiry. Following this assessment clients can be referred for help as appropriate eg to advisers, other specialist agencies, CAB website. This enables the CAB to deal with a larger number of clients and to provide the most appropriate form of help relevant to individual need.
- Demand for their services is likely to increase in the future, including the cumulative effect due to the gradual impact of benefit changes being experienced and the likely consequence of the level of debt rising.
- Their name and services are well known by both the public and agencies who refer clients to them. They therefore have little need to promote themselves and their approach is reactive rather than proactive.
- They utilize approximately 60 volunteers to deliver their services and employ 12 part-time staff (6 full-time equivalents). This is beneficial regarding the value of volunteer time and the contribution these volunteers make to the service. However it can also be problematic due to less control being possible over volunteers than paid staff. There are

no contractual obligations for volunteers, instead it requires reliance on goodwill and co-operation. There is also a cost in managing volunteers.

- They provide advice services by telephone, through the CitA website, and face to face from Braintree, Halstead and Witham with both appointment and drop in services. Subject to securing additional funding, they also run rural outreach services fortnightly in Finchingfield and monthly in Coggeshall. However, at present, they do not open at weekends or during evenings making it more difficult for anyone in full-time employment to access face to face services. Opening times vary across the three sites. **(See Appendix 2 page 7 for opening times)**
- Although the CAB always aim to help their clients to take as much responsibility as possible for solving their problems, inevitably there are some clients who return repeatedly without making progress in self-help.
- There are other advice providers in the District apart from the CAB, including the Council, Greenfields Community Housing, Age UK, Essex MIND. Up until now it does not appear that many attempts have been made to build a joined up approach to advice giving and eliminate any duplication. However a partnership bid has recently been made to The Big Lottery Fund's Advice Services Transition Fund 2013, led by the RCCE Village Agents project, in order to source funds to achieve a co-ordinated and streamlined advice service for the District. The outcome of this bid is awaited.
- The CAB are now part of an Essexwide group of Citizens Advice Bureaux whose purpose is to act as the main contract holders for bidding for services from Essex County Council.

2. Through their relationship with the Council

- The current 3 year Service Level Agreement, is subject to 6 monthly monitoring, in addition to which there is Member and officer representation on the CAB's Trustee Board. The Council is by far the main funder of the CAB who are therefore over reliant on this source of funding..
- In 2012 regular Liaison Meetings were set up to develop a closer working relationship between the Council and the CAB, to identify and discuss emerging trends and issues and generally matters of mutual concern. These meetings are attended by Cllr Jo Beavis, Cllr Jennie Sutton, Member representative on the CAB's Trustee Board, Andy Wright, Corporate Director, Angela Verghese, Officer representative on CAB's Trustee Board, Trevor Wilson, Head of Finance, Julie Rigby, Benefits Manager, Don Smith, CAB Chair, Paul Hart, CAB District Manager and Linda Steer, CAB Operations Manager.
- Of their three offices in Braintree, Halstead and Witham, the Braintree premises, provided under Licence from the Council, are not adequate for the needs of the organisation, with ongoing problems regarding access and security. In addition there are some pending issues regarding the future of the Lease which expires in 2015. The CAB are currently in discussion with the Council's Estates Department concerning these issues.
- The Council has recently agreed to fund a Money Advisor on a 30 hours per week basis for 2 years. This resource will provide support via an officer referral basis, to customers within the Braintree District, who have been affected by the Council Tax Benefit reforms, the under-occupancy and benefit cap reforms and also those cases referred directly by the Council's Housing Service in relation to issues with rent arrears or other financial hardship which affects their ability to remain in their homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The full Report is attached and the recommendations are as follows:

For Braintree District Council (to Cabinet):

- **Financial Support:** To continue to provide its core funding contribution and to maintain close partnership working with the CAB. This funding and support is essential for the CAB to provide its services to benefit local residents, who are amongst some of the most vulnerable people in the District.
- **Non Financial Support:** To identify ways to increase its non-financial support to the CAB including:
 - In addition to the Council's representative on the Trustee Board a deputy should be available to make sure BDC is always represented by one/two people. Both of these Representatives to have voting rights.
 - In kind support eg PR advice, administrative assistance
 - To provide a Member representative on the Essexwide Group of Citizens Advice Bureaux
- **Partnership Working:** To continue to work in partnership with the CAB and to seek opportunities to develop joint solutions to meet emerging needs.
- **Awareness Raising:**
 - To increase Parish Councils awareness of the scope and limitations of the CAB's services
 - To increase Members' awareness of the scope and limitations of the CAB's services through wider dissemination of its Monitoring information and through the Members' Portal, Member Induction Training and Members' Evenings.

2. For Braintree Halstead & Witham Citizens Advice Bureau:

- **Gateway Assessment Process:** To implement this process for handling enquiries as quickly as possible with the support of all staff and volunteers. This was strongly supported by the Task & Finish Group who felt that this new procedure should be able to be implemented as quickly as possible and would seem to be the way forward to progress the future increase in enquiries in a shorter amount of time.
- **Volunteers:** To investigate opportunities to recruit volunteers for appropriate tasks that do not require extensive, lengthy training as advisers, eg administrative tasks
- **Fundraising:** They should develop a fundraising strategy to enable the Bureau to identify potential sources of funding and achieve increased income from a wider range of sources.
- **Opening Hours:** To investigate whether it is feasible to extend opening hours for appointments at weekends, and/or evenings in order to increase access.
- **Premises:** To seek a satisfactory solution to the problems arising from the Braintree premises through further discussions with the Council's Estates Department

SECTION 2:

BRAINTREE DISTRICT VOLUNTARY SUPPORT AGENCY **DETERMINE THE ISSUES THAT THE BDVSA FACE:**

1. Through their work in the community

- Their premises are not situated in a prominent, visible location in the town. This does not encourage people to pass by and drop in to find out more about BDVSA or to volunteer. Improved premises would create a pleasant, welcoming and positive environment for staff and the public
- The accommodation is of a very poor standard and the 6 part-time staff work in cramped conditions, with all but one of them working in one room.
- There are no private rooms to discuss confidential information, for one to one reviews or to interview volunteers.
- The current poor accommodation reflects adversely on the organisation in the image that it conveys ie a place (organisation) of little value.
- BDVSA publish a regular Newsletter, bulletins and mailshots via email for organisations that are signed up to receive these. They also have a promotional flyer about their services which is sent to public places to display/hand out, eg libraries. Recently the organisation has begun to use social media such as Twitter, as well as information provided on their website. However, they still find it difficult to ensure that enough people/organisations know of them and the help they can provide.
- For some years BDVSA have received funding towards their core services from the NHS. With the recent re-organisation and the transfer of public health responsibilities to Essex County Council, BDVSA face uncertainty regarding future funding arrangements beyond 2014/15. As primarily a second tier organisation (ie not delivering frontline services), there are limited alternative sources of funding available to them.
- In April 2012 BDVSA took over responsibility for Health Walks, formerly run by Braintree District Council. Despite all their efforts it is proving more difficult than anticipated to secure long term funding for this initiative. This is aggravated by the uncertainty over future funding as outlined in the point above.
- An increasing national focus on volunteering and the use of volunteers will see growing demands on this service which is provided uniquely in Braintree District by BDVSA's volunteer centre

2. Through their relationship with the Council

- The current 3 year Service Level Agreement, which is subject to 6 monthly monitoring, together with Member and officer representation on BDVSA's Executive Committee, supports a strong, productive partnership between the two organisations.
- BDVSA enjoys a positive working relationship with the Council, leading on both the LSP Voluntary and Community Partnership Board, of which BDC is a member, and Braintree District Local Compact with the voluntary sector, to which BDC is a signatory.
- Despite this financial and working relationship with the Council over a number of years, the majority of members of the Task & Finish Group had not heard of BDVSA or their services.

Recommendations

1. For Braintree District Council

- **Financial Support:** To continue to provide its core funding contribution and to maintain close partnership working that sustains and values both BDVSA and the local voluntary sector.
- **Non Financial Support:** To identify ways in which it could provide non-financial support to BDVSA including:
 - In addition to the Council's representative on the Executive Committee a deputy should be available to make sure BDC is always represented by one/two people. Neither of these Representatives would have voting rights.
 - To make representations on BDVSA's behalf to support them in securing funding from Essex County Council and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.
- **Awareness Raising:**
 - To increase Members' awareness of the services BDVSA provides through wider dissemination of its Newsletter, Monitoring
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 - To provide more information and improved links to BDVSA on the Council's website.

2. For BDVSA (through Cabinet)

- **New Premises:** To investigate alternative premises to provide a higher standard of accommodation and a more positive environment. This would greatly enhance BDVSA's image, presence and working conditions for its staff. It is the Task & Finish Group's opinion that this could help to re-energize the organisation and encourage it to be more proactive in promoting its services to the voluntary sector. It will enable staff to work more productively in less cramped conditions, with room for volunteers to be used to undertake work to support or expand the activities of BDVSA, eg volunteers working on publicity and promotion. Possible accommodation options to be investigated include:
 - The Council's property portfolio: an initial discussion has taken place between the Chair of the Task & Finish Group and Andrew Epsom, Asset Manager
 - Accommodation at Greenfields Community Housing offices: The Chair of the Task & Finish Group has met Greenfields' Community Empowerment Manager who will make further enquiries.
 - Empty shop premises in a town centre
 - Creation of a community hub for a variety of voluntary organizations (including BDVSA) to operate from

However, it is noted that BDVSA may struggle to secure adequate premises without incurring additional costs (rent, heat, etc) as they enjoy a peppercorn rent of £620 per annum, excluding electricity, at their current premises.

- **Profile Raising/Publicity:** To consider ways to ensure that more organizations that could benefit from their services are made aware of them eg use of in kind specialist advice and/or volunteer support for publicity campaigns.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Service Level Agreement Braintree Halstead & Witham Citizens Advice Bureau

Appendix 2: Service Level Agreement with Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AND

BRAINTREE DISTRICT VOLUNTARY

SUPPORT AGENCY

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AND

BRAINTREE DISTRICT VOLUNTARY SUPPORT AGENCY

1ST APRIL 2012 – 31ST MARCH 2015

Braintree District Council agrees funding towards the provision of core services by Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency as set out in this Agreement for the period 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2015

In return Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency is to co-ordinate, support, promote and develop the work of the voluntary sector and provide the representative views of the voluntary sector into appropriate decision making forums in Braintree District, as set out in Part 2 of this Agreement

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PART 1 – GENERAL CONDITIONS	

1.1 Parties

This is an Agreement between Braintree District Council (The Council) and Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency (BDVSA)

1.2 Object of The Agreement

The Council wishes to support the services of BDVSA as a voluntary sector infrastructure organisation and volunteer centre subject to an agreed grant and defined level of service.

1.3 Period of the Agreement

The Agreement will take effect from 1st April 2012 for a period of 3 years up to 31st March 2015 unless it is terminated under Paragraph 1.10 of this Agreement.

1.4 The Parties' Obligations

BDVSA agrees to provide the services specified in Part 2 of this Agreement (Service Objectives and Specifications)

The Council agrees to make the grant payments specified in Part 3 of this Agreement (Financial and Resourcing Arrangements)

1.5 Status of Service Provider

In carrying out this Agreement, BDVSA is acting in its own right as an independent organisation and not as agent of the Council.

1.6 Management

BDVSA is a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable status (Registered Charity No. pending, Company No 7831270). With effect from 1/4/12 BDVSA intends to transfer all employment contracts, assets and the Undertaking to Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency Ltd in an incorporation process approved by the Charity Commission.

BDVSA Ltd is managed by a Board of Directors consisting of not less than 3 and not more than 15 directors being:

- a) The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer
- b) Not less than 3 and not more than 12 members elected annually.
- c) Not more than 4 Observers appointed by the Board and not more than one-third of the members of the Board are observers

1.7 Parties' Representatives

The Cabinet of the Council will be entitled to appoint one co-opted member of the Board of Directors.

The Council and BDVSA will each appoint a contact officer for this Agreement:

- a) The role of The Council's contact officer is to:
 - Attend BDVSA's Board meetings in an advisory capacity
 - Act as the initial point of contact within The Council for BDVSA
 - Inform BDVSA of any issues that may affect the implementation of the service provision in this Agreement
 - Provide information, advice and support to BDVSA as reasonably required
 - Implement monitoring process in accordance with Part 4

- b) The role of BDVSA's contact officer is to:
 - provide the information required in Part 4 of this Agreement
 - Inform the Council's Contact Officer in writing if there is:
- i) A proposal by BDVSA to change or reduce the core services set out in Part 2 of this Agreement
 - ii) A significant actual or projected change to BDVSA's financial budget
 - iii) A change to BDVSA's constitution

1.8 Dispute Resolution

If either party considers the other to be in breach of their duties under this Agreement or has a grievance about some aspect of the Agreement's operation they will meet for discussion within 21 days of written notice of a breach being given. If they are unable to reach agreement they will follow the procedure set out in Braintree District Local Compact Resolution of Disagreements Code of Practice (Appendix 2) to which both the Council and the BDVSA are signatories.

1.9 Review

- a) It is recognised that this Agreement may require amendments during its 3 year duration. Any such amendments will need to be negotiated and agreed in writing by both parties.
- b) A review of the level of services specified in Part 2 can be requested by either party and a meeting held as soon as practicable after this. It can take into account changes in community needs, feedback from clients or other stakeholders, changes in the Council's corporate objectives and any other relevant factors beyond the control of BDVSA, such as staff availability.

1.10 Termination

If either party is found to be in breach of this Agreement and providing the procedure set out in **1.8 Dispute Resolution** has been followed the Agreement can be terminated by either party giving the other 3 months' written notice. In the event of termination of this Agreement the Council reserves the right to reclaim the proportion of the grant equal to the period of annual grant remaining. If the Council exercises this right, BDVSA will make the repayment to the Council within 60 days of a written request and in the event of default the council may recover such sum as a civil debt.

PART 2 – SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 Core Service

BDVSA Core Functions have been developed in line with the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action model and linked with the Essex Partnership Agreement:

- a) Support
 - Provide services and resources that are accessible and relevant to the needs of local voluntary and community sector (vcs)
- b) Development
 - Identify unmet needs and work with local vcs to build their capacity to meet these needs
- c) Liaison
 - Facilitate effective communication that reflects the diversity of local voluntary and community action
- d) Representation
 - Ensure that the consultative mechanisms and processes used enable representation that is appropriate to the whole of the vc
- e) Strategic Partnership Work
 - Ensure the vcs play an active part in the development of strategic partnerships

2.1.1 Advice Services

BDVSA will provide advice, information and recommend best practice to vcs organisations working in Braintree District specifically for funding opportunities, running a charity/ setting up new groups, training and charity law.

BDVSA will provide information on voluntary organisations and services to public, private, statutory and voluntary and community sectors on request

2.1.2 Volunteer Services

Within BDVSA, Braintree Volunteer Centre will promote volunteering, encourage best practice in volunteering, recruit volunteers and provide a brokerage service between volunteers and voluntary organisations.

2.1.3 Representation

BDVSA will:

- endeavour to represent the vcs at relevant meetings and forums and keep the vcs informed appropriately.
- lead on the Local Compact and encourage the vcs to be involved.
- represent the interests of the District's vcs as Chair of the 3rd Sector Partnership Board and as a member of Essex Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (EACVS) and Volunteer Centres Essex (VCE)

2.2 Access to Services

With effect from 1st April 2012 services will be accessed as follows

2.2.1 Location and Opening Hours

Braintree – Room 5 Colne House, 96 Mount Chambers, Coggeshall Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 9BY	9.00 am to 3.00 pm Monday to Friday Open Door Appointments Telephone
Outreach	Interviews for prospective volunteers in Witham & Halstead by appointment

2.2.2 Alternative Access

Electronic access will be available via bdvsa@bdvsa.org

Written correspondence will be answered or acknowledged within ten working days unless covered by another standard.

2.2.3 Accessibility

BDVSA will continue to develop and improve its practice on accessibility and look for opportunities to deliver services more effectively in rural areas.

2.2.4 Equal Opportunities & Impartiality

BDVSA is committed to take positive steps to ensure equality of opportunity in the access to and delivery of its services and employment of staff. BDVSA will deliver an impartial and objective service and this is reflected in BDVSA's Service, Recruitment and Training policies.

2.1.1 Safeguarding

BDVSA recognises that the duties of its staff and volunteers can involve access to vulnerable adults. It will therefore take positive steps to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are put in place including Criminal Records Bureau checks and appropriate training and guidance for staff and volunteers. It will also ensure compliance with any future legislative changes

2.2.5 Confidentiality

BDVSA staff and volunteers and IT contractor are required to sign a Confidentiality Statement.
BDVSA implements a Data Protection Policy and Procedures

2.2.6 Independence

BDVSA is independent and able to offer an impartial service to all enquirers.

2.3 Quality Assurance

BDVSA has the Volunteering England Quality Mark and NAVCA Quality Mark. BDVSA has achieved PQASSO Level 1 and will continue to work towards achieving PQASSO Level 2

Copies of documentation evidencing the above will be made available to the Council's contact officer on request.

2.3.1 All staff and volunteers are required to undergo relevant training to enable them to perform their roles effectively and relevant training records are maintained.

2.3.2 BDVSA will maintain complaints statistics and these will be available to The Council on request.

2.3.3 BDVSA will regularly monitor service accessibility

2.3.4 BDVSA will prepare and submit to The Council six monthly monitoring reports as specified in Part 4.

2.4 Service Development & Improvement

BDVSA will produce and implement a Business Plan and Fundraising Strategy, the monitoring of which will contribute to innovation, improvement and sustainability of its service.

2.5 User Feedback & Involvement

BDVSA will undertake an annual client satisfaction survey

BDVSA will consult both clients and potential clients about service provision and opening hours

BDVSA will operate a procedure for representations and complaints about the service.

2.6 Circumstances Beyond BDVSA's Control

BDVSA will not be held responsible for any interruption in or disruption to the core services due to circumstances beyond its control.

PART 3 - FINANCIAL & RESOURCING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 For the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2015 the Council will, subject to the conditions set out in Paragraph 3.1.1 being met, providing funding towards the core costs of the BDVSA as follows:

Year	Grant
1 st April 2012-31 st March 2013	£22,720
1 st April 2013-31 st March 2014	£22,720
1 st April 2014-31 st March 2015	£22,720

3.1.1 The funding in 3.1. above will be paid in advance in two equal instalments in April and October subject to:

- Full compliance with the terms of this Agreement
- The Council obtaining all necessary approvals
- Funding being available
- BDVSA providing the level of service set out in this Agreement

PART 4 - MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

4.1.1 BDVSA monitors and evaluates its services in accordance with the procedures and directions set out in the BDVSA Procedures Manual – Staff Handbook (a copy of which is available on request).

4.1.2 BDVSA will be subject to audits from Volunteering England and National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA).
Standards for PQASSO are regularly monitored by BDVSA's Executive Committee.

4.1.3 BDVSA will provide information to the Council's Contact Officer as set out in Appendix 1 for the periods:

1st April to 30th September – 6 Half Yearly Report

1st April to 31st March – Annual Report

4.1.4 BDVSA will also provide the following information to the Council's Contact Officer:

2 copies of the Annual Report & Accounts as soon as available

The results of BDVSA's annual Customer Satisfaction Survey as soon as available (2.6 refers)

A copy of the BDVSA's current Business Plan and Fundraising Strategy as soon as available

4.1.5 BDVSA will provide any further information reasonably requested by the Council, subject to those requirements not being in breach of clients' confidentiality.

PART 5

In witness whereof the parties to this Service Level Agreement have signed this document in the presence of the persons mentioned below:

Signed by Nicola Beach
on behalf of the Council

.....

Date:

Signed by the Chair of Braintree
District Voluntary Support Agency

.....

Date:

Appendix 1 Monitoring Information

<p>Coordinate and provide core support to a wide range of voluntary and community groups working in the Braintree District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 250 organisations supported during each year • 4 newsletters and 4 bulletins per year • Office open 5 days a week 9-3 • Annual Client Satisfaction Survey
<p>Representation: Voluntary sector views are sought on issues that impact on the sector and fed back to appropriate forums/organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair a minimum of 4 3rd Sector Partnership board meetings per year • Signpost relevant consultations at least 4 times per year or as required • Provide feedback to the voluntary sector about relevant issues in every newsletter • Respond to at least 10 relevant consultations per year • Support 1 networking Event per year • Annual Client Satisfaction Survey
<p>Funding Advice/Governance Advice: Voluntary organisations are provided with information and advice to enable them to develop their organisation and access funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 one to one support sessions • 1 funding/ Governance event per year • Funding Bulletin 12 times per year • 50 funding opportunities promoted by mailshot or in newsletter per year
<p>Training Advice: Voluntary organisations are provided with information and advice to enable them to access training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VST training courses promoted 8 times a year • External Training opportunities promoted 4 times a year • 2 Training courses in the Braintree District per year
<p>Volunteering: Volunteering is promoted and facilitated to benefit both individual volunteers and voluntary organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 Volunteers registered per year • 80 Volunteers placed per year • 120 Volunteer opportunities advertised for groups per year • 1 Volunteering event per year • 5 groups provided with volunteer best practice per year • Annual Volunteer Satisfaction Survey
<p>Compact: The Local Compact is effectively implemented by both voluntary and statutory sectors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Compact an agenda item at every 3rd Sector Partnership Board meeting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Compact related articles per year in the newsletter • Annual Compact Review
3 year SLA provides BDVSA with stability and enables forward planning and securing additional funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure additional funding from other sources see funding plan Appendix D

Appendix 2

BRAINTREE DISTRICT LOCAL COMPACT

Resolution of Disagreements Code of Practice

The Braintree COMPACT sets out a general framework for enhancing the relationship between statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector. As far as possible disagreements over the application of that framework should be resolved between the parties. Where resolution is not possible, both parties should seek mediation, through a mutually agreed mediator. Any disagreements, which arise throughout the year, will be monitored for consideration at the annual review meeting.

Our Procedure

Initially, the **issue or complaint** should be raised **directly** with the **organisation concerned**. You should pursue any offers or actions proposed to resolve the matter before commencing action under the COMPACT's RESOLUTION OF DISAGREEMENTS CODE OF PRACTICE Process.

NB: Check whether the organisation has its' own official Complaints Procedure and whether it might be more appropriate to use this route

Our Procedure

Stage One

If the issue or complaint has not been resolved by direct consultation with the organisation concerned complete the Braintree COMPACT Complaints Form with details of the complaint indicating which part of the COMPACT has been breached and the actions taken so far to resolve the matter. This form should be completed within 28 working days of the issue not being resolved

Stage Two

Provide the completed form to a member of the 3rd Sector Partnership Board. and discuss prior to it being passed to the 3rd Sector Partnership Board Secretariat.

The Secretariat to provide a copy of completed form to the Chair of the 3rd Sector Partnership Board to determine whether a **Dispute and Arbitration Panel (DAP)** meeting should be convened.

The Dispute and Arbitration Panel

The DAP will meet within 40 working days of receipt of the Braintree COMPACT Complaints Form.

The DAP will consist of **three people** who have **no direct association with either organisation and drawn from a pool of the 3rd Sector Partnership Board** having previously agreed to undertake this task. Membership of the Dispute and Arbitration Panel will include at least one member from the Voluntary Sector and one from the Statutory Sector. The Chair of the DAP will be determined by its members at the beginning of the meeting. Additional information on the complaint or issue under consideration will be requested from both parties. The DAP will be looking for compromise and resolution of the issues.

Decision for the DAP

1. No action to be taken.
2. Both parties to agree to meet the DAP around the table with a view to negotiating a settlement of the dispute or complaint.
3. DAP to write to the organisation subject to the complaint requesting adherence to the undertakings in the Braintree COMPACT and proposing a course of action within a specified timescale to resolve the matter.
4. Refer the matter for mediation through the National COMPACT Mediation Scheme.

Appeal Process

If the organisation is not satisfied with the decision of the DAP they may appeal to the 3rd Sector Partnership Board within 14 working days of the result of this panel.

The DAP will meet again with 3 different members of the 3rd Sector Partnership Board within 30 working days of receipt of the appeal.

Their decision is final and there is no further right of appeal.

This form should be completed if an organisation wishes to use the Braintree DISTRICT COMPACT Resolution of Disagreements code of Practice.

Name of Organisation

Contact Details.....

.....

.....

Organisation with whom you have a disagreement

Contact Details.....

.....

.....

Details of Complaint indicating which part of the Compact has been breached

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.....
.....

Actions taken to date to resolve the matter

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.....

Signed **Date**

**Send to: Judy Cuddeford ,BDVSA
(Secretary to the Braintree District Local Compact Steering group)
Rm 5, Colne House, 96 Mount Chambers
Coggeshall Rd, Braintree CM7 9BY**

Task and Finish Group – Affordable Housing, Brief Update		Agenda No: 6
Corporate Priority:		
		Prosperity: securing appropriate infrastructure and housing growth
Report presented by:		Councillor P Barlow, Chairman of the Group
Report prepared by:		Affordable and Social Housing Task and Finish Group officer support
Background Papers: Affordable and Social Housing Task and Finish Group		Public Report
Options: For members to note progress of the Affordable and Social Housing Task and Finish Group.		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:		
<p>Following the meeting held on February 21st, the Group met on Wednesday 24th April where Jan Cole, a joint appointment between BDC and the Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE), delivered a presentation about the Localism Act.</p> <p>The aim of the presentation was to outline the various components of the Localism Act and identify potential opportunities the group could consider for enabling further affordable housing across the district.</p> <p>The group were also informed of the new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) currently being undertaken. The SHMA forms part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework and intends to identify housing demand and need across tenures based on population projections, migration flows and economic growth projections. This is known as establishing objectively assessed need.</p> <p>The Group were also updated on the launch of the Housing StatNav, a joint project between BDC and Greenfields. The Housing StatNav was launched in March and provides detailed analysis about housing needs at individual parish level across the district.</p> <p>The information available from the Housing StatNav will help members, parish councils and staff to deal more effectively with housing queries from applicants on the housing register as well as members of the community, in addition to supporting a more strategic approach to enabling development of new affordable homes.</p>		

Looking ahead, the group intend to meet with Saffron Building Society late May/early June to explore ways that the Council can invest to help people access market housing.

Following this meeting the group will begin to compile a final report with a view to this being presented at the September Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Decision: That the progress be noted.

Purpose of Decision: To monitor progress of the work being undertaken by the Affordable and Social Housing Task and Finish Group.

Corporate implications

Financial:	None at this stage
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Legal:	None at this stage
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Equalities/Diversity	None at this stage
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Customer Impact:	None at this stage
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Environment and Climate Change:	None at this stage
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Consultation/Community Engagement:	None at this stage
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Risks:	None at this stage
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Officer Contact:	Joanne Albini
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Designation:	Head of Housing
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Ext. No.	2118
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E-mail:	joanne.albini@braintree.gov.uk
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Overview and Scrutiny Committee –		Agenda No: 7
Scrutiny Review of the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership		
Corporate Priorities:	A better place People feel good	
Report presented by:	Councillor Dr Evans, Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Report prepared by:	Alastair Peace, Member Services Manager	
Background Papers:	Public Report	
Options:	Key Decision: No	
Executive Summary:		
<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to scrutinise the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) as result of information received at the Committee’s meeting with invited CSP representatives in March 2012 and other information received.</p> <p>Scrutiny of the CSP is timely as future funding for community safety became the responsibility of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex in November 2012.</p> <p>In conducting its review, the Committee has sought to learn more about the wider scope and functions of the CSP, its value to the community and how it relates to the strategic objectives of the Council.</p> <p>Committee Members are invited to consider the attached draft report including possible recommendations to Cabinet arising from the scrutiny review of the CSP.</p>		

Decision:

That following be recommended to Cabinet:

1. That consideration is given in the CSP's priorities to providing greater prominence to other community safety issues outside of the police and criminal justice system. e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour.
2. That the Annual Partnership Plan of the CSP be published and that all publically available CSP documents are reviewed to ensure the use of plain English throughout with the aim of encouraging the public to take a greater interest in the CSP.
3. That the Council, perhaps via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, receives an annual report on the performance of the CSP which takes account of how the CSP has delivered against the Council's objectives.
4. That in the case of the Fire Break project, follow up arrangements are put in place with the aim of ensuring that those young people who have gained certain experiences and qualities as a result of attending the project maintain these positive outcomes.
5. That in the case of the Domestic Abuse project, the benefits are drawn out in terms of the number of people referred to the service and those able to build a new life as a result of using the service.

Purpose of Decision: To consider the Committee's draft report to scrutiny of the Braintree District CSP.

Corporate implications

Financial:	None arising from this report
Legal:	None arising from this report
Equalities/Diversity	None arising from this report
Customer Impact:	None arising from this report
Environment and Climate Change:	None arising from this report
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None arising from this report
Risks:	None arising from this report
Officer Contact:	Alastair Peace
Designation:	Member Services Manager
Ext. No.	2602
E-mail:	alastair.peace@braintree.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Review of the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership

May 2013

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to scrutinise the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) as result of information received at the Committee's meeting with invited CSP representatives in March 2012 and other information received.
- 1.2. Scrutiny of the CSP is timely as future funding for community safety became the responsibility of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex in November 2012.
- 1.3. In conducting its review, the Committee has sought to learn more about the wider scope and functions of the CSP, its value to the community and how it relates to the strategic objectives of the Council.
- 1.4. Based on its findings, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends the following to Cabinet.
 - 1.4.1. That consideration is given in the CSP's priorities to providing greater prominence to other community safety issues outside of the police and criminal justice system. e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour
 - 1.4.2. That the Annual Partnership Plan of the CSP be published and that all publically available CSP documents are reviewed to ensure the use of plain English throughout with the aim of encouraging the public to take a greater interest in the CSP.
 - 1.4.3. That the Council, perhaps via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, receives an annual report on the performance of the CSP which takes account of how the CSP has delivered against the Council's objectives.
 - 1.4.4. That in the case of the Fire Break project, follow up arrangements are put in place with the aim of ensuring that those young people who have gained certain experiences and qualities as a result of attending the project maintain these positive outcomes.
 - 1.4.5. That in the case of the Domestic Abuse project, the benefits are drawn out in terms of the number of people referred to the service and those able to build a new life as a result of using the service.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received information from invited speakers from the Braintree District CSP on the role of the CSP at its meeting on 22nd March 2012. As a result of this, and other information received, the Committee agreed to scrutinise the CSP further and to learn more about its wider scope and functions, its value to the community and how it relates to the strategic objectives of the Council.
- 2.2. Also, as future funding for community safety became the responsibility of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex in November 2012, the Committee considers scrutiny of the CSP to be timely.

3. How the Review was Carried Out

3.1. Terms of Reference

- 3.1.1. The Committee agreed that the scrutiny review of the CSP should include the following:
- The scope and functions of the CSP;
 - the value of the CSP to the community;
 - how the CSP relates to the strategic objectives of the Council.

3.2. Scrutiny Hearings

- 3.2.1. The Committee carried out two scrutiny hearings with representatives of the CSP as follows:

Committee Meeting on 26th September 2012

- General review of the CSP

Invited Speaker	Organisation
Nicola Beach	Then Corporate Director, Braintree District Council and Chairman, Braintree District CSP
James Taylor	Essex Fire and Rescue Service and Vice Chairman, Braintree District CSP
Helena Goodwin	Community Services Manager, Braintree District Council
Chief Inspector Nick Lee	District Policing Area Commander, Uttlesford and Braintree Districts

13th March 2013

-Review of selected specific projects within the CSP

Theme	Project	Speakers
Education	Fire Break Mark II	James Taylor, Essex Fire and Rescue Service
Prevention	Integrated Offender Management	Adam Colby, Essex Probation Trust
Domestic Abuse	'Responding to Domestic Abuse' Workshop	Rita Milton Safer Places

3.2.2. Nicola Beach, Chief Executive, Braintree District Council, and Helena Goodwin, Community Services Manager, Braintree District Council, both also attended the meeting on 13th March to assist the Committee with its review.

3.2.3. The Committee is grateful to all invitees who attended its scrutiny meetings.

3.2.4. The Committee is also grateful to the following invited speakers who attended the Committee's initial meeting to consider the Braintree District CSP on 22nd March 2012:

Invited Speaker	Position
John Zammit	Chairman, Braintree District CSP
Jane Richards	Vice Chairman Braintree District CSP
Chief Inspector Nick Lee	District Policing Area Commander, Uttlesford and Braintree Districts

4. Mandate for the CSP

- 4.1. Some of the CSP partners are the Responsible Authorities (Local Authority - Braintree District and Essex County Council), i.e. The Police, Fire Authority, NHS and Probation Service, under the legislation that governs CSPs. This is the core of the CSP, called the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG). Other community representatives are non-core members of the CSP, e.g. Schools Consultant – Local Delivery Groups, Neighbourhood Watch, Cabinet Member for Community Safety.
- 4.2. Each organisation in the CSP has its own corporate objectives and targets. Partners work jointly through the CSP to address those objectives and targets where it is appropriate to do so. The CSP believes joint working has been effective in delivering CSP outcomes through good collaboration and focussing resources in priority areas. The CSP also believes the partnership brings together people and organisations with the right skills to address the various objectives and targets.

5. CSP Objectives and Priorities

- 5.1. The overall objective of the Braintree District CSP is to “take the lead in making the district even safer and to help people feel safe, by reducing crime and disorder and the related health, economic and social costs of crime.”
- 5.2. The Braintree District CSP’s Priorities for 2012 were as follows:
- **Domestic Abuse** - Combating Domestic Abuse, supporting victims, targeting perpetrators and addressing the impact on families.
 - **Integrated Offender Management** - Targeting the most prolific and persistent offenders and supporting their change in behavior.
 - **Drug and Alcohol Misuse** - Combating substance misuse and its impact on communities and crime.
- 5.3. The Committee notes that these priorities are intelligence led and based on the key issues derived from evidential data from a Strategic Assessment of Crime and Disorder in the district carried out annually (n.b. this is a legal requirement for CSPs). The priorities are then translated into projects and initiatives that form the Annual Partnership Plan which steers the actions of the CSP to address crime and disorder, and, its obligations under legislation.
- 5.4. Whilst noting the intelligence and evidence led approach to identifying priorities, the Committee is of the view that much of the CSP Annual Partnership Plan appears to be driven by the police and criminal justice system. The Committee believes this limits the amount of true partnership working. The Committee therefore recommends that consideration be given to providing greater prominence of other community safety issues e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour.

Recommendation 1 to Cabinet

That consideration is given in the CSP’s priorities to providing greater prominence to other community safety issues outside of the police and criminal justice system. e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour.

6. Delivery and Monitoring of CSP Priorities

- 6.1. The Committee notes that the CSP’s priorities are delivered through the following methods:
- **Prevention and Education** - (Schools projects – Crucial Crew, Being Safe (which now incorporates Reality Roadshow).
 - **“Moving Targets”** – Reactive and time limited work to address emerging crime types/spikes, e.g. metal theft, and unusual or unexpected incidents/events (Police instigated).
 - **Community Led Solutions** - Resolving concerns in first instance with the help of local communities, partner agencies and community leads.

- 6.2. Projects and actions are listed in the CSP's Annual Partnership Plan and evaluated and monitored quarterly by the RAG with the Plan being updated regularly in terms of outcomes.
- 6.3. The monitoring of the Police statistics is carried out by the Home Office through their iQuanta system. This system is classified as Restricted and therefore not available to the public. Public information on aggregated statistics is available through the Police.uk website.
- 6.4. The CSP is ultimately accountable to the Home Office and crime statistics are reported through the iQuanta system.
- 6.5. The Committee also notes the development of the Essex Insight, a new Essex wide information system for the sharing and collection of data from all statutory organisations. However, due to the restricted nature of this data, the Committee notes that this information is only available to analysts and CSP Managers.

7. Outcomes and benefits to the community from the CSP

- 7.1. The Committee notes that all CSP projects and initiatives aim to improve the quality of life for residents in the Braintree District. The aims include:
 - reducing crime,
 - keeping vulnerable people safe;
 - increasing the reporting of 'hidden' crimes (such as racism, homophobia, domestic abuse);
 - establishing early intervention schemes to prevent, educate and provide informed options for people (primarily the young), to think about actions and consequences, and in some cases, stop problems before they arise.
- 7.2. The Committee also notes that the CSP advises that all crime and disorder in the district has reduced year on year since 2005, and since the recording of ASB data in 2006, Anti-Social Behaviour has significantly reduced year on year since 2007. The CSP believes the partnership has played a role in achieving this reduction with communities being a part of addressing issues that affect them.

8. Communication with the Public and Access to Information

- 8.1. The CSP's communication and engagement with the public is predominantly undertaken through existing Police engagement methods such as:
 - Police led Neighbourhood Action Panel (NAP) meetings where members of the public can raise issues of concern;
 - Police led Monthly Joint Action Group (JAG) meetings covering the Braintree District. These meetings are open to interested community parties who may also raise local issues and concerns. Issues raised at NAPs are also discussed at JAGs where appropriate;

8.2. The CSP is responsible for the following methods of communication:

- Distribution of information on relevant events, training and news to a mailing list of around 130 community contacts;
- A recently launched twitter account for the Braintree CSP. (It is noted that the numbers following the account are currently low although it is hoped that this will rise as it is a low cost and quick communication tool);
- School Projects (i.e. Crucial Crew and Being Safe) to deliver safety messages to schools across the district;
- Awareness days, seasonal workshops, Community Day of Action and focus groups (where a specific issue is to be addressed). The groups are subject to available resources and, when held, usually lead to the development of community led solutions;

8.3. The Committee notes that CSP meetings are not public meetings, but meetings made up of public bodies with a statutory responsibility to work collectively on crime and disorder issues. The CSP is required to meet legislative requirements which include the sharing of information on a need to know basis, in adherence to legislation. The Committee also notes that some information is of a restricted nature and therefore cannot be made publically available. As a result, the minutes, agendas and reports are also restricted documents.

8.4. The Committee notes that the Annual Partnership Plan is available to the public via the Council's website. .

8.5. The Committee recognises that the public is more interested in the outcomes of the CSP e.g. crime reduction, rather than an awareness of the existence of the CSP itself. However, the Committee believes that reviewing the content of publically available documents to ensure the use of plain English throughout might encourage the public to take a greater interest in the CSP. The Committee, therefore, recommends that all publically available CSP documents are reviewed to ensure the use of plain English is used throughout with the aim of encouraging the public to take a greater interest in the CSP.

Recommendation 2 to Cabinet

That all publically available CSP documents are reviewed to ensure the use of plain English throughout with the aim of encouraging the public to take a greater interest in the CSP.

9. CSP and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex

- 9.1. The Committee notes that the PCC holds the future funding for community safety and that the funding mechanism for the CSP to access new funds is currently unclear. The PCC has no power over CSPs and is only required to have regard to CSPs in his work. However, the Essex PCC has stated at meetings and in his recently published plans that effective joint working with CSPs is a key objective to deliver wider community benefits. The Committee also notes that the introduction of the PCC has not resulted in any changes to legislation on CSPs although it is clearly sensible for the CSP and PCC to work closely together.
- 9.2. The Committee is aware that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex is looking beyond just direct policing and had given positive messages in terms of understanding the local context, victim support, and prevention and education. The PCC has advised that he will not be setting numerical targets for the reduction of crime but wishes to see all crime in the County reduced.

10. Funding

- 10.1. The Committee notes that the funding contributions to the CSP have greatly reduced. About 3-4 years ago, the CSP received around £144,000 per year directly from the Home Office. The Committee notes that the Braintree District CSP has not spent all of the funds it has received and therefore, still has some funds available and that the CSP's work programme is being assessed against these available funds.
- 10.2. In 2012-13, the CSP received £10,000 and since November 2012, the budget for community safety has become the responsibility of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). It remains to be seen if some of the CSP's work will be funded by the PCC through the community safety budget.
- 10.3. The Committee believes that whatever the outcome on funding issues, much can still be achieved by continued close partnership working.
- 10.4. The Committee believes the transfer of funding of certain CSP projects to Whole Essex Community Budget might provide greater security of funding.
- 10.5. The Committee notes that the Council also provides the following resources to the CSP:
 - The Council's Community Services Manager's responsibilities include Community Safety, overseeing the Community Safety Team and the Community Safety Partnership Management;
 - The salary for the Anti-Social Behaviour Liaison Officer;
 - Council staff delivering some of the CSP workshops to schools;
 - Venues for some CSP meetings.

11. Delivery of Council objectives through the CSP

11.1. The CSP has supported the delivery of the following Council objectives in 2012-13:

11.1.1. Prosperity

- Increase job prospects

As part of The Essex Probation and Police Integrated Offender Management Scheme, the CSP provided a small resource to encourage local businesses to employ offenders to support them in changing their ways away from criminality and into paid employment.

- Supporting Business

CSP works with local licenced premises businesses to ensure that they are supported through the Pubwatch/BOBB (Behave or Be Banned) scheme and also regular Test purchasing is carried out by Trading Standards to ensure that underage children are not accessing illegal alcohol/cigarettes. Supporting these local businesses helps the local economy to prosper.

11.1.2. People Feel Good

- Safe and Healthy Living

The CSP works with Essex Police and additional partners to identify and address Anti-Social Behaviour problems.

The CSP also works with local communities to give young people the opportunity to access local facilities and provide diversionary activities e.g. A Youth Bus visit the Marks Farm, Braintree, area once per week.

The vision of the Braintree CSP is to continually ensure that people feel that the District is a safe place to live. All annual priorities identified in the Strategic Assessment work towards this main aim.

The CSP involves the voluntary and community sector in its projects to enable them to be better placed to respond to local needs and sustain future needs.

11.1.3. Performance

- Value for Money

By working in Partnership all initiatives can be delivered in a cost effective and valued manner, and support all CSP Partner Agencies.

12. Report to Council

- 12.1. The Committee notes that many of the Council's objectives described above link directly to those of the CSP but that the Council receives no annual reports on the performance of the CSP. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Council receives an annual report on the performance of the CSP, with a suggestion that this is made via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee..

Recommendation 3 to Cabinet

That the Council receives an annual report on the performance of the CSP which takes account of how the CSP has delivered against the Council's objectives.

13. Specific CSP Projects

- 13.1. As part of the scrutiny, 3 projects set out below were selected for closer review.

Theme	Project
Education	Fire Break Mark II
Prevention	Integrated Offender Management
Domestic Abuse	'Responding to Domestic Abuse' Workshop

- 13.2. The comments of scrutiny members on each project are as follows:

13.2.1. Education - Fire Break Mark II

- The Fire Break project is providing excellent results;
- With funding only £10k, the project has resulted in 12 young people from troubled backgrounds gaining significantly in terms of self esteem and respect for others;
- The project had gained from Essex Fire and Rescue Service being viewed as impartial by children and young people. ??? Doesn't make sense and not sure what it is that you are trying to say?
- The project should have a follow up arrangement with the aim of ensuring that those young people how have gained certain qualities as a result of attending the project maintain those qualities; ? again doesn't make sense?

Recommendation 4 to Cabinet

That in the case of the Fire Break project, follow up arrangements are put in place with the aim of ensuring that those young people who have gained certain experiences and qualities as a result of attending the project maintain these positive outcomes.

13.2.2. Prevention - Integrated Offender Management

- The Probation Service is sharing a facility with the local police which helps in the development of a “joined-up” approach between the organisations to provide a holistic multi-agency approach to deterring offenders on the scheme from reoffending;
- Members thought there might be a role to involve village agents in the work of offender management. This could possibly be by the village agents extending their ‘eyes and ears’ role within the community to aid the deterrence of reoffending.

13.2.3. Domestic Abuse- ‘Responding to Domestic Abuse’ Workshop

- The project aims to raise awareness of the safer places organisation and accessing the service;
- The project also helps in directing people to a place of safety e.g. a refuge;
- Schools are visited to raise awareness of domestic abuse issues and healthy relationships;
- Support schemes are also provided to help women to regain their self-esteem and ideally build a new life without someone controlling them;
- Members thought there would advantages, particularly in looking for any further funding, if the benefits of the project could be drawn out in terms of the number of people referred to the service and those able to build a new life as a result of using the service;
- Members also thought the project would need to continue in some form as domestic abuse issues will continue to be present.

Recommendation 5 to Cabinet

That in the case of Domestic Abuse projects, the benefits of the project are drawn out in terms of the number of people referred to the service and those able to build a new life as a result of using the service;

Overview and Scrutiny Committee- Annual Work Programme 2013-14	Agenda No: 8
Report presented by: Cllr Dr Evans, Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report prepared by: Alastair Peace, Member Services Manager	
Background Papers: Report of the Rural Isolation Task and Finish Group, September 2008	Public Report
Options:	Key Decision: No

Executive Summary:

The Committee is invited to agree its Annual Work Programme for 2013-14.

All Braintree District Councillors were invited to suggest new topics for possible scrutiny review in the Committee's Work Programme for the year. The Scrutiny Steering Board (comprising Group Leaders and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) considered those suggestions at its meeting on 30th April as part of its deliberations on recommendations to the Committee on topics for scrutiny in 2013-14.

The Steering Board recommends to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that its Work Programme for 2013-14 comprises:

1. Main Topic for Scrutiny by the Committee

Moving young people who are NEET into Education, Employment or Training

2. Topic for Scrutiny by a Task and Finish Group

Provision of Public Services in Rural Areas

A further topic may be identified for review by a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group later in the year.

3. Regular Committee Scrutiny Items

a. Council's Budget

b. Community Safety Partnership

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 21st October 2010 that the Chairman of the Braintree District CSP would be invited to attend the meeting of the Committee on an annual basis to present an annual report on the CSPs activities.

However, given that the Committee is just completing a review of the CSP as its main scrutiny topic for 2012-13, it is suggested that the CSP is not scrutinised further in 2013-14 but that the Chairman of the Braintree District CSP be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to provide members with an update on the work of the CSP.

Scrutiny Items Carried Over from 2012-13

The Task and Finish Group on Affordable Housing is continuing with its scrutiny work into 2013-14 (see separate report to this meeting).

There are no other items carried forward from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2012-13.

Decision:

That the Committee's Annual Work Programme for 2013-14 comprises:

1. Main Scrutiny Topic for Scrutiny by the Committee

Moving young people who are NEET into Education, Employment or Training

Terms of Reference

- a) To identify the number and locations of young persons who are NEET and the problems this causes.
- b) To understand the skills gaps being faced by local employers and if the type training offered meets the gaps.
- c) To identify and evaluate the organisations, facilities and support services available to help move young people who are NEET into education, employment or training.
- d) Where appropriate, to recommend improvements to those organisations, facilities and support services to help move young people who are NEET into education, employment or training.

2. Topic for Scrutiny by a Task and Finish Group

Provision of Public Services in Rural Areas

Terms of Reference

- a) To identify any impacts specifically as a result of living in rural areas in the district to the delivery of public services (in particular, those delivered by Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, Police and Health Services). Impacts should include consideration if any result in social isolation or exclusion.
- b) To identify how the services in rural areas might be improved where any adverse impacts are identified.
- c) To identify the costs of the provision of these services in rural areas
- d) To evaluate the impact of the new localism fund on the delivery of these services
- e) To consider the relationship between Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and Parish Councils in the delivery of these services.

Note: The Terms of Reference of both the above topics are broad. Members may wish to consider refining the Terms of Reference to provide for more focussed reviews. In the case of the provision of rural services review, it may be beneficial to start with a review of the outcomes and progress against the Rural Isolation Task and Finish Group, which reported in September 2008.

3. Regular Committee Scrutiny Items

- a. **Council's Budget**
- b. **Community Safety Partnership** – an invitation to the Chairman of the Braintree District to provide members with an update on the work of the CSP.

Purpose of Decision: To agree the Committee's Work Programme for 2013-14.

Corporate implications	
Financial:	None arising out of this report.
Legal:	None arising out of this report.
Equalities/Diversity	To be considered within each scrutiny item.
Customer Impact:	To be considered within each scrutiny item
Environment and Climate Change:	None arising out of this report.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	To be considered within each scrutiny item.
Risks:	None arising out of this report.
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