

# **CABINET AGENDA**

**Monday 8th February 2021 at 7:15pm**

In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held via Zoom and by the Council's YouTube channel – Braintree District Council Committees.

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>

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

Overall Vision and Strategic Direction	Councillor G Butland (Leader of the Council)
Economic Development and Infrastructure	Councillor T Cunningham (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Communities, Culture and Tourism	Councillor F Ricci
Corporate Transformation	Councillor J McKee
Environment and Place	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt
Finance and Performance Management	Councillor D Bebb
Health and Wellbeing	Councillor P Tattersley
Homes	Councillor K Bowers
Planning	Councillor Mrs G Spray

Invitees: Councillors J Abbott, Mrs J Pell and D Mann are invited to attend as Group Leaders and Councillors Mrs D Garrod and Mrs M Cunningham are invited to attend for Agenda Item 6a.

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](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk) by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

A WRIGHT  
Chief Executive

## INFORMATION FOR MEMBER – 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:

In response to the Coronavirus the Council has implemented procedures for Public Question Time for its virtual meetings which are hosted via Zoom.

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

Participation will be via the submission of a written question or statement which will be read out by an Officer or the Registered Speaker during the meeting. All written questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be read **within 3 minutes** allotted for each question/statement.

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](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk) by midday on the 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 Monday, (where there is a bank holiday Monday you will need to register by midday on the previous Friday).

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

Upon registration members of the public may indicate whether they wish to read their question/statement or to request an Officer to read their question/statement on their behalf during the virtual meeting. Members of the public who wish to read their question/statement will be provided with a link to attend the meeting to participate at the appropriate part of the Agenda.

All registered speakers are required to submit their written questions/statements to the Council by no later than 9am on the day of the meeting by emailing them to [governance@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk). In the event that a registered speaker is unable to connect to the virtual meeting their question/statement will be read by an Officer.

Questions/statements received by the Council will be published on the Council's website. The Council reserves the right to remove any defamatory comment in the submitted questions/statements.

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.

**Documents:** Agendas, Reports, Minutes and Public Question Time questions and statements can be accessed via [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://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](https://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200136/access_to_information/376/privacy_policy)

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](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk)

**1 Apologies for Absence****2 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.

**3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 23rd November 2020 (copy previously circulated).

**4 Public Question Time**

(See paragraph above)

**5 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT****5a Council Budget and Council Tax 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25**

To recommend to Council proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22; Council Tax for 2021/22; Fees and charges for 2021/22; and the Capital Strategy (including the Treasury Strategy and Investment Policy) for 2021/22.

Note: This report has been published as a separate report.

**6 OVERALL CORPORATE STRATEGY & DIRECTION****6a Scrutiny Reviews referral from Full Council 5 - 30****7 HEALTH & WELLBEING****7a New Artificial Grass Pitch Facility – Halstead Leisure Centre 31 - 36****8 Cabinet Member decisions made under delegated powers 37 - 38**

Scrutiny Reviews referral from Full Council		Agenda No: 6a
Portfolio	Environment and Place Health and Communities	
Corporate Outcome:	A sustainable environment and a great place to live, work and play Residents live well in healthy and resilient communities where residents feel supported A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services	
Report presented by:	Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council Emma	
Report prepared by:	Wisbey, Governance and Members Manager	
Background Papers:		Public Report
Reports and Minutes of Full Council – <a href="#">7<sup>th</sup> December 2020</a> Reports and Minutes of the <a href="#">Community Development Group</a> Reports and Minutes of the <a href="#">Partnership Development Group</a>		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:		
<p>In accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Cabinet are to formally receive the Scrutiny Review reports from the Community Development Group and the Partnership Development Group following their presentation to Full Council on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020.</p> <p>Cabinet are invited to consider the Scrutiny Review reports and their respective recommendations and are further requested to prepare a response to each of the Reviews, which will be reported to Full Council in due course. The Scrutiny Review Reports are appended to this report.</p> <p>In light of the current situation in respect Covid and the vaccinations programme it is appropriate to advise Cabinet that the Scrutiny Review conducted by the Community Partnership Group into Vaccinations was a review into childhood vaccinations. At the time of the Scrutiny Review, which was conducted in October 2020, it was premature to look at potential vaccinations in response to Covid-19. Cabinet are reminded that their response to this particular Scrutiny Review should be confined to the findings within that report in respect of childhood vaccinations.</p> <p>Councillors Mrs Diana Garrod, and Mrs Mary Cunningham as the relevant Scrutiny Chairman are invited to attend Cabinet to address Cabinet on their respective Scrutiny Reports.</p>		

**Recommended Decision:**

- 1) To formally receive the Scrutiny Review reports from the Community Development Group and the Partnership Development Group into:
  - a. Scrutiny Review into Community Woodlands (Appendix A)
  - b. Scrutiny Review into Childhood Vaccinations (Appendix B)
  - c. Scrutiny Review into Leisure Provision and Access to Sport (Appendix C)
- 2) To agree that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Place will provide a full and detailed response to the Scrutiny review into Community Woodlands.
- 3) To agree that the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing will provide a full and detailed response to the Scrutiny review into Childhood Vaccinations.
- 4) To agree that the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing will provide a full and detailed response to the Scrutiny review into Leisure Provision and Access to Sport.
- 5) To agree that the Cabinet responses to the Scrutiny Reviews will be reported to Full Council at the earliest opportunity.

**Purpose of Decision:**

To enable the Scrutiny Review reports to be formally received and responded to by Cabinet in accordance with the Procedure Rules for Scrutiny as set out in the Council's Constitution.

<b>Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail.</b>	
<b>Financial:</b>	No matters arising out of this report. Cabinet's responses to the recommendations set out in the individual reports may have a financial implication; these will be identified and addressed in the Cabinet's response.
<b>Legal:</b>	No matters arising out of this report. The Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny Reviews are not required to be ratified by Full Council, but should be returned to for noting. However there may be decisions subsequent to the Cabinet's response which may need to be referred to Full Council, such as matter which are reserved to Full Council and not a Cabinet Function.
<b>Safeguarding:</b>	No matters arising out of this report.
<b>Equalities/Diversity:</b>	If it has not been necessary to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) in respect of this report which seeks to formally refer the Scrutiny Reviews from the Community Partnership Group and the Partnership Development Group to Cabinet in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules. Cabinet's responses to the recommendations set out in the individual reports may require an EIA.
<b>Customer Impact:</b>	No matters arising out of this report. Cabinet's responses to the recommendations set out in the individual reports may have a customer impact; these will be identified and addressed in the Cabinet's response.
<b>Environment and Climate Change:</b>	No matters arising out of this report. Cabinet's responses to the recommendations set out in the individual reports may have an Environment and Climate Change implications/impact; these will be identified and addressed in the Cabinet's response.
<b>Consultation/Community Engagement:</b>	No matters arising out of this report. Cabinet's responses to the recommendations set out in the individual reports may require further consultation/community engagement; these will be identified and addressed in the Cabinet's response.
<b>Risks:</b>	No matters arising out of this report.
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	Emma Wisbey, Governance and Members Manager
<b>Designation:</b>	Governance and Members Manager
<b>Ext. No:</b>	2610
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**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
**SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO 'COMMUNITY WOODLANDS'**

The Community Development Group selected 'Community Woodlands' as their topic for Scrutiny Review within the Terms of Reference set out below:-

- What is the “background” of Community Woodlands in the Braintree District?
- What are the current/past examples of Community Woodlands?
  - I) List of woodlands
  - II) Successes/challenges encountered with past/current woods
- Are there any policies/criteria that the Council holds in relation to Community Woodlands?
- What is the impact on climate emission of woodlands?
  - I) Ecological benefits
  - II) Carbon emissions diminished by woodlands, and any statistics available in this area?
- What are the community benefits of woodlands, as part of a Cost/Benefit Review?
  - I) Costs associated with maintenance of woodlands vs. benefits

As part of their initial review, the Group were required to establish a clear definition of what constituted a community woodland when compared with that of a regular woodland, and from this to undertake research into the background of community woodlands and examples of these within the Braintree District.

There were three evidence gathering sessions in total which took place on the following dates:

- [30<sup>th</sup> October 2019](#)
- [14<sup>th</sup> January 2020](#)
- [19<sup>th</sup> February 2020](#)

In order to support the Group's evidence gathering, officers in the Landscapes team were able to provide the Group with much of the necessary background information through verbal presentations at evidence gathering sessions with Members. The Landscape Services team identified a number of key evidence streams for the Group and gave suggestions as to appropriate external representatives and partners of the Council who could attend meetings and help to inform the review.



## **RESEARCH OF THE GROUP**

### **The research of the Group established the following:-**

#### **Woodlands**

The Group identified two useful definitions to define woodlands when compared with 'community' woodlands.

Forest Research<sup>1</sup> defines a woodland as land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20%, or having the potential to achieve this. The definition is in relation to land use, rather than land cover, and as such integral open space and felled areas awaiting restocking are included as woodland.

Llais y Goedwig<sup>2</sup> defines community woodlands as: "Fundamentally, any woodland where the local community has some degree of control over how the woodland is run or managed."

On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the Group agreed to a number of lines of enquiry to facilitate the Scrutiny Review, including;

- The identification of those woodlands that were under the responsibility of Braintree District Council and which were not;
- The impact of woodlands on carbon emissions and other ecological benefits;
- Whether any woodlands within the District had been assigned a Tree Preservation Order (TPO);
- The impact of invasive species and diseases on woodlands, such as Ash Dieback;
- Projects in respect of tree planting that was being implemented by Essex County Council; and
- The apparent reluctance of some Parish Councils to adopt local woodlands.

#### **Evidence supplied by Braintree District Council's Landscape Services Team**

The Landscape Services Team Supervisor provided the Group with the following data:-

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<sup>1</sup> Forest Research - <https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/forestry-statistics-2018/woodland-areas-and-planting/woodland-area/>

<sup>2</sup> Llais y Goedwig (Voice of community woodlands in Wales) - <http://llaisygoedwig.org.uk/about-community-woodlands/what-is-a-community-woodland/>

- General information in relation to the definition of a woodland, woodlands within the ownership of Braintree District Council (e.g. Cuckoo Wood in Braintree) and a number of the benefits of woodlands to local communities and the environment, such as increased biodiversity and leisure facilities.
- An overview of the various community woodland sites located across the District and the ways in which different woodlands are used and maintained by different groups, such as volunteer organisations (e.g. Witham Tree Group).

The following key areas were noted from Mr Taylor's presentation:-

- Research by the Forestry Commission indicates that there are broadly five types of community woodland which are largely based on a particular set of circumstances and the commitment of the members of local communities who want to actively engage in woodland management:
  - **Urban regeneration:** Often on neglected public land where there has been a local community involvement with management often in the form of a Friends Group, or similar.
  - **Community resource:** Woodland owned and managed by the local community, normally through a Parish Council.
  - **Economic partnership:** Land owned by others - community management for economic benefits such as firewood or charcoal production.
  - **Community place:** Land owned by others. Community volunteers often manage and work for conservation or wellbeing/therapy workshops.
  - **Lifestyle alternative:** Group work and live in the woodland.
- Braintree District Council was reportedly responsible for the management of 15 different woodlands sites, which included: Coggeshall Pieces in Halstead; James Cooke Wood in Witham; Cuckoo Wood in Great Notley; woodlands on the Bocking Blackwater/Marks Farm development area and the woodland sites located adjacent to the River Brain, such as Hoppit Mead and Marshalls Park respectively.
- Braintree District Council was responsible for the maintenance of approximately 9,000 trees across the District, and possessed a duty of care towards managing the risks associated with woodlands (e.g. damage from storms, onslaught of diseases, etc) The Council also retained a budget of £25,000 to enable it to manage potential risks.
- James Cooke Community Woodland, off Maldon Road, Witham - Witham Town Council and local people planted the woodland in 1993/94 to provide an area of quiet relaxation for local people and to create habitat that is attractive to a wide variety of wildlife. The woodland was planted

using British trees local to the area and open grassland areas within the wood provide a wide range of habitats in which to view birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

- Apart from the woodlands within Council ownership, most of the more aesthetic and attractive areas of open space in the District tended be concentrated along the main river corridors of the Colne, Blackwater and Brain.
- A deliberate policy of planned new planting would limit the space available for some other forms of recreation; a new community woodland planted on agricultural land would need to be considered as a land purchase or as part of an integrated mosaic of open space provision for a new garden community development(s). Parcels of land on the edge of the major settlements which may be attractive as a starting point for a new woodland would probably be in use for agriculture and in the current climate. Many areas were subject to speculative planning applications with the attendant prospect of a higher land value.
- The public's perception of woodland management was sometimes antagonistic, with some resistance to change.
- The Landscape Services Team was a statutory consultee following the receipt of Planning applications. It was highlighted that potential opportunities for the development of woodland areas were always sought, as well as suggestions made where possible for the development of footpaths and other means of accessibility to woodlands to help improve the level of visits from the public.
- It was a requirement for developers to include areas of open space in new development site areas (e.g. as at the Mulberries Redrow estate in Witham).
- The costs associated with employing contractors to undertake the maintenance of wooded areas, such as the watering of trees, could be excessive. The support provided by volunteer and friend groups, such as the Witham Tree Group, in the maintenance of woodlands, was therefore imperative in helping to ensure the sustainability woodlands.

### **INPUT FROM WITHAM TREE GROUP**

At the invitation of the Group, Mr Barry Fleet, Chairman of the Witham Tree Group provided a presentation on a local perspective on subjects relating to woodlands such as the planting of trees, liaison between various partners and the impacts of climate change on the District's woodlands.

The key points that arose from the presentation included:-

- The close liaison between the Witham Tree Group and Witham Town Council, to whom it supplied tree warden services.

- The success of the Group's partnership with Aegon Insurance, who regularly assisted the Group with the movement of heavy trees, and its constructive relationship with the general public, with whom the Group would consult regularly with on new areas for tree planting. Increasingly, residents were also offering their suggestions as well via the Group's website.
- A project that was underway between the Witham Tree Group and Braintree District Council for the creation of World War One Memorial Tree Park. Over 50 trees had been planted thus far, and it was expected that further trees would be planted in 2021 in order to bring the total number of trees to 80.
- Emphasis on the formation of new woodlands as a means through which the issue of climate change could be combated. The presence of woodlands also served the purpose of creating new habitat for wildlife, as well as leisure opportunities for local residents, which could also help address issues associated with mental wellbeing.
- Wholesale tree-planting schemes in conjunction with the community were possible, as had taken place previously at James Cooke Wood in Witham. Similar initiatives involving tree planting were reported to be underway at Chelmsford City Council and Colchester Borough Council.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Policy - The Council's Tree Strategy 2016**

Following the presentation from the Witham Tree Group, the Chairman requested that any policies the Council held in relation to Community Woodlands be circulated to Members. These included:-

- The [Council's Tree Strategy](#): this Strategy was approved as a planning guidance document by the Council on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016; the Strategy incorporated a Five Year Action and provided a number of corporate and management objectives, including management of the Council's tree stock, tree protection and replacement.
- Members' comments on the Strategy was that the document did not appear to include a detailed strategy for the planting of new woodlands. Members also questioned whether the action plan within the Tree Strategy has been subject to an annual review as indicated upon its adoption.

#### **Possible Site Visit 2020**

As part of its evidence gathering, the Group were asked to consider the benefits of a possible site visit to one or more of the local District's woodlands, as this would allow Members to witness different types of woodland conservation and maintenance work in practice. Sites that were suggested for

a potential visit included Hoppit Mead Nature Reserve in Braintree and Coggeshall Pieces in Halstead.

Members agreed that a visit was not necessary as it was unlikely to bring any further value to the overall Scrutiny Review into Community Woodlands beyond the evidence that had already been provided by witnesses in their presentations and information shared in discussions between Members at scrutiny sessions.

## **CONCLUSIONS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW**

In conducting a Scrutiny Review of Community Woodlands, Members were mindful not to duplicate their work with that of the Climate Change Working Group. In concluding their Scrutiny Review, Members have identified the following recommendations below. Each recommendation listed below includes the Group's evidence in support:-

### **Recommendation 1**

*The progress of planting more trees is monitored and measured.*

The Community Development Group noted the Council's decision at the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019 to "...substantially increase tree planting within the district on public and private land." There is generally an increased value and invigorated appreciation of trees and woodlands, and the wildlife it supports. There is a willingness to protect our natural environment and mitigate the impact of climate change and air pollution. It was conveyed by Members during meetings of the Community Development Group that there seems to be a general discord regarding destruction of woodland in favour of construction and development and problematic pest and disease outbreaks.

### **Recommendation 2**

*The Council's Tree Strategy 2016 should be updated to include more information about the Council's objectives and aspirations for new community woodlands. A new updated Action Plan could be considered.*

The document does not appear to include a detailed strategy for the planting of new woodlands. At the presentation held during the meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017, it was stated that the Five Year Action Plan (2016-2021) within the Tree Strategy "...would be subject to annual review."

### **Recommendation 3**

*The Council should protect the District's trees, woods and forests and improve our woodland assets. Where possible, the Council should expand woodland cover and possibly create new woodlands, perhaps as part of the Local Plan or close to new large developments where woodlands would help to manage risks such as flooding and improve biodiversity.*

The Community Development Group recognises the economic, social and environmental benefits of Community Woodlands (as part of a holistic approach), and also realises the benefits for both people and nature, with added quality of life for all.

#### **Recommendation 4**

*The Council adopts a long-term view and plants more resilient species appropriate to soil type, and gives consideration to after care and management costs, as employing contractors is expensive.*

It was noted that the District had some very active voluntary groups who had contributed considerably to the planting, maintenance and upkeep of woodlands. Native hardwood and other broad-leaved tree types were the more favourable options for the planting of new trees, as these tended to be more robust. Any new trees planted should be capable of competing with the existing tree stock in a given area.

#### **Recommendation 5**

*The Council should give consideration to the expansion of woodland cover where it would most benefit communities, support and contribute to health and well-being, education, the economy and environment.*

Preferred sites should be closer to towns where more residents would be able to access and enjoy them. Locations within the local plan should be considered, and potential sites must also enhance local environments and wider landscapes.

#### **Recommendation 6**

*The Council should exercise its right to insist to developer that certain species of tree be planted at development sites with a more robust approach to ensure appropriate trees are planted and maintained (using the Tree Strategy and associated policies) with irrigation in the early years following planting.*

The Community Development Group was advised that, when granting planning permission, the Council was within its rights to insist to developers that certain species of trees be planted at the development sites. Other agreements between the Council and the developer might require the developer to plant a specific number of trees, or to maintain that number by replacing any trees that had died. It was noted that it was more cost effective for developers to replace dead trees than it was to arrange maintenance.

#### **Recommendation 7**

*Liaison between the Council and Writtle College about opportunities and collaboration regarding the maintenance of woodlands should continue, and there should also be better support towards Town and Parish Councils and voluntary organisations through the provision of information in relation to the ownership and maintenance of woodlands.*

It was inferred from the scrutiny review that Town and Parish Councils were seemingly apprehensive to take ownership of local woodlands due to Health and Safety regulations, insurance costs and legal requirements. The Council could perhaps work with Town and Parish Councils to help reduce unnecessary regulations in this area.

### **Recommendation 8**

*The Council should identify ways to improve and encourage community involvement with Community Woodlands and raise awareness of their benefits.*

The Community Development Group recognises that Community Woodlands can bring a number of benefits to residents within local communities (e.g. in the form of leisure provision, aesthetic of the landscape, etc). There were also environmental benefits, such as added habitat and the opportunity for increased biodiversity, as well as means of reducing carbon emissions, thus helping to combat climate change.

### **Recommendation 9**

*The Council considers the development of a public 'woodlands' website ("public" being all woodlands that were under the ownership of public bodies, including Local Authorities and charities) which local residents could utilise in order to make suggestions on ways that the maintenance of existing woodlands could be improved, or new locations for tree planting.*

The Witham Tree Group already has such a website, which provided the Group a useful tool through which members of the Group and local residents could exchange ideas for improving or adding to woodlands site. A website could also help to improve the transparency of communication between the Council on public on this matter, in addition to improving knowledge and awareness of the benefits of woodlands to residents. Updates or change to relevant policies could also be made easily accessible to the public.

### **Recommendation 10**

*The Council explore funding opportunities such as the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, and whether it could submit an expression of interest for this. The Council could also work with partners who have access to funding, such as Dedham Vale AOBN.*

Increased funding opportunities would allow the Council to support wooded areas within urban locations across the District.

### **Recommendation 11**

*The Council produces a guide for Town and Parish Councils and community groups who wish to set up a community woodland covering.*

Town and Parish Councils appear to have limited knowledge in respect of woodland provision, ownership and maintenance that they can support within their local areas. A more informative guide could explain how to plan a

community woodland, what to look out for, recommended tree species for different soil types and locations, planting guidance and maintenance. We could allow advertising in this to offset the costs.

### **Recommendation 12**

*The Council focuses its resources on managing its existing woodland rather than planting additional woodlands; however, it should still try to support groups who wish to set up additional community woodland sites (e.g. Witham Tree Group).*

Any new trees planted are required to be capable of competing with the existing tree stock in a given location. Focusing resources on the current woodlands within the Council's remit of responsibility would help to identify ways of managing and resourcing them more effectively and efficiently. The provision of support to local groups (e.g. funding, advertising, etc) would help to increase woodland cover and improve existing tree stocks. Furthermore, the Council could foster improved relationships with such groups, as well as identify potential future opportunities for funding and other project working.

### **Recommendation 13**

*The Council improves residential access to our existing woodland by use of signage and paths.*

Increased signage and improved accessibility to woodlands would help to increase the public's awareness of such areas and the benefits that they can bring, as well as improve access of those sites to a wider demographic, thus increasing rates of visitation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Community Development Group wishes to thank the following people for their contribution of the Scrutiny Review:-

- Mr Shaun Taylor – Landscape Services Team Supervisor, Braintree District Council
- Mr Barry Fleet – Chairman of the Witham Tree Group



## **Scrutiny Review into Childhood Vaccinations 2019**

The Community Development Group's first topic for Scrutiny Review for the period 2019/2020 was 'Vaccinations in the Braintree District.'

The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Review were as follows:-

- Who is responsible for managing/overseeing the Vaccination Programme in the Braintree District?
- What Vaccinations/diseases are covered by the "normal" programme – age/other triggers to get Vaccinations?
- What are Braintree District's rates of vaccination in comparison to Essex / National averages?
  - Would any rates give rise to public health concerns
  - Are there any trends (good or bad) we should be aware of
  - Are there any hotspot concerns within the District (e.g. geographics/demographic groups)
- What "optional" vaccinations are available for people and how?
  - Best practice/emerging practice
  - Travel

The first stage of the Scrutiny Review was to establish who was responsible for vaccination and immunisation in the Braintree District, whether there were any notable issues in relation to vaccine uptake and how this compared with uptake across the wider Mid-Essex area.

Enquiries were made with the Director of Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities at Essex County Council, Dr Mike Gogarty, in order to identify which authority had direct responsibility for vaccinations in the Braintree District. Dr Gogarty confirmed that vaccination and immunisation in the Braintree District was the responsibility of NHS England (East of England branch) and an invitation was sent to the local lead consultant for Screening and Immunisation. Unfortunately, this invitation could not be accepted due to capacity issues within that particular service; however, a briefing paper which addressed the questions asked by the Group in relation to vaccination uptake in the Braintree District was provided to enable the Group to explore this within the terms of the Review.

The briefing paper included details about The Essex Vaccination Oversight Committee (EVOC) which oversees effective commissioning and delivery of immunisation services, ensures vaccinations are of a high quality, responsive, progressive and safe for the population of Essex. The briefing paper explained that the EVOC meets quarterly or more frequently if required, and its function is to provide strategic direction to ensure that there is full implementation of national vaccination policies within the required timeframe and long term sustainability. The briefing paper also clarified the following:-

- Immunisations offered up to the age of 5 are generally given at GP practices and the scheduling of these vaccinations is managed by the Child Health Information Service (CHIS) who schedule childhood immunisations and report uptake data.
- The Community and School Aged Immunisation Service (provided by Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, EPUT) are commissioned to assist in the follow up children that are not up to date with their childhood immunisations.
- Immunisations offered in adolescence are delivered in schools by the Community and School Aged Immunisation Service. Catch-up sessions are often offered in schools for children that have been absent, and vaccination can also take place in the community clinics offered by this service. This helps support reducing inequalities by providing additional access for home-educated children, Gypsy and Traveller communities and some faith groups. The community clinics also provide support for patients with needle-phobia. These clinics cover support for patients from birth to up to 19 years of age.
- Vaccinations offered to older adults are generally delivered in GP practices, with the exception of the seasonal flu vaccine which is also offered through community pharmacy, and some maternity units for pregnant women only.

Further to the briefing paper provided, the Group concluded that vaccination uptake for immunisations within Mid Essex is generally amongst the highest in the County, and Essex frequently demonstrates uptake levels slightly above that of the national average. The data shows that uptake for the Braintree GP practices is broadly similar to that of the Mid Essex CCG. The recommended uptake rates for childhood vaccinations is 95%, which would provide 'herd immunity' (i.e. those that are contraindicated for vaccination would be protected because so much of the community is vaccinated that it prevents the circulation of disease). Uptake targets vary for the adult programmes; both nationally and locally, the uptake of key vaccinations is generally lower than the 95% level and has been dropping slightly year-on-year since around 2014. There is a national push to increase uptake in childhood vaccinations; for example, in early 2019, a National Measles and Rubella Elimination Strategy was published. There is also a local strategy focussing on how we can improve vaccination uptake across the East of England.

The Group agreed that the data provided by NHS England seemed to suggest that the level of vaccination uptake in the Braintree District were in alignment with the vaccination rates for Mid-Essex, and that the County as a whole frequently demonstrated levels of vaccination uptake that were slightly above that of the national average.

The Group reflected that the key aim of the Scrutiny Review was to ascertain whether there was an issue with vaccination uptake at District level, and if this compared favourably or not with the wider Mid-Essex area, Essex as a whole and nationally. Members compared the information received from NHS England with that of the European Region of the World Health Organisation (WHO). The WHO sets a

target which stipulates that 95% of children are vaccinated and immunised against diseases preventable by vaccination and targeted for elimination or control.

From the data provided by NHS England, the following areas of note were identified:

- The data related to GP Surgeries only and as such did not necessarily give an accurate representation of the entire District's vaccination and immunisation rates. It is likely that some residents travelled beyond the District for the service, and others perhaps sought private medical care or attended pharmacies instead.
- The data related primarily to routine vaccinations amongst children (e.g. MMR, Polio etc.) and did not encompass older age groups or the rate of optional vaccination uptake, such as for those travelling abroad or for seasonal influenza.

Despite there being some discrepancies with the data, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The data provided by NHS England gave a portrait of the District's vaccination and immunisation rates that was, as much as possible, an accurate and fair representation.
- Members agreed that the data was both positive and reassuring for the District as it indicated that the WHO's target of 95% was being achieved across most areas.
- The District did not appear to have any major issues regarding rates of vaccination uptake.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the evidence available, the Community Development Group did not feel it was necessary to continue with exploring the topic of Vaccinations. The findings of the Group were both positive and conclusive in nature and there did not appear to be any major issues regarding vaccine uptake within the District. It was therefore concluded that the Scrutiny Review had met with its substantive Terms of Reference and there was no scope to make any recommendations to the Cabinet or any of its partners as a result of its findings.

The Community Development Group would like to thank the following representatives for their help and the time taken to identify and provide the necessary data to support the Scrutiny Review:

- Dr Mike Gogarty, Director Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities at Essex County Council.
- Clinical Leads and Officers of NHS England (East of England branch).

**PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
**SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO 'LEISURE PROVISION AND ACCESS TO SPORT' IN**  
**THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT (SCRUTINY REPORT)**

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Members of the Partnership Development Group were tasked with conducting a Scrutiny Review into 'Leisure Provision and Access to Sport' in the Braintree District.

The Terms of Reference for the Partnership Development Group are as follows:-

- Driving forward existing partnerships;
- Helping to bring partnership working into the Council's mainstream work;
- Bringing together partners within the public sector for the benefit of the community;
- Developing an approach to future partnership working with both the public and the private sector;
- To receive the Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership.

As part of the Scrutiny Review into Leisure Provision and Access to Sport, the key questions that Members sought to address were:-

- What is the picture of sports availability and groups?
- What partnerships are there to support the sports groups?
- What involvement does the Council have directly/through Fusion?
- What is the accessibility of facilities for groups? E.g. Availability, cost
- What impact can the Council have with partners to support groups and engagement for residents?

**2. OVERVIEW OF LEISURE PROVISION IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT**

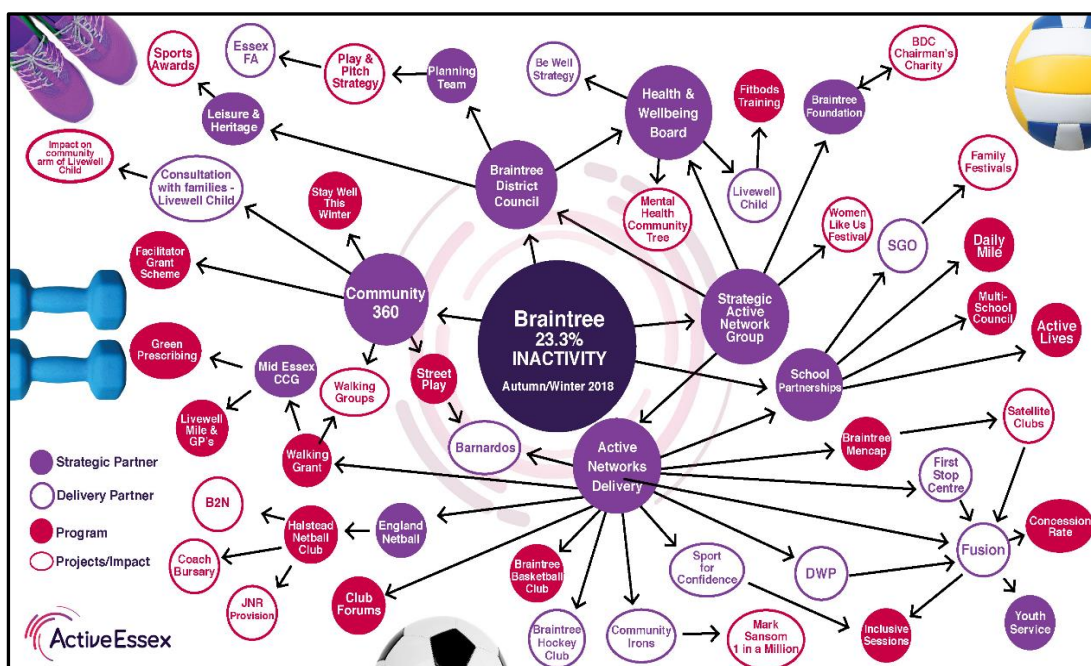
There is a wide range of both indoor and outdoor sports groups and activities available throughout the District that provide opportunities for a number of different groups of residents (i.e. young, elderly, disabled, etc) to become involved in sport and leisure. These groups included independent sports clubs such as a BMX Club, Martial Arts and Athletics. There was generally a large uptake in sports activities by residents; for example, the Braintree and District Athletic Club was reported to have over 400 club members alone. The Council

also hired out a number of playing fields and sports pitches directly to clubs, families and schools, which helped to broaden the extent of sport and leisure activities that such clubs could provide (i.e. football, netball, tennis, etc). There is usually a high demand for facilities like those of outdoor pitches, and the Council monitors this usage closely throughout the year.

The Council is responsible for four leisure centres across the District which are operated by Fusion Lifestyle under the Leisure Contract 2012-22; the centres include Witham Leisure Centre and Sports Ground, Braintree Sport and Health Club, Halstead Leisure Centre and Braintree Swimming and Fitness. Contractual obligations have been in place with Fusion for the provision of activities that cater for groups considered to be “harder to reach” in respect of sport and leisure; this helps to ensure that there is a positive balance of different clubs, membership deals and “pay and play” activities on offer. The centres tend to be well-used by residents throughout the year, with booking taken regularly from a mixture of clubs and organisations for activities, although there can be shortfalls in usage due to impact of the wider picture of available sports activities and facilities across the District. Two of Fusion’s leisure centres are linked to local academies; as such, protected bookings and joint-use agreements exist to enable limited access to some facilities on school days.

As well as Fusion Lifestyle, there are a number of partnerships that work with the Council which help to support sports groups and clubs. One such partnership is the Active Braintree Foundation, together with the Active Network. The Active Braintree Foundation is a trustee organisation that operates externally to the Council in order to allow for other funding streams to be identified. The Foundation’s vision and aims are also similar to that of the [Council’s Livewell and Be-Well Strategies](#), and support for clubs is provided in the form of coaching development, funding applications, safeguarding, social media support, planning applications, Section 106 monies, etc. The Council’s strongest influence in respect of sport and leisure was with the Active Braintree Foundation, as the Foundation helped to promote the Livewell Campaign brand and agenda to a wider audience.

NOTE: The data below was provided by Mr Joby Humm, Leisure and Heritage Manager, on behalf of Active Essex; it provides an indication of the different partnerships, both strategic and delivery, that operate within the District.



During the course of the Scrutiny Review, the Partnership Development Group took part in four evidence gathering sessions. A range of internal and external invitees attended the sessions in order to help support the findings of the Scrutiny Review and identify further lines of enquiry for Members; this enabled them to establish potential future recommendations.

### 3. INPUT FROM JOBY HUMM, LEISURE, HEALTH AND HERITAGE MANAGER

Mr Joby Humm attended the meeting of the Partnership Development Group on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 in order to provide Members with an overview of the picture of sports availability and provision across the District, including the different facilities and community groups (e.g. Park Run) and partnerships that supported sports groups (e.g. Livewell, Active Braintree Foundation, Braintree Mencap, etc), as well as an indication of the Council's involvement with this through its contract with Fusion Lifestyle.

Members were informed that across the District, there was a wide range of projects that had been implemented as a means of sustainable sports provision, such as 'Park Run.' Park Run took place every Saturday at the Great Notley Country Park, and was a key example of a self-funding project that was supported primarily by volunteers each week. The level of public engagement with the project was generally positive, with an average of approximately 300 runners and walkers in attendance each week. As well as projects, there was also a variety of available sports facilities in the District, from swimming pools to artificial grass pitches (AGPs), of which four were Council-operated.

The District had also experienced much success recently in terms of its achievements and awards in sport and leisure, as seen with the Braintree

BMX Club and Martial Arts Centre, the members of which had gone on to become world champions in their field. It was important to note that the wide variety of activities and facilities in the District meant that there was an opportunity for residents of all backgrounds, ages and capabilities to become involved in a form of sport that was suitable for their needs; this was exemplified by groups such as 'Walking Netball,' and projects such as Sport for Confidence, Chair-based Exercise, Age Well Afternoons and the appointment of a Teen Ambassador by Fusion Lifestyle. Sports and community development in the District also supported the objectives of the Council under its "Livewell" initiatives; for example, through Livewell, schemes such as "Age Well" were promoted through partnership work with local community groups such as Age UK, Age Concern and the Dementia Alliance to help infiltrate older age groups. The brand of "Livewell" embodied a vast partnership network under the umbrella of health and wellbeing, and included Essex County Council, the Fire Service, Greenfields Community Housing and links with Doctor's Surgeries.

#### **4. INPUT FROM ACTIVE BRAINTREE FOUNDATION**

At the meeting of the Partnership Development Group on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019, Members agreed that a member of the Active Braintree Foundation (ABF), as one of the Council's key partners in respect of sports and leisure provision in the District, should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Group. Mr John Wood, Chair of the ABF, was subsequently in attendance at the meeting of the Group on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and provided Members with an overview of the work of the ABF and its role within the District, its past achievements, future planned work and the strategic partnerships that the Foundation liaised with. Mr Wood informed Members that the ABF would offer support to organisations that sought to liaise with them wherever possible; support could be offered in the form of funding or expertise knowledge required in order to implement new sport and leisure projects or activities; the Sports for Confidence project, based at Witham Leisure Centre, was a prime example of such a project. Developing partnerships with local organisations was fundamental aspect of the ABF; such organisations that the ABF had already worked with included groups such as Braintree District Council, Community Iron, Greenfields Community Housing, Sport for Confidence, First Stop, Barnardos, Community 360, Department of Work and Pensions and Active Essex.

The key objective of the ABF was reported as: "To promote community participation in healthy recreation for the benefit of the inhabitants of Braintree District." Under this objective, the key aims of the ABF were as follows:-

- Partner with local clubs/agencies to increase levels of participation in sport and physical activity;
- Inspire communities to become more active to improve their health and wellbeing, therefore leading happier and more positive lives;
- Raise aspirations, confidence, skills and knowledge to enable individuals to reach their full potential;

- Strengthen community cohesion and break down barriers to participation thereby addressing inequalities; and
- Improve physical and mental health wellbeing.

A key point raised by Mr Wood as part of his presentation included the need for the Council to give further consideration as to how community assets such as sports, leisure and healthcare facilities could be incorporated within new communities during their design stages, and to how those assets could be interlinked to make them as effective as possible in serving the needs of local residents. Another key point raised was the need to increase access to sports activities through improving the promotion of available activities and clubs, such as through the activity finder on the Active Essex website, which both the Council and ABF were known to have subscribed to.

There was reportedly £30k of funding available to the ABF, the majority of which had been supplied by Active Essex and Public Health. Smaller grants were received from local charities, such as those associated with the Courtauld Family. Funding for the different clubs and organisations who were in partnership with the ABF was allocated by means of grant sums of up to £1,000 for the promotion of sports activities.

Although engagement with the ABF could not be imposed on other organisations, it was nonetheless important that the key aims of the ABF of widening access to sport, increasing participation in sports and improving the health and wellbeing of the public be communicated in a more effective manner. The success of the 'Spot It Stop It' campaign launched by the Community Safety Partnership was mentioned as a key example where local businesses and other organisations alike had engaged in partnership work with one another in order to increase awareness of the scheme, of which sought to combat cases of Child Sexual Exploitation.

Although sports development in the Braintree District was priority focus of the Council, officers were restricted as to the amount of time they could invest into the subject, often due to other work commitments. Members as such agreed that a potential recommendation as part of the Scrutiny Review was to support officers in their efforts by identifying the available sports facilities across the District and observing how those facilities could be utilised as efficiently as possible. The Council could work with the ABF in order to achieve this.

## **5. INPUT FROM PLANNING OFFICERS**

Following the end of Mr Humm's presentation to Members at the meeting of Partnership Development Group on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019, Members agreed that it would be useful if Planning Officers were to attend a future meeting of the Group in order to advise Members on the subject of Section 106 regulations and Community Infrastructure Levies (CIL). Planning Officers would also be able to advise Members on how land for sports and leisure provision was allocated under the Local Plan. Mr Neil Jones, Principal Planning Officer and Julie O'Hara, Senior Planning Policy Officer at the Council, were therefore in attendance at the meeting of the Group 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to speak to Members on the subject and address queries that had been raised previously.



Members were advised that Planning Officers were required to determine new planning applications in accordance with the Council's adopted planning policies. For example, under the Local Plan, designated employment areas, such as industrial estates, were to remain protected for industrial and commercial usage in order to ensure that there was available land for which businesses could use as a means of expansion. Planning officers were also required to examine the existing and future supply of employment land and how this would be achieved (e.g. as with Horizon 120), as well as the protection of the existing employment land. New planning applications received by the Council would sometimes conflict with these policies and could not, as such, always be granted.

On the subject of the Local Plan, it was advised that Planning officers followed a standards based approach when calculating what provision of open space was required for new developments. Open space could be provided through Section 106 agreements by either the developer making a provision on the site, or making a financial contribution to the Council that it could use in order to improve existing facilities, or to provide new open space and leisure facilities. However, it was not possible to request that a developer included more space at a site in order to address previous issues that had perhaps arisen as a result of historic planning policy. Negotiation between developers and the Council was essential, and the end results of any new land proposals would always need to be reasonable and proportionate and in accordance with the Council's standards regarding open space and leisure provision.

Further to the discussions, Members identified a number of potential recommendations including the suggestion that the Council gave further consideration to how leisure and sports facilities across the District could be utilised more effectively, and further examination into informal sports provision across the District. Furthermore, it was highlighted that Members could give consideration as to how they might engage more successfully with Town and Parish Councils during periods of public consultation in order to ensure that more informed responses were provided as a result.

## **6. INPUT FROM RAYNE PARISH COUNCIL**

Councillor Ann Hooks, Chairman at Rayne Parish Council, was invited to attend the meeting of the Partnership Development Group on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in order to provide Members with an overview of leisure provision within the Rayne area and to clarify who was responsible for the management of the different leisure facilities, what funding streams were available and how successful the level of engagement from the public was.

The responsibility for the management of a number of key leisure facilities in the Rayne Village area were listed, as provided below:-

- Rayne Village Hall and Playing Fields (owned by the Parish Council and run and managed by the dedicated Village Hall Committee)
- Nature Reserve (owned and maintained by the Parish Council)
- Flitch Way (owned and maintained by Essex County Council together with Friends of the Flitch Way volunteers)

Members were advised that Rayne Village Hall was the main provider of leisure provision within the area, including the outdoor gym, fitness trail, BMX track, playing fields, etc. A 'Community and Leisure' survey was distributed to local residents by the Parish Council in 2019, the survey of which asked questions in relation to the uptake by residents of facilities like that of the BMX track, local cafes, play areas and allotments. Other questions that were posed included additional facilities that residents would perhaps like to see implemented in future, a request for the details of any clubs or societies that residents belonged to (e.g. fitness clubs or indoor bowls, etc). The overall response rate was approximately 10% against the 1,300 dwellings in the Rayne area.

The overall usage of the facilities in the Rayne area by local residents, such as sports grounds and playing areas, was generally positive, with many residents external to the Rayne area often visiting to make use of these as well. Facilities like that of the Flitch Way and Booking Hall Café were popular attractions throughout the year. Playing fields in Rayne were maintained entirely by the local cricket and football clubs, whereas areas such as the nature reserve and hedges were maintained by the Parish Council. The Village Hall Committee was responsible for the management of the local playground, although the Parish Council maintained certain aspects of this, such as weed control of the grounds.

In respect of funding for new sport and leisure schemes, this was often provided through grants, as seen with the installation of a fitness trail in 2016, for which funding was applied for and awarded through the Mi Community Braintree District Council grant. The presence of a sufficient financial resource to support leisure provision was noted as being instrumental in ensuring that new schemes could be implemented. The Rayne Village Hall Committee was self-maintained through fundraising events and its own accounts, although there was also an element of liaison with the Parish Council on some financial precepts, such as the sharing of defibrillator costs and payment of cleaner wages.

## **7. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL SURVEY – 7<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2020**

Throughout the duration of their evidence gathering sessions, Members identified a number of potential areas for further exploration within the scope of the Scrutiny Review; this included formal and informal leisure provision within the District. Members were therefore keen to extend their research to the remit of Parish and Town Councils in the District in order to understand what levels of sport and leisure provision there is in local areas. A scrutiny enquiry was therefore commenced between the Council and Parish and Town Clerks via e-mail on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and sought to establish what levels of sport and leisure provision there were across the District, what resources were available in those areas and how accessible sport and leisure facilities were for residents in more rural localities.

As of the meeting of the Partnership Development Group on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020, a total of 21 responses from the Parish and Town Clerks had been received. During the meeting, Members received further input from Councillor Ann Hooks in respect of sport and leisure provision in the Rayne Parish area and then discussed the scrutiny enquiry responses received.

(The responses of Parish and Town Clerks to the enquiry can be found [here](#).)

In considering the responses, Members determined that, overall, there appeared to be positive engagement and contribution by Parish and Town Councils in the District in respect of leisure provision and management of resources in this area. A number of key features were identified by Members as being especially prevalent in Parish and Town areas where there had been much success in ensuring that leisure and sports provision could be sustained in more rural localities; Rayne Parish Council was noted as a primary example of this, due largely to features such as a sustainable financial resource, a central village hub, effective communicative and media tools, as well as positive engagement and enthusiasm for sport and leisure expressed by local residents.

In discussing the survey results, Members noted that although the results provided a useful insight into the different types of leisure and sports provision that was available across the District, a weakness in the survey was highlighted as Parish Clerks were not necessarily aware of all of the activities that took place in their localities (e.g. due to the presence of informal clubs and groups, private sessions, etc). Furthermore, responses had not been received from all of the Parish and Town Clerks within the District, which meant that a more accurate reflection of the District's leisure provision could not be provided.

## **FUSION REPORT TO CABINET**

As part of their evidence gathering, Members of the Partnership Development Group were invited to attend a meeting of the Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020; Fusion Lifestyle were due to be in attendance at the meeting in order to present their annual report to Cabinet for review. The Council reviewed its contract with Fusion regularly in order to ensure that it remained of economic benefit to the organisation, and where issues were identified, whether consideration towards alternative options, such as the return of the management of the District's leisure facilities in-house, was needed. Any such decisions required evidence-based justification. Members of the Partnership Development Group who subsequently attended the meeting of the Cabinet were present in a scrutiny capacity and were permitted to observe the proceedings only, and then report back any areas of note to the Group at its next meeting.

## **COMMUNITY ASSETS SURVEY – COMMUNITY SERVICES TEAM**

At the meeting of the Partnership Development Group on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the Chairman made reference to comments that had been received from Councillor Mrs Parker in relation to the Scrutiny Enquiry with Parish and Town Clerks on the subject of leisure provision. Councillor Mrs Parker was aware of

a 'Community Assets Survey' that had been circulated to all Ward Members and Parish and Town Councils by the Community Services Team in 2019; the survey had requested details of the different activities and facilities that were available in local areas across the District, and formed part of the Council's initiative to combat issues surrounding social isolation and loneliness. Members agreed that the data collected from this survey could help to support the scrutiny review by providing them with a more comprehensive list of what was available in terms of leisure provision across the District (e.g. such as shops, cafes, pubs, surgeries, etc).

Officers in the Governance Team subsequently contacted Ms Moira Groborz, Community Services Officer at the Council on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to request that the results of the Community Assets Survey be shared with the Members of the Partnership Development Group. Ms Groborz kindly shared the results of the team's survey with Governance Officers, who then circulated this to the Group. At the time that this took place, the results of the survey had not yet been made public; as such, the survey results were shared with Members of the Partnership Development Group only. The results of the survey were then used by the Chairman of Group and Members to help inform their recommendations as part of the Scrutiny Review.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendation 1**

The Council should review its planning policy with regard to planning permissions in order to address the issues regarding land usage and, in turn, allow more sites to be utilised accordingly for leisure facilities.

*Following recent Planning refusals and comments made by Mr John Wood, Chair of the Active Braintree Foundation, whereby sports, dance and/or fitness groups had applied for Planning permission for change of use of industrial premises to accommodate leisure. This very concern was raised by Sir Simon Stevens, head of the NHS who stated that "Perverse planning rules restricting gyms from opening are undermining efforts to solve the obesity epidemic."*<sup>3</sup>

### **Recommendation 2**

The Council should review why only 12 of the District's schools participate in the 'Daily Mile' and to ascertain if there are difficulties around achieving it in each school and to encourage as many as possible to participate.

*In his presentation to the Members of the Partnership Development Group, Mr John Wood, Chair of the Active Braintree Foundation, reported that there were only 12 primary schools in the District that participated in 'The Daily Mile' scheme. It has been proven as an effective way of keeping children physically and mentally healthy, helping to avoid issues such as obesity.*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://headtopics.com/uk/nhs-chief-has-warned-that-perverse-planning-rules-restricting-gyms-from-opening-are-undermining-ef-10519757>

### **Recommendation 3**

The Council should collect data pertaining to the various walking groups across the District, and that the information be distributed to the Parish and Town Councils for their reference.

*Mr John Wood revealed that he was often received inquiries about the available walking groups in the District. The general consensus of Members of the Group with their local knowledge was that there are walking groups in the District which are of great benefit, mainly to older residents. Walking, as well as keeping physically and mentally fit, can also help to overcome social isolation. Furthermore, group walking may have appeal to both men and women who would feel more comfortable walking with company.*

### **Recommendation 4**

The Council identifies and collates possible funding streams in the District that could support leisure and sports provision; this information should then be circulated to Parish and Town Councils, as well as local sports clubs and groups.

*With reference to the presentation given by Councillor Ann Hooks, Chairman of Rayne Parish Council, it was identified that a resident of Rayne was very well informed on how to access funding for all sorts of groups and activities. Councillor Mrs Hooks stated that this was a huge advantage in aiding village projects that otherwise may not go ahead. It was also identified from other presentations that groups were unaware of what funding streams might be available and how they could be accessed.*

### **Recommendation 5**

The Community Assets Survey carried out by the Community Services Team, or a similar survey, should become a regular exercise for Members to undertake (suggest annually) and that the results are regularly forwarded to the Parish and Town Councils to be shared with residents and thus help them to identify what sport and leisure provision is available in their local area.

*A recurring theme throughout the time of the Partnership Development Group's evidence gathering (with much of this identified from the responses of the Parish and Town Council surveys) was that although there was a huge amount of sports and leisure activities taking place across the District, in some areas there seemed to be a lack of information for residents to know what was available. Furthermore, Parish and Town Councils were not always aware of what clubs, groups etc, were established in their own areas. The issue would hopefully be addressed to a degree by work that the Community Services Team implemented by gathering information from Members last autumn (2019).*

### **Recommendation 6**

The Partnership Development Group recommends that there be some form of partnership working with land owners, pub landlords, café owners, etc, across

the District in order to help promote the importance of more informal leisure provision (e.g. off-road cycle and walking paths that connect villages and towns).

*The importance of informal leisure provision, such as safe walking and cycling, has been highlighted since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many formal activities and facilities such as leisure centres, children's play areas and cafes were closed during the lockdown, or remain so now.*

## **Recommendation 7**

The Council should gather more information on effective means of communication and inclusion around leisure provision for wider groups of people in the District.

*The Group have determined from the completed questionnaires and presentations provided during evidence gathering sessions that communication is a fundamental aspect of promoting the existence of the various facilities and initiatives under the umbrella of leisure provision more broadly across the District, particularly in less urban areas. Councillor Ann Hook, Chairman at Rayne Parish Council, stressed the importance of both electronic and paper formats in getting responses to the surveys that were circulated in Rayne; inevitably, many residents who responded were involved in football, BMXing or rambling, for example, and were as such already aware of the leisure facilities available to them. The challenge seemed to be around communicating with 'harder to reach' residents who were not already aware of the facilities available to them; for instance, in more rural Wards with a high proportion of older residents, electronic communication and social media was not necessarily the most effective means of promoting leisure provision across all groups of people. There is perhaps an over-reliance on the internet as a standard means of communication.*

## **9. MINUTES AND AGENDAS OF MEETINGS**

[21<sup>st</sup> August 2019](#)

[2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019](#)

[20<sup>th</sup> November 2019](#)

[5<sup>th</sup> February 2020](#)

[23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020](#)

## **10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Members of the Partnership Development Group would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the Scrutiny Review:-

- Joby Humm, Leisure and Heritage Manager at Braintree District Council
- John Wood, Chair of the Active Braintree Foundation
- Neil Jones, Principal Planning Officer at Braintree District Council
- Julie O'Hara, Senior Planning Policy Officer at Braintree District Council
- Councillor Ann Hooks, Chairman at Rayne Parish Council
- Moira Groborz, Community Services Officer at Braintree District Council

<b>New Artificial Grass Pitch facility – Halstead Leisure Centre</b>		<b>Agenda No: 7a</b>
<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Health and Communities</b>	
<b>Corporate Outcome:</b>	<b>A sustainable environment and a great place to live, work and play</b>	
<b>Report presented by:</b>	<b>Cllr Peter Tattersley Cabinet Member for Health &amp; Communities</b>	
<b>Report prepared by:</b>	<b>Joby Humm, Leisure, Health and Heritage Manager</b>	
<b>Background Papers:</b>		<b>Public Report</b>
None		<b>Key Decision: Yes</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>		
<p>As part of Braintree District Councils (the Council) improvements to the current artificial playing surface at Halstead Leisure Centre (the Project), the Council made an application to the Football Foundation to fund the majority of the works needed as part of the Project, as the new facility will promote football development in Halstead and the surrounding area.</p> <p>Part of the grant conditions the Football Foundation require the Council to contribute towards the overall costs of the Project. The total cost of the project is £751,600, accordingly the Council are required to contribute 30% towards the total cost. The Councils contribution will be sourced from Section 106 contributions together with a capital contribution of £45,000.</p>		
<b>Recommended Decision:</b>		
Cabinet agrees:		
<p>1a.To note the Football Foundation grant for part funding the improvements to the artificial playing surface at Halstead in the sum of £543,368.00;</p> <p>1b. To note that £163,777.08 of the Councils 30% contribution is from S106 funding allocation.</p> <p>and</p> <p>2. To approve the allocation of £45,000 from the leisure capital reserve as Braintree District Councils contribution to the overall project; and</p> <p>3. Award a NEC3 Engineering and Construction Contract to TigerTurf UK for the works at a value of £706,261.59</p>		

<b>Purpose of Decision:</b>
To ensure that the financial governance process is completed, ahead of the works commencing on site, and to enable the Council to enter into the associated NEC3 Engineering and Construction Contracts.



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

<b>Financial:</b>	<p>Accept the funding of £543,368.00 from the Football Foundation</p> <p>Allocation of S106 monies from the Central Piling £93,228.25 and Monks Road £45,049.82 developments and open space contributions totalling £25,499.01 from developments in Halstead</p> <p>Capital contribution from the Council of £45,000</p>
<b>Legal:</b>	All leases have and associated subleases have been completed in accordance with Football Foundation grant conditions
<b>Safeguarding:</b>	No matters arising out of this report
<b>Equalities/Diversity:</b>	If it has not been necessary to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment, as this project will benefit the entire community.
<b>Customer Impact:</b>	Significantly improved outdoor sport facilities for Halstead and its surrounding villages
<b>Environment and Climate Change:</b>	State of the art LED floodlights installed, and the old AGP carpet will be upcycled
<b>Consultation/Community Engagement:</b>	<p>ECC</p> <p>NEMAT Academy Trust</p> <p>Ramsey Academy</p> <p>Fusion Lifestyle</p> <p>Halstead Town FC</p> <p>Essex County FA</p> <p>Football Foundation</p>
<b>Risks:</b>	<p>Funding is not secured and the project cannot be delivered and the Council will need to meet in total the capital cost of replacing the artificial surface.</p> <p>The S106 contributions received from the Central Piling and Monks Road developments are specifically secured for this purpose and cannot be used to fund any other project</p>
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	Joby Humm
<b>Designation:</b>	Leisure Health & Heritage Manager
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## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) at Halstead Leisure Centre is over 12 years old and is no longer fit for purpose. In consultation with the Essex County Football Association (ECFA) a review was undertaken looking at demand for high quality full size AGP's in the District. When looking at the AGP at Halstead it was suggested that by turning the orientation of the pitch by 90 degrees it would allow for the creation of a full size football pitch which would meet full Football Association and FIFA standards. This could allow the pitch to be used for competitive football matches, which would increase the usage of the pitch by local teams and improve football development opportunities for all age groups and gender's.
- 1.2 The Council were encourage by the ECFA to approach the Football Foundation as a possible source of funding for the works necessary for a full size SGP Pitch to be established (the Project). The Football Foundation are committed to improving the experience of playing football for everyone, transforming lives and strengthening communities. They are keen to make investments in facilities which will benefit grass roots and competitive football. After lengthy discussions with the representatives from the ECFA and the Football Foundation, the Council was able to secure significant grant funding for the project.
- 1.3 Accordingly the Football Foundation have confirmed that they would award a grant of £543,368.00 towards the total cost of the scheme which totals £751,646.07.

## **2. Funding Conditions**

- 2.1 One of the main conditions set out by the Football Foundation was that the Council is required to make a 30% contribution towards the total costs of the Project.
- 2.2 The Council has received £138,000 of Section 106 contributions specifically towards the Project which are to be used as part of the Councils contribution. An additional £25,499.01 non-specific S106 open space contributions are also to be used, bringing the total S106 funding available to £163,000. In order to meet the required 30% contribution, the Council will need to make a one off capital contribution of £45,000.

£6,741.82 – 11/00150/FUL Public Open Space Contribution Purposes means the use of the Public Open Space Contribution "Towards the provision and/or improvement and/or maintenance and/or enhancement of an area or areas of public open space and facilities thereon either in the parish ward or catchment area corresponding with the development"

£2,483.97 – 12/00870/FUL Public Open Space Contribution Purposes means the use of the Public Open Space Contribution "Towards the provision and/or improvement and/or maintenance and/or enhancement of an area or areas of public open space and facilities thereon either in the parish ward or catchment area corresponding with the development"

£2,471.93 – 12/01437/FUL Public Open Space Contribution Purposes means the use of the Public Open Space Contribution “Towards the provision and/or improvement and/or maintenance and/or enhancement of an area or areas of public open space and facilities thereon either in the parish ward or catchment area corresponding with the development”

£4,911.90 – 10/01285/FUL Public Open Space Contribution Purposes means the use of the Public Open Space Contribution “Towards the provision and/or improvement and/or maintenance and/or enhancement of an area or areas of public open space and facilities thereon either in the parish ward or catchment area corresponding with the development”

£6,276.19 – 13/00047/FUL Public Open Space Contribution Purposes means the use of the Public Open Space Contribution “Towards the provision and/or improvement and/or maintenance and/or enhancement of an area or areas of public open space and facilities thereon either in the parish ward or catchment area corresponding with the development”

£2,613.20 – 13/01075/FUL Public Open Space Contribution Purposes means the use of the Public Open Space Contribution “Towards the provision and/or improvement and/or maintenance and/or enhancement of an area or areas of public open space and facilities thereon either in the parish ward or catchment area corresponding with the development”

- 2.3 The Council has available to it funding within its Capital Leisure reserve fund, which was established to fund support the Councils leisure provision within the District. The Council entered into the grant agreement on December 2020

### **3. The Procurement**

- 3.1 The Council together with the Framework Managing Consultant, conducted a mini competition through the AGP Supplier Framework, established by the Football Association. This Framework has 6 suppliers, who have been through a rigorous procurement process ahead of their appointment by the Football Association to the Framework, and is valuable resource in tendering for Contractors to carry out the construction works.
- 3.2 In February 2020, the Council invited all suppliers on the Framework to submit bids for the works. All bids received were evaluated and the successful bidder was identified as TigerTurf UK.
- 3.3 However, as a result of the national pandemic and the lockdowns the Country experienced from March 2020- September 2020, it has not been possible to progress the Procurement further, as the commencement date of the works has continued to remain an uncertainty. However, provisions have now been put in place to ensure that following receipt of the grant funding, the works can begin promptly.

#### **4. Legal**

- 4.1 Upon approval for the award of the Contract, the Council will enter into the NEC3 Engineering and Construction Contract with TigerTurf UK. The Expected commencement date on site will be 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. All leases and associated subleases have been completed by the Council in accordance with Football Foundation grant conditions and in anticipation of the works commencing.

<b>Cabinet Member Decisions made under delegated powers</b>		<b>Agenda No: 8</b>
<b>Portfolio</b> See body of report <b>Corporate Outcome:</b> <b>Report presented by:</b> Not applicable – report for noting <b>Report prepared by:</b> Chloe Waight, Governance Business Officer		
<b>Background Papers:</b>		<b>Public Report</b>
Cabinet Decisions made by individual Cabinet Members under delegated powers.		<b>Key Decision: No</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>  All delegated decisions taken by individual Cabinet Members and Chief Officers are required to be published and listed for information on the next Cabinet Agenda following the decision.  Since the last Cabinet meeting the following delegated decisions have been taken (details as at time of decision):  <b>Councillor J McKee – Cabinet Member for Corporate Transformation. Decision taken on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b>  Agreed the transfer of a small parcel of land to Essex County Council at nil consideration for the purpose of creating a fully compliant cycleway (Great Notley Cycle Path).  <b>Councillor J McKee – Cabinet Member for Corporate Transformation. Decision taken on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>  To confirm that the 2.9 acre parcel of land off Cambridge Way, Bures continues to be used for its current use as agricultural land leased to the local farmer.  Cabinet Decisions made by individual Cabinet Members under delegated decisions can be viewed on the Access to Information page on the <a href="#">Council's website</a> .		
<b>Recommended Decision:</b>  For Cabinet to note the delegated decisions.		

<b>Purpose of Decision:</b>	
The reasons for decision can be found in the individual delegated decision.	
<b>Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail.</b>	
<b>Financial:</b>	None arising out of this report.
<b>Legal:</b>	None arising out of this report.
<b>Safeguarding:</b>	None arising out of this report.
<b>Equalities/Diversity:</b>	None arising out of this report.
<b>Customer Impact:</b>	None arising out of this report.
<b>Environment and Climate Change:</b>	None arising out of this report.
<b>Consultation/Community Engagement:</b>	None arising out of this report.
<b>Risks:</b>	None arising out of this report.
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	Chloe Waight
<b>Designation:</b>	Governance Business Officer
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