

# Council AGENDA



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**Date: Monday 16 February 2015**

**Time: 7:15pm**

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

## **Membership:**

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

**Members of the Council are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.**

N BEACH  
Chief Executive

## 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 Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email [demse@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:demse@braintree.gov.uk) at least 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 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.** Please ensure that your mobile phone is switched to silent or is switched off during the meeting.

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

We welcome comments from members of the public to make our 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.....

.....

.....

.....

Contact details.....

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence to the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email [demse@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:demse@braintree.gov.uk)

## **INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS**

### **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest:-**

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

## **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

### **2 To receive any announcements/statements from the Chairman and/or Leader of the Council.**

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

To declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice where necessary before the meeting.

### **4 Public Question Time**

(See page 2)

### **5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 15th December 2014 (copy previously circulated).

### **6 Council Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19**

**6 - 8**

(1) Recommendations from Cabinet held on 2nd February 2015 – Council Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19.

(2) Council tax Resolution for 2015/16 (to follow).

*Members are requested to bring to this meeting the Cabinet Report item 6a - Council Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 and Medium – Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19 report, previously circulated.*

### **7 Reports from the Leader and Cabinet Members**

To receive the following reports from each Portfolio Holder.

Oral Questions to the Cabinet:

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

Where a verbal response cannot be given, a written response will be issued to all Members. (Procedure Rules 7.1 to 7.3 apply).

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

<b>7a</b>	<b>Councillor G Butland - Leader of the Council</b>	<b>9 - 10</b>
<b>7b</b>	<b>Councillor J Beavis - People and Participation</b>	<b>11 - 12</b>
<b>7c</b>	<b>Councillor D Bebb - Performance and Efficiency</b>	<b>13 - 14</b>
<b>7d</b>	<b>Councillor Lady Newton - Planning and Property</b>	<b>15 - 17</b>
<b>7e</b>	<b>Councillor W Schmitt - Place</b>	<b>18 - 20</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>List of Public Meetings Held Since Last Council Meeting</b> To raise any matters arising from the Minutes of meetings that have been held in Public Session since the Council meeting of 15th December 2014.	<b>21</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Chairmen's Statements</b> To receive statements from those Chairmen who have given prior notification in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7.9 and to respond to questions on such statements. None have been received.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Statements by Members</b> 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 7.6. There are none	
<b>11</b>	<b>External Organisations</b> To receive reports about and receive questions and answers on the business of external organisations. There are none.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Exclusion of Public and Press: - To give consideration to adopting the following Resolution: -</b> 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**

### **13 Leader's or Cabinet Member Statements - Private Session**

Leader's Statments or statements by Cabinet Members containing exempt information on a key issue.  
There are none.

### **14 Policy Recommendations and References - Private Session**

There are none.

### **15 Reports from the Leader or Cabinet Members - Private Session**

To receive any reports from the Leader of the Council and each Portfolio Holder containing exempt information and to ask questions on matters contained in the reports.  
There are none.

### **Oral Questions from Councillors - Private Session**

Questions to the Cabinet:

Members are reminded that following the presentation of each Cabinet Member's report, Members may put questions to the Cabinet Member on matters relating to their portfolio, the powers and duties of the Council or the District.

Where a verbal response cannot be given, a written response will be issued to all Members. (Procedure Rules 7.1 to 7.3 apply).

Members are reminded that questions under this item must relate to exempt information.

### **16 Private Meetings Held Since the Last Council Meeting**

To raise any matters arising from the Minutes of meetings that have been held in Private Session since the Council meeting of 16th December 2013.  
There are none.

### **17 Chairmen's Statements - Private Session.**

To receive statements containing exempt information from those Chairmen who have given prior notification in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7.9 and to respond to questions on such statements.  
There are none.

### **18 Statements by Members - Private Session**

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 7.6.  
There are none.

<b>Recommendation from Cabinet – 2nd February 2015</b>		<b>Agenda No: 6</b>
<b>Council Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19</b>		
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Deliver excellent customer service and provide value for money	
<b>Portfolio Area:</b>	Performance and Efficiency	
<b>Report presented by:</b>	Councillor David Bebb, Cabinet Member for Performance and Efficiency	
<b>Report prepared by:</b>	Governance and Members Team	
<b>Background Papers:</b>		<b>Public Report</b>
<b>MINUTE EXTRACT</b>		
<b>Cabinet – 2nd February 2015</b>		
<b>Council Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 and Medium- Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19</b>		
61	<b><u>COUNCIL BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2015/16 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2015/16 TO 2018/19</u></b>	
<b>INFORMATION:</b> Consideration was given to a report on the Council's proposed budget and Council Tax 2015/16 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19.		
In discussing the report, specific reference was made to Appendix G 'Allocation of the Estimated Surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31st March 2015'. It was noted that the reference to 'Braintree' was unclear and that it should state 'Braintree District Council'. It was also noted that a report on the Business Investment Fund to provide financial loan support to businesses in the district would be presented to Cabinet in March 2015 setting out the details of the proposed scheme. [Subject to Council approval of the budget allocation for this scheme.]		
<b>DECISION:</b> That it be <b><u>Recommended to Council</u></b> that the following be approved:		
1. The budget variations to the current base budget as detailed in Section 4 of the main report and Appendices B and C;		
2. The savings as detailed in Appendix E;		

3. The Priority Areas Investment bids, ongoing and for one-off expenditure, detailed in Appendix A;
4. That the New Burdens Grant of £27,317 to be received in 2015/16 be held in an earmarked reserve, to be utilised in respect of the Local Council Tax Support scheme and authorised by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Property;
5. That the Council Tax Freeze grant receivable from the Government in 2015/16 be accepted;
6. The Council's discretionary fees and charges for 2015/16 as detailed in Appendix D;
7. That the Council's housing rents and service charges are increased by 2.2% for 2015/16, as detailed in Appendix D;
8. That delegated authority is given to the appropriate Cabinet Member to agree variations to Trade Waste, Town Hall Centre, Building Control and Car Parking fees and charges for commercial purposes;
9. Discretionary Council Tax discounts and exemptions for 2015/16 are:
  - Discount applicable to empty dwellings undergoing major repairs is set at 0% for the twelve month period;
  - Discount applicable to vacant dwellings is set at 0% for the six month period;
  - Discount applicable to second homes is set at 0%;
  - Empty Homes Premium charged on dwellings vacant for over two years be set at 0%;
10. The Council's Pay Policy for 2015/16 as detailed in Appendix H;
11. An allocation of £894,484 from the General Fund unallocated balance in 2015/16;
12. Transfers between earmarked reserves and back to the Unallocated Balance in 2014/15 and estimated drawdown from earmarked reserves for 2015/16 as detailed in Appendix L;

#### Capital

13. The General Fund Capital bids for 2015/16 listed in Appendix M;

#### Treasury Management

14. The Prudential Indicators and limits set out in Appendix O;
15. The Policy on Minimum Revenue Provision as recommended in Appendix O;
16. The Treasury Management Strategy, including annual investment strategy, for 2015/16 (Appendix O);

### Council Tax

17. The proposed estimates (producing a budget requirement for Council Tax purposes of £14,729,942) as detailed in Appendix I and the Council Tax for 2015/16 of £159.57 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).

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To determine the budget and Council Tax level proposals for 2015/16 to be submitted to Full Council for consideration, in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution.

**NOTE:** Members are reminded that it is a requirement that the vote on the recommendations or any amendments on the Council Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19 is a Recorded Vote.



**LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**Agenda No: 7a**

**OVERALL CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DIRECTION  
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**Corporate Strategy**

**1. Braintree District Business Leaders' Board – 13 January 2015**

Together with Cllr Cunningham I attended the above meeting and presented to Business Leaders the key elements of the Councils proposals for 2015/16. There was a useful exchange of views and ideas which have been considered in putting forward the final budget statement.

In addition, Colchester Institute, who hosted the Board meeting at the College at Braintree, outlined their development plans for the College including improving their science, technology, engineering and maths provision. Stansted Airport also outlined their Sustainable Development Plan which aims to create up to 10,000 jobs in the coming decades through developing the Airport to its full capacity using the existing runway.

**2. Visit to Greater Manchester Combined Authorities (GMCA) – 23 January 2015**

The Leader of Uttlesford DC, the Chief Executives of Essex CC and Braintree DC and the Assistant Chief Executive of Thurrock Council and I visited Manchester to talk with political leaders and senior officers about the development of the GMCA and its devolution deal with the Government. The main points of the deal are:-

- A consolidated, multi-year transport budget
- Responsibility for franchised bus services, railway stations, and 'smart ticketing' (an example of this is London's Oyster Card in Greater Manchester)
- A Housing Investment Fund of £300m over 10 years
- The power to produce a statutory spatial strategy, equivalent to the power of the Mayor of London: this would be subject to rejection by two-thirds of the 'combined authority cabinet' (i.e. the ten leaders of the combined authority's member authorities)
- Devolved business support budgets: the Growth Accelerator, Manufacturing Advice Service and UKTI Export Advice
- Power to restructure further education in Greater Manchester, plus control of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers
- Joint commissioning, with the Department for Work and Pensions, of the next stage of the Work Programme
- The opportunity to plan the integration of health and social care

**3. Essex Leaders Meeting 29 January 2015**

There were two items on the agenda – The Essex Waste Management Partnership and Devolution of Powers to Essex.

In respect of the Waste Management Partnership it was agreed that although there was agreement to the project continuing there was still a significant amount of work still to be done. The lead Chief Executive, David Marchant of Castle Point BC, will keep leaders informed of progress.

As regards Devolution of Powers it was agreed to establish a small group of Essex Leaders to work on this. Nicola Beach will be the lead Chief Executive on this project.

#### **4. Essex Police & Crime Panel (EP&CP) – 29 January 2015**

The main agenda item of this meeting was to consider the proposed precept by the Commissioner for 2015/16. The approved note of the meeting has not yet been circulated so what is below are my observations.

Several members expressed concern at the quality of the budget papers prepared for the Panel and compared them unfavourably with those produced by local authorities. As a result the Commissioner was subjected to detailed questioning on his plans. Members of the panel drew upon information contained in the HMIC VFM profile of all forces across England & Wales. Members can access this report at <http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publication/value-for-money-profiles-2014/>

The Commissioner proposed a precept increase of 1.996% which is the maximum permitted by the Government before a referendum is triggered.

I am very disappointed that the Commissioner has again seen fit to increase the burden on Council Taxpayers and as in previous years I voted against his proposals. This year I was supported by the representatives of Basildon, Rochford and Uttlesford Councils.

### **Economic Development Strategy**

#### **Skills**

A joint promotion campaign with the College at Braintree (Colchester Institute) to encourage businesses to take on apprentices, "30 in 30", will be launched at a business breakfast on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at Oaklands Inn, Great Notley. The aim of the campaign is to secure commitment from District businesses to take on 30 apprentices, over a 30 day period, and the launch will include presentations from businesses who have taken on apprenticeships explaining how this helped them to deliver their business plans.

Councillor Graham Butland  
Leader of the Council

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF  
PEOPLE & PARTICIPATION**

**Agenda No: 7b**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING**

**1 – Braintree District Health & Wellbeing Panel**

The Health and Wellbeing Panel met in January. The group, which consists of multi-agency partners, is pivotal in the planning and delivery of health and wellbeing programmes across the District. From the information examined in the most up to date Braintree Public Health England Health Profile the following areas continue to be of concern:-

- Hip fractures in the over 65's
- Higher than the national average level of obesity and physical inactivity

**2 – Livewell Campaign**

The Livewell brand was officially launched before Christmas and will provide a catalyst to drive forward the agenda to encourage the people of the Braintree District to live fit and healthy lives. This will include a multi-agency approach to ensure all partners work collectively for the benefit of the people of the Braintree District.

**3 – Health and Wellbeing Champions**

I have supported many of the Council's staff in becoming Workplace Health Champions. The champions have completed a "Workplace Health Champion Training Course" and this training will enable, through staff, the health and wellbeing agenda to embed within the organisation. I have written a personal note to all staff involved thanking them for their energy and enthusiasm.

**4 – Stepping Up Campaign**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January I joined the Leader of Essex County Council at the new Witham Leisure Centre to launch the "Stepping Up" campaign. This campaign is all about the simple steps that people can take to create stronger communities. The campaign includes support around:-

- Informal caring
- Giving children the best start in life
- Keeping active and healthy
- Volunteering
- Encouraging reuse and recycling

**5 – Community Agents Essex**

The Agents support independent living for older people within our District. It is an innovative partnership supporting older people and their informal carers. Community Agents will visit older people at home to discuss and help with:-

- Mobility issues
- Practical living skills
- Social inclusion

- Healthy living
- Caring for someone
- Individual resilience

## **ACTIVE COMMUNITIES**

### **1 – Braintree District Timebank**

Braintree Timebank has launched (volunteering with a twist). Time banking is neighbourhood help and support. It is a great way to be a part of the community. Once you sign up you are given an account. Each time a member gives time to help another they in turn build up credits. The credits can be withdrawn when there is something a member would like in return. For further information contact:- [timebank@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:timebank@braintree.gov.uk)

### **2 – Safeguarding Audit**

Ongoing work, behind the scenes, continues to ensure that Braintree District Council complies with the national safeguarding audit. The audit has been completed and officers will work through the findings once the self-assessment has been scored.

### **3 – The Rural Community Council of Essex**

I wrote to Rt. Hon. Elizabeth Truss MP to ask her not to withdraw funding for the ACRE Network of Rural Community Councils. I can confirm that Defra has announced that it will continue to maintain its £2.3m investment in the ACRE Network of Rural Community Councils for 2015/16. This is good news for the Rural Community Council of Essex who support our local parish and town councils with a multitude of help and advice. It was good to receive thanks from the Rural Community Council of Essex for highlighting the issue to the Minister.

### **4 – Women’s Tour – 17<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> June 2015**

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June will see almost 100 of the World’s top women riders racing across Essex from the start in Braintree to Clacton’s Marine Parade. The Tour de France put the Braintree District on the map for cycling. This is a rare opportunity and a real honour to host the start of the Women’s Tour and once again will provide a great opportunity to promote our District. It is planned to hold the annual festival of sport on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June at Weavers Park. The festival is a partnership approach to encourage young people particularly to engage in sport and healthy living.

### **5 – Active Braintree District Network**

This group continues to grow and provides a real partnership approach in looking at solutions to reduce obesity and physical inactivity within the District. The latest work programme includes applying for funding streams from Sport England, planning the annual sports festival and organising the Braintree District Sports Awards 2015. I was delighted to be asked to join the board of Active Essex which is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest County Sports Partnership in the country. I will, of course, use this opportunity to benefit the Braintree District.

Councillor Joanne Beavis  
Cabinet Member – People & Participation

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

**Agenda No: 7c**

**Staffing**

Finance service delivery resilience has been impacted due the sad sudden death in service of Paul Jennings, Accountancy Assistant, on December 21<sup>st</sup>. The Team has agreed temporary arrangements to cover key processes in the short term.

**December Council Tax and Business Rates Collection**

Following the Lloyds Bank/ BACS issue affecting the non-collection of 5,433 direct debits, value £1,174,057, collection performance for December is down, but with contingency arrangements put in hand performance should be back on track by March. All staff within the service worked valiantly including over a pre-Christmas weekend to undertake the corrective action required and ensure letters were produced and sent to all affected customers. The corrective action worked and as customers were kept informed on our progress, there were minimal complaints, considering the number of customers affected.

We have lodged an official complaint with Lloyds/BACS with a claim for recovery of our costs. An interim payment has been received and we are pressing for the full cost to be recovered.

**Icelandic Glitnir Bank – repatriation of funds held in an escrow account in Iceland**

Whilst a distribution of £821,000 of the original investment of £1,000,000 was received in £ sterling in 2012, a further sum of approx. £220k was made in Icelandic Krona, which due international currency transfer restrictions, has been locked in an escrow account in Iceland. An opportunity has now arisen through a currency auction by the Central Bank of Iceland to repatriate funds from Icelandic krona to sterling via euros and a bid via an intermediary bank has now been submitted.

**ICT/Customer Services**

Evaluation is in hand on the various options for wholesale replacement of our servers and Windows software which are nearing end of scheduled life, and are due for replacement later this year. Our server room now accommodates servers from Colchester Borough Council. A new standby back-up generator will be installed in the new financial year.

The recent introduction of in- cab technology on the roll out of new routing for domestic waste, and now trade waste collection, has enabled significant financial savings to be made, together with improvements to responsiveness to customer waste collection

queries.

### **Investment Workshop**

Cabinet and Corporate Management Board are holding an Investment Workshop on February 6<sup>th</sup> to review the current status of our investment strategy and evaluate options for further investment opportunities.

### **DCN Assembly**

I represented the Council at the District Councils Network Assembly on January 27th. Kris Hopkins, the Deputy Minister for Communities and Local Government gave a review on current DCLG activities and responded to a number of issues raised by members, including the disparity in funding between urban and rural authorities. This was followed by a session on Combined Authorities and Economic Prosperity Board, and a workshop on potential alternative district council delivery models.

Councillor David Bebb  
Cabinet Member for Performance and Efficiency

Further information on the contents of this report can be obtained by contacting:

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

**Agenda No: 7d**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Rail

A Consultation Document on the next Anglia Rail Franchise was published on 9th December 2014. Stakeholders, including the business community are being consulted to inform a District Council response highlighting the necessity of increased frequency and reliability on the Braintree/Witham Branch line as part of the Franchise specification (via a passing loop). The deadline for responses to the consultation is 16th March 2014.

Broadband

Superfast Essex and Braintree District Council will be jointly hosting a business breakfast in early February 2015 to promote improvements to superfast broadband being provided by Superfast Essex through the BDUK programme and to seek feedback on a draft brochure explaining the options for broadband connectivity available to businesses. The District Council has provided match funding of £250,000 to provide extended broadband coverage in the District through the BDUK extension programme – the highest match commitment of any of the Essex Districts. Superfast Essex is currently working with BT to map this extended coverage, which is geared towards improving access for businesses.

**REGENERATION**

In Braintree Town Centre, planning permission has now been granted for enhancement works to Sandpit Lane including an archway and planters to encourage footfall into the Lane. Legal work is being completed and installation works will commence shortly. Progress continues with works to enable the trial pedestrianisation of the town centre on market days. Mapping & proposals for re-provisioning of disabled Badge holder spaces have now been prepared by the Parking Partnership and consultation is underway on these proposals. The Partnership has also prepared alternative signage plans and discussed re-routing with Network Management at Essex Highways.

Proposals for improved pedestrian signage in Braintree Witham and Halstead are in the process of being commissioned and it is anticipated that a tender will have been let for the works by early February 2015. A presentation on town centre regeneration proposals was given to Witham Town Council on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 with consultation on the proposals due to take place during February 2015.

**PLANNING POLICY**

The sites which are being proposed by landowners and developers through our 'Call for Sites' have now been processed. Over 300 sites have been submitted across the District, at a variety of sizes and for a variety of uses. These are available to view via



an interactive map at [www.braintree.gov.uk/callforsites](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/callforsites)

The first public stage of consultation on our new Local Plan, Issues and Scoping, will be subject of a 6 week public consultation starting from the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015. A full programme of consultation and engagement with our residents and businesses will take place.

## **HOUSING**

### Homelessness & Temporary Accommodation

Between April 2014 and the end of December 2014 the Council accepted 110 households as being eligible, homeless and in priority need. The total number of acceptances for 2013/14 was 166 households. A forward projection based on the current position suggests a small reduction on the 2013/14 figure by year end. At the end of December 2014 there were 61 homeless households in temporary accommodation arranged by the Council, either awaiting a decision on their homeless application or waiting to be moved on to more settled accommodation after being accepted under homeless provisions.

In the summer of 2014 as part of the first stage of 'Gold Standard' programme for homelessness services, our Housing Team took part in a diagnostic peer review process with three other Essex councils. The process is supported by the National Practitioner Support Service and is designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. In order to move to the second stage of the process a score of over 60% is required, we achieved a score in the peer review of 69%. This second stage now involves applying for each of ten local challenges. These ten challenging standards are set out in our Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan. Applications are assessed by an independent advisory committee.

### Affordable Housing Development

Since April 2014 there have been a total of 81 new affordable homes.  
The units were:

Two developments and open market purchases by Colne including:

- 24 one and two bedroom flats at Hyde Farm Corner, South Street, Braintree.
- 3 two bedroom flats purchased on the open market in Braintree.
- 13 one and two bedroom properties developed on land off Constance Close, Witham.

Three Greenfields Community Housing developments including:

- 25 one and two bedroom homes on Walford Way in Coggeshall
- 4 homes (including 2 bungalows) on Ronald Road in Halstead and
- 4 properties purchased on the open market

One 8 property rural exception scheme development in Stisted developed by Hastoe. We are anticipating 93 further completions by the end of March 2015.

### The Housing Register

Between April and the end of December 2014, 519 housing association homes were let in the Braintree District via the Gateway to Homechoice, Choice Based Lettings scheme.



As at the end of December 2014 there were 2,283 applicants on the Housing Register consisting of:-

Band A	101
Band B	247
Band C	572
Band D	111
Band E	1225
Band F	27

Band F is used for applicants for 'non-bidding' schemes such as Helen Court in Witham

## **ASSET MANAGEMENT**

### New Business Start-Up Units on Springwood Drive, Braintree.

Construction of 12 new business start-up units with meeting rooms, kitchen areas and conference facilities on Springwood Drive in Braintree has now commenced. The construction period is 12 months. These new facilities will provide further opportunities for new business creation and employment within the District. It is proposed that once completed these new facilities will be leased to Ignite Business Enterprise Limited who will manage them alongside the existing start-up premises on Springwood Drive.

### Bramston Sports Centre, Witham.

Demolition of the redundant Bramston Sports Centre site in Witham has now been completed. The Council is now considering its disposal options for the site.

### George Yard Multi-Storey Car Park, Braintree.

Major planned maintenance works to the George Yard multi-storey car park in Braintree have now been completed. The works included resurfacing of the top deck, drainage improvements, concrete repairs and the replacement of expansion joints.

<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Councillor Lady Patricia Newton</b>
<b>Designation:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Planning and Property</b>
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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF PLACE**

**Agenda No: 7e**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Green Heart of Essex/Love Essex Campaigns**

Work continues in the fight against litter bugs with a fine of £737 being given by Magistrates for a cigarette but not being binned. Also a fine of £1,000 was given for failure to clear up a huge pile of litter and waste in a garden.

The Love Essex Campaign, spearheaded by Braintree District Council is a finalist in this years Keep Britain Tidy Diamond Jubilee Awards on February 12<sup>th</sup> where I have also have the privilege of giving a presentation

**New strategy to support bees' needs**

The Government is launching a new strategy to support bees and other pollinators that are vital for fertilising plants so they produce fruit and seeds.

Organisations such as Network Rail, Highways Agency and the National Trust who manage more than 800,000 hectares of land in England have signed up to the National Pollinator Strategy. They have pledged to take action by doing things such as planting more bee-friendly wild flowers and allowing grass to grow longer.

Defra has announced more funding will be made available to farmers and landowners who take steps to protect pollinators through a new Countryside Stewardship Scheme

**Energy**

The new Solar Panels on Halstead Leisure Centre were officially opened by Councillor Robert Mitchell on January 30<sup>th</sup>. This is part of the ongoing process of installing panels on all appropriate BDC properties.

**Dogs**

Tough new legal powers to help prevent thousands of dog attacks every year have been given to Police Forces and Local Authorities. For the first time, Police and Local Authorities will be able to demand that owners take action to prevent a dog attack or risk fine of up to £20,000. If a complaint has been made about a dog to the Council or Police, its owners could be ordered to do any or all of the following:

- Attend dog training classes
- Muzzle the dog or require it to be on a lead in public
- Require the dog to be micro chipped and/or neutered
- Repair fencing to prevent the dog leaving the property

The "Dealing with irresponsible dog ownership: practitioner's manual" will guide Police Forces and Local Authorities in the use of their new legal powers to prevent dog attacks.

## **OPERATIONS**

### **Car Parking**

I am pleased to announce that the top floor at George Yard Multi-Storey Car Park re-opened in early December, following improvement works. Work is due to start early next month to relocate all blue badge holder spaces to the ground floor to improve accessibility. This will be done overnight to avoid disruption to customers.

The new evening and overnight parking tariff at our Pay & Display car parks came into force on 12 January 2015 and all tariff boards have been updated.

Resurfacing works are due to commence in the permit holders-only section of Newlands Drive car park on 26 January 2015, followed by Lockrams Lane.

The new car park at Easton Road, Witham, is now in use and provides another facility for long-stay parking and, being situated very close to the railway station; it is a prime site for commuters.

### **Refuse & Recycling**

I am pleased to report that the vast majority of customers took note of the advanced collection dates scheduled over Christmas and the New Year and the arrangements worked extremely well, with all scheduled collections being completed on the due date. I would like to thank customers for their cooperation, as well as the Council's staff who worked extremely hard to ensure that the additional waste generated at this time of year was collected. We were particularly pleased with the volume of glass that customers brought to our bring bank sites, although this did result in some sites taking longer to empty than we would have liked.

### **ICDC (Integrated Commercial & Domestic Collections)**

With the opening of the County Council's new Waste Transfer Station at Cordons Farm, on Monday, 2 February 2015, our new routes commenced and our in-cab technology went live. These changes were designed to deliver better value for money for Taxpayers, improve communication to customers, reduce our carbon footprint and offer greater choice to businesses (particularly those in rural areas) as they will now be able to use the Council's recycling service to dispose of their recyclable waste.

A comprehensive communication plan was implemented well in advance of the changes and this has helped to ensure that customers are aware of the change in collection days, and also a change in the time when crews visit. I would just take this opportunity to remind customers that their waste should be presented by 7am on the day of collection to avoid the risk of it being missed if the crew visit earlier than expected.

## **LANDSCAPES AND COUNTRYSIDE**

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 10am a circle of five Lime trees will be planted in Hoppit Mead Nature Reserve to commemorate the Centenary of World War One. The trees will form a circle of healing; each tree will represent Remembrance, Renewal, Reflection, Respect and Resilience. Assisting will be the Hoppit Mead volunteers, local scouts, guides, brownies and schools. Also a native Elm tree will be planted in memory of Mel Crow, plus 3 Liquid Ambers.

Please note that the Friends of Bocking Blackwater and Hoppit Mead are always looking for volunteers for their monthly work parties. Please contact Amanda Turburville for details.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

The details of the new Delegation of Powers to permit use of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 were presented to Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015.

Councillor Wendy Schmitt  
Cabinet Member – Place

<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Councillor Wendy Schmitt</b>
<b>Designation:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Place</b>
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:cllr.wschmitt@braintree.gov.uk">cllr.wschmitt@braintree.gov.uk</a>

<b>LIST OF PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD SINCE LAST COUNCIL MEETING</b>		<b>Agenda No: 8</b>
<b>Corporate Priority:</b> Not applicable <b>Report presented by:</b> Not applicable <b>Report prepared by:</b> Emma Wisbey – Governance and Member Manager		
<b>Background Papers:</b> Published Minutes of the meetings listed within the report below.		<b>Public Report</b>
<b>Options:</b> Report for noting		<b>Key Decision:</b> No
<b>Executive Summary:</b>  Since the last Council meeting held on 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2014, the following Minutes have been published for meetings held in public session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Planning Committee – 23rd December 2014</li> <li>(2) Planning Committee – 6th January 2015</li> <li>(3) Local Plan Sub-Committee – 12th January 2015</li> <li>(4) Governance Committee – 14th January 2015</li> <li>(5) Planning Committee – 20th January 2015</li> <li>(6) Braintree District Local Highways Panel – 22nd January 2015</li> <li>(7) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 28th January 2015</li> <li>(8) Cabinet – 2nd February 2015 (copy to follow)</li> <li>(9) Planning Committee – 3rd February 2015 (copy to follow)</li> </ul>		
<b>Decision:</b> Members are invited to note the Minutes published.		
<b>Purpose of Decision:</b> Not applicable		
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	Emma Wisbey	
<b>Designation:</b>	Governance and Member Manager	
<b>Ext. No.</b>	2610	
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