

COMBINED SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 8th August 2022 at 7.15pm

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

Members of the public will be able to view and listen to this meeting via YouTube.
To access the meeting please use the link below:

<http://www.braintree.gov.uk/youtube>

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

Councillor J Abbott
Councillor J Baugh
Councillor G Courtauld
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham
Councillor Mrs C Dervish
Councillor Mrs D Garrod
Councillor A Hensman
Councillor Mrs A Kilmartin

Councillor W Korsinah
Councillor T McArdle
Councillor Mrs J Pell
Councillor Mrs J Sandum
Councillor Mrs L Walters
Councillor Miss M Weeks
Councillor Mrs S Wilson
Councillor B Wright

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

A WRIGHT
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Pecuniary Interests (OPI) or Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI).

Any Member with a DPI, OPI or NPI must declare the nature of their interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Members must not participate in any discussion of the matter in which they have declared a DPI or OPI 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 Question Time – Registration and Speaking:

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time.

Members of the public wishing to participate are requested to register by contacting the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk by midday on the second working day before the day of the Committee meeting. For example, if the Committee meeting is due to be held on a Tuesday, the registration deadline is midday on Friday, (where there is a bank holiday Monday you will need to register by midday on the previous Thursday). Public Question Time speakers may participate in person or virtually. Speaker preference must be indicated upon registration.

The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register for Public Question Time if they are received after the registration deadline.

The public may ask questions on any matter listed on the Agenda for this meeting. All questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be read within the 3 minutes allotted for each question/statement.

The Chairman of the Committee has discretion to extend the time allocated for public question time and to amend the order in which questions/statements are presented to the Committee.

Public Attendance at Meetings:

Public attendance is welcomed, but is subject to restrictions due to the Council's arrangements for keeping Causeway House Covid secure and visitors safe.

Public attendance is limited and will be on a first come first served basis with priority given to Public Registered Speakers. In order to maintain safe distances, the Council may have to refuse entry to members of the public. The public may not be able to sit in the Council Chamber, but will be able to observe the meeting from a public gallery through a large screen. Alternatively, the Council meetings are webcast and are available via the Council's YouTube Channel and can be viewed by the public as a live broadcast, or as a recording following the meeting.

Public speakers and public attendees are required to attend on their own, and where possible only one representative of any community group, family household or Company should attend. Members of the public intending to come to Causeway House to observe a meeting are recommended to watch the meeting via the webcast, or to contact the Governance and Members Team to reserve a seat within the public gallery.

Health and Safety/COVID:

Causeway House is a Covid secure building and arrangements are in place to ensure that all visitors are kept safe. Visitors are requested to follow all instructions displayed at Causeway House or given by Officers during the course of their attendance.

Anyone attending meetings is asked to make themselves aware of the nearest available fire exit. In the event of an alarm you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by staff. You will be directed to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building.

Documents: Agendas, Reports and Minutes can be accessed via www.braintree.gov.uk

Data Processing: During the meeting the Council will be collecting performance data of participants' connectivity to the meeting. This will be used for reviewing the functionality of MS Teams/Zoom and YouTube as the Council's platform for virtual meetings and for monitoring compliance with the legal framework for Council meetings. Anonymised performance data may be shared with third parties.

For further information on how the Council processes data, please see the Council's Privacy Policy.

https://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200136/access_to_information/376/privacy_policy

Mobile Phones:

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

Webcast and Audio Recording:

Please note that this meeting will be webcast and audio recorded. You can view webcasts for up to 6 months after the meeting using this link: <http://braintree.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>. The meeting will also be broadcast via the Council's YouTube Channel.

Comments and Suggestions:

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

PUBLIC SESSION

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declaration of Interests - Scrutiny Committee

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

3 Public Question Time

(See paragraph above)

4 Appointment of Chairman

To appoint a Chairman of the Combined Scrutiny Committee.

5 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

Members to note the Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Scrutiny Review.

5-8

6 Scrutiny Review into Cost of Living Crisis - First Evidence Gathering Session

7 Urgent Business - Public Session

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

Report Title: Terms of Reference and Work Programme	
Report to: Combined Scrutiny Committee	
Date: 8 th August 2022	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Kim Cole, Head of Governance	
Enquiries to: Jessica Mann, Governance and Members Officer	
Jessica.mann@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To outline the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Combined Scrutiny Committee that were agreed as part of the Motion by Councillor Mrs J Beavis which was approved at the meeting of Full Council on 20th June 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to note the Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Scrutiny Review into the Cost of Living Crisis.

3. Summary

- 3.1 At the meeting of Full Council on 20th June 2022, the following Motion was approved:

“This Council recognises the Cost of Living Crisis and the impact it is having on many residents in the Braintree District.

Council also recognises that the Government has introduced a range of support measures including relief through council tax bills and new grant support, with additional specific grants to assist pensioners, people with disabilities and the poorest households.

However the Government has stated it cannot cover all impacts and therefore, given the scale of the Cost of Living Crisis, Council requires the Chairmen of the Community Development and the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committees to establish a combined committee consisting of all the Members of the respective two Scrutiny Committees. The remit of the combined committee will be to review the measures that the Council and its partners in Essex are already offering, and to recommend any further assistance that can be delivered this financial year for the residents of Braintree District.

The combined committee is to report back to the meeting of the Council to be held on Monday 10th October 2022, and to facilitate this timetable there shall be no more than two meetings of the combined committee.”

- 3.2 As a result, it was necessary to consider putting in place the relevant arrangements and consider this as a short-term Scrutiny Review headed by the Members of the Partnership Development and Community Development Scrutiny Committees, who would work together as part of a larger 'combined' Scrutiny Committee. The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Review have been devised in line with the approved Motion by Councillor Mrs Beavis.
- 3.3 In line with the Motion, it is intended that the Scrutiny Committee will meet on two separate occasions; once in early August and once in early September.
- 3.4 The first meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will take place on Monday, 8th August 2022 and will be used to appoint a Chair/Vice-Chair, note the Terms of Reference and commence with the evidence gathering for the Scrutiny Review. The second meeting will take place on Monday, 5th September 2022 and will provide an opportunity to seek clarification on any areas arising from the first meeting, and will consider the draft report.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. Other Implications

- 6.1 None.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.3 This meeting is an evidence gathering session only and no decisions will be made; therefore, it is not necessary for an Equalities Impact Assessment to be undertaken.

8. List of Appendices

None.

9. Background Papers

Agenda and Minutes – Full Council 20th June 2022.

Terms of Reference – Combined Scrutiny Committee

Examining the ‘Cost of Living Crisis’

This Council recognises the Cost of Living Crisis and the impact it is having on many residents in the Braintree District.

The Council also recognises that the Government has introduced a range of support measures including relief through council tax bills and new grant support, with additional specific grants to assist pensioners, people with disabilities and the poorest households.

However, the Government has stated it cannot cover all impacts and therefore, given the scale of the Cost of Living Crisis, the Council on 20th June 2022 agreed that the Chairmen of the Community Development and the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committees should establish a combined Scrutiny Committee consisting of all the Members of the respective two Scrutiny Committees.

The Combined Scrutiny Committee will undertake a short-term scrutiny review in order to:-

1. Review the measures that the Council and its partners in Essex are already offering the residents of the Braintree District in terms of support during the current crisis.
2. Recommend any further assistance that the Council could deliver during the current financial year in order to support the District’s residents further.

There will be two meetings of the Combined Scrutiny Committee:-

- The first meeting will take place on Monday, 8th August 2022, and will be an evidence gathering meeting.
- The second meeting will take place on Monday, 5th September 2022 and will provide an opportunity to seek clarification on any areas arising from the first meeting, and will consider the draft report.

As part of the evidence gathering, the Combined Scrutiny Committee will hear from:

- Suzanne Bennett, Corporate Director (Support Services)
- Cherie Root, Corporate Director (Operational)
- Julie Rigby, Revenues and Benefits Manager
- Tracey Parry, Community Services Manager
- Caroline Elias-Stephenson, Head of Housing and Communities
- Mark Wilson, Sustainability Manager (Cost of Living Officer Group)
- Tom Walker, Executive Director (Essex County Council)

Following the end of the review, the Combined Scrutiny Committee will be required to prepare a report, including any recommendations, ready for presentation at the meeting of Full Council on Monday 10th October 2022.