

COUNCIL AGENDA

Monday, 5th September 2016 at 07:15 PM

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

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
(Please note this meeting will be webcast and audio recorded)
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Members of the Council are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.

Membership:-

Councillor J Abbott	Councillor J Goodman	Councillor Mrs J Pell
Councillor Mrs J Allen	Councillor A Hensman	Councillor R Ramage
Councillor C Bailey	Councillor P Horner	Councillor F Ricci
Councillor M Banthorpe	Councillor D Hufton-Rees	Councillor B Rose
Councillor J Baugh	Councillor D Hume	Councillor Miss V Santomauro
Councillor Mrs J Beavis	Councillor H Johnson	Councillor Mrs W Scattergood
Councillor D Bebb	Councillor Mrs A Kilmartin	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt
Councillor R Bolton	Councillor S Kirby	Councillor P Schwier
Councillor K Bowers	Councillor G Maclure	Councillor C Siddall
Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint	Councillor D Mann	Councillor Mrs G Spray
Councillor G Butland	Councillor J McKee	Councillor P Tattersley
Councillor S Canning	Councillor R Mitchell	Councillor Miss M Thorogood
Councillor J Cunningham	Councillor Mrs J Money	Councillor R van Dulken
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham	Councillor Lady Newton	Councillor Mrs L Walters
Councillor T Cunningham	Councillor J O'Reilly-Cicconi	Councillor Mrs S Wilson
Councillor M Dunn	Councillor Mrs I Parker	
Councillor J Elliott	Councillor Mrs S Paul	

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

N BEACH
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest

Any member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest 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 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other Pecuniary Interest or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting. In addition, the Member must withdraw from the chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless the Member has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.

Question Time

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes when members of the public can speak. Members of the public wishing to speak are requested to register by contacting the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email demse@braintree.gov.uk no later than 2 working days prior to the meeting. The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register to speak if they are received after this time. Members of the public can remain to observe the public session of the meeting.

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Documents

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- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 To receive any announcements/statements from the Chairman and/or Leader of the Council.**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**

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

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27th June 2016 (copy previously circulated).
- 5 Public Question Time**

(See paragraph above)
- 6 Presentation of the North Essex Business Apprentice of the Year Award**

The Chairman of the Council to present the Award for the North Essex Business Apprentice of the Year .
- 7 Presentation of the Customer Service Excellence Standard Accreditation**

To present to the Chairman of the Council the Customer Service Excellence Standard Accreditation.
- 8 Special Meeting of Full Council for the Local Plan – Proposed Change of Date and Confirmation of Procedural Steps** **7 - 12**
- 9 Recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 13th July 2016 - Scrutiny Review in to Apprenticeships into the Braintree District** **13 - 28**

10	Land at Rear of Braintree Enterprise Centre, Springwood Drive, Braintree – Approval of construction funding	29 - 35
11	Block B at The College at Braintree, Church Lane, Braintree – Approval of funding for conversion works for a medical centre	36 - 43
12	Braintree Town Centre Regeneration Scheme – Approval of Funding	44 - 54
13	Reports from the Leader and Cabinet Members To receive the following reports from each Portfolio Holder. Oral Questions to the Cabinet: Members are reminded that following the presentation of each Cabinet Member’s report, Members may put questions to the Cabinet Member on matters relating to their portfolio, the powers and duties of the Council or the District. Questions are not restricted to the contents of the Cabinet Member's report. Where a verbal response cannot be given, a written response will be issued to all Members. (Council Procedure Rules 29.1 to 29.4 apply). A period of up to 1 hour is allowed for this item.	
13a	Councillor G Butland - Leaders Report to Council	55 - 58
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13c	Councillor T Cunningham - Economic Development	61 - 63
13d	Councillor J McKee - Corporate Services and Asset Management	64 - 65
13e	Councillor Lady Newton - Planning and Housing	66 - 67

13f	Councillor P Tattersley - Health and Communities	68 - 70
13g	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt - Environment and Place	71 - 74
14	List of Public Meetings held since last Council Meeting	75 - 76
15	Chairmen's Statements	
	To receive statements from those Chairmen who have given prior notification in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 33.1 and to respond to questions on such statements. <i>None have been received.</i>	
16	Statements by Members	
	To receive any statements by Members of which the appropriate written notice has been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 32.1. <i>None have been received.</i>	
17	External Organisations	
	To receive reports about and receive questions and answers on the business of external organisations. <i>None have been received.</i>	
18	Exclusion of Public and Press: - To give consideration to adopting the following Resolution: -	
	That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.	

PRIVATE SESSION

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19	Land at Rear of Braintree Enterprise Centre, Springwood Drive, Braintree – Approval of construction funding - PRIVATE
20	Block B at The College at Braintree, Church Lane, Braintree – Approval of funding for conversion works for a medical centre - PRIVATE

21 Braintree Town Centre Regeneration Scheme – Approval of funding - PRIVATE

Special Meeting of Full Council for the Local Plan – Proposed Change of Date and Confirmation of Procedural Steps		Agenda No:8
Portfolio	Overall Corporate Strategy and Direction	
Corporate Outcome:	Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers	
Report presented by:	Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Report prepared by:	Emma Wisbey, Governance and Member Manager	
Background Papers:	Public Report	
<u>Report and Minutes of Full Council – 18th April 2016</u> <u>Council Procedure Rules - Chapter 2 of the Constitution</u>		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:		
<p>On 18th April 2016, Council agreed that the Local Plan would be considered at a Special Meeting of Full Council on 28th November 2016. Following this meeting the draft Local Plan would be subject to its last public consultation period prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate in January/February 2017 for examination.</p> <p>In reviewing the Council's process for the submission of the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate it is considered appropriate to reschedule the November 2016 Special Meeting of Full Council to 7th February 2017 to align with Colchester Borough and Tendring District Councils' respective local plan processes.</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Strategic Part 1 of the respective draft Local Plans sets out the proposal for Garden Communities in the Braintree District, Colchester Borough and Tendring District Councils' areas. In developing the Local Plans there is a need to align the Council's decision making process and to co-ordinate the consultation periods with that of Colchester Borough and Tendring District Councils; and for simultaneous submission of the three Authorities' Local Plans to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. Therefore it is recommended that there should be greater alignment with Colchester Borough and Tendring District Councils and to move the meeting to the 7th February 2017.</p> <p>Members are also asked to note that the rescheduling of the Special meeting of Full Council will provide the Planning Policy Team and Local Plan Sub-Committee with a greater period of time to consider and respond to the consultation responses received during the July/August 2016 consultation period and the development of the Strategic Part 1 of the Local Plan before making its final recommendation to Full Council. Whilst this represents a delay to the current process timetable, given the joint submission it will</p>		

not directly impact on the timetable for consideration of final adoption of the plan.

The Constitution (Council Procedural Rule 25.1) states that a decision made by Full Council cannot be amended/rescinded within the preceding six months. However, this Rule may be suspended upon a simple majority of any meeting of the Council in accordance with Council procedural Rule 7.1.

Members are requested to agree to suspend Council Procedure Rule 25.1 in order to reschedule the Special Meeting of Full Council to 7th February 2017.

Subject to Full Council's agreement to the change of date, there will be consequential amendments to the process steps agreed on 18th April 2016. A revised schedule of the process steps are set out in the appendix attached.

Members are asked to note that the consequential amendments are limited to change of dates only.

Members will be aware that there is a Members' Evening programmed for 7th February 2017, this Members Evening will be re-arranged to accommodate the Special Meeting of Full Council.

Recommended Decision:

That Full Council agrees:

- 1) That Council Procedure Rule 25.1 is suspended.

Subject to the agreement of 1 above,

- 2) That the Special Meeting of Full Council for the Local Plan is rescheduled to 7th February 2017.
- 3) That the Process steps as set out in the appendix for the meeting of Full Council on 7th February 2017 are agreed.

Purpose of Decision:

To aid transparency for the rescheduling of a Special Meeting of Full Council and compliance with the Council Procedural Rules (Part 2 of the Constitution)

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

Financial:	None arising out of this report.
Legal:	The rescheduling of the meeting of Full Council to 7 th February 2017 will have an impact on the Council's current agreed timetable for the Local Plan; however this is within the Council's powers to change in order for the process to be effectively managed with other authorities and the need for alignment of joint submissions.
Safeguarding:	None arising out of this report.
Equalities/Diversity:	None arising out of this report.
Customer Impact:	<p>The rescheduling impacts upon the Council's current agreed timetable for the Local Plan, but does impinge upon the rights of those wishing to engage/participate in the Local Plan process.</p> <p>The business of the Special Meeting of Full Council is limited to that of the Local Plan. No other business of the Council will be delayed as a result of rescheduling this meeting to the 7th February 2017.</p> <p>The change of date will be communicated via the Timetable of Meetings for 2016/17 which is available on the Council's website.</p> <p>The public will be able to register to participate in the Public Question Time upon publication of the Agenda.</p>
Environment and Climate Change:	None arising out of this report.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	The alternative date does not impact on participation rights.
Risks:	None arising out of this report.
Officer Contact:	Emma Wisbey
Designation:	Governance and Member Manager
Ext. No:	2610
E-mail:	emma.wisbey@braintree.gov.uk

Timetable for the Special Meetings of Full Council for the Local Plan on 7th February 2017

Note: Items in grey italics are for Member and Officer information and guidance and may need to be revised to meet the business needs of the Council; they are not formal procedural steps for the Council.

Special Meeting of Full Council – 7th February 2017			
Date	Time	Event	Notes
<i>06.01.2017 (Friday)</i>	<i>Before 5pm</i>	<i>Reminder email to all Councillors confirming the procedure and timetable for the Special Meeting of Full Council for Local Plan.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reiteration of agreed timetable</i>
12.01.2017 (Thursday)	6pm	Meeting of the Local Plan-Sub-Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included for information only - Last meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee before Full Council on 7th February 2017 Agenda published – 04.01.2017.
<i>16.01.2017 (Monday)</i>	<i>5.30pm</i>	<i>Report Deadline for Council Agenda – 7th February</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reports to Governance and Members Team for early publication of Agenda on 20.1.2017.</i>
20.01.2017 (Friday)	5.30pm	1) Publication of Agenda and Reports for Full Council 2) Guidance note to Councillors re: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declaration of Interests Amendment Deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda published - at least 10 days before meeting. <i>Agenda delivered by hand to Councillors, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance.</i>

Date	Time	Event	Notes
27.01.2017 (Friday)	12 noon	Proposed amendments to the Local Plan from Councillors to Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed deadline – Suspension of CPR 23.4 Proposed amendments to be emailed to demse@braintree.gov.uk
30.01.2017 (Monday)	TBC	<p>1) <i>Meeting of Officers to review proposed amendments.</i></p> <p>2) <i>Preparation of proposed amendment pack.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To be confirmed - Meeting time to be arranged.</i> <i>Officers to meet – Chief Executive, Corporate Director, Planning Policy, Head of Governance.</i> <i>Governance to prepare Amendment Pack.</i>
31.01.2017 (Tuesday)	TBC	<p>1) Informal meeting with Chair of Local Plan Sub-Committee and Cabinet Members (Cllr Lady Newton and Cllr Butland) regarding proposed amendments.</p> <p>2) <i>Chairman and Vice-Chairman's briefing for Full Council.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be confirmed - Meeting time to be arranged. <i>Chairman's briefing to be confirmed.</i>
02.02.2017 (Thursday)	By: 5.30pm	<p>1) Deadline for registration for Public Question Time for Council on 7th February 2017.</p> <p>2) Circulation of proposed amendments to Members and those minded to be accepted by the Chairman of the Local Plan Sub-Committee indicated.</p> <p>3) Publication of proposed amendments on the website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance and Member Team maintain PQT Register. Agreed process – Suspension of CPR23.4.

Date	Time	Event	Notes
07.02.2017 (Tuesday)	9am	1) Deadline for amendments on the proposed amendments to the Chief Executive. 2) Deadline for requests to the Chief Executive for an amendment minded to be accepted by the Chairman of the Local Plan Sub - Committee to go forward for debate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed process – suspension of CPRs 23.4 and 23.5. Proposed Amendments to amendments to be emailed to demse@braintree.gov.uk Requests for Amendments to go forward for debate to be emailed to demse@braintree.gov.uk
	11am	1) <i>Final proposed Amendments Pack to Chief Executive.</i> 2) <i>Meeting of Officers to review proposed amendments.</i>	
	2pm	Informal meeting with the Chair of Local Plan Sub-Committee and Cabinet Members (Cllr Lady Newton and Cllr Butland) regarding the proposed amendments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be confirmed - Meeting date and time to be arranged.
	5pm	<i>Final briefing with Chairman and Vice-Chairman.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To be confirmed - Meeting date and time to be arranged.</i>
	6pm	1) Amendment Papers on Members' desks in Council Chamber. 2) Proposed amendments published on website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full set of Amendments; both those recommended for acceptance and those for debate.
	7.15pm	Meeting of Full Council	

<p>Recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 13th July 2016</p> <p>Task and Finish Group Review in to Apprenticeships in the Braintree District</p>	<p>Agenda No: 9</p>
<p>Background Papers:</p> <p><u>Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 13th July 2016 Task and Finish Group Review in to Apprenticeships in the Braintree District</u></p>	<p>Public Report</p>

<p>Minute Extract:</p>
<p>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – 13TH JULY 2016</p> <p>12 TASK AND FINISH REVIEW INTO APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT</p> <p>INFORMATION: Members were asked to consider the report of the Task and Finish Groups’ scrutiny review report into Apprenticeships.</p> <p>A Task and Finish Group of Braintree District Councillors was formed to explore the current state of apprenticeships in the District and make recommendations to the Council going forward. The Task and Finish Group had met with apprentices from the Council, from outside organisations and gathered evidence of companies and partners across the District.</p> <p>As part of the review members looked at the take up of apprenticeships in the District relative to County and national levels, the barriers faced by companies and individuals taking up apprenticeships and what role the District Council had, if any, to play in the future of apprenticeships.</p> <p>Members identified the barriers between schools and apprenticeships and felt that this should be reflected in the recommendations. It was therefore agreed by Members that recommendation 1 should be amended to read;</p> <p><i>“Businesses, and schools, need help to understand and navigate the apprenticeship process.</i> <i>The process for hiring an apprentice can be complex, confusing and time consuming. Even large businesses can struggle with the</i></p>

complexity involved in identifying the correct programme for an apprentice, fulfilling the requirements of the provider and understanding the correct procedures for monitoring an apprentice's progress. As the district is largely made up of small businesses, this becomes an even larger barrier and hindrance – making it a real issue specifically for Braintree. Our Task and Finish Group recommends that a checklist is pulled together, drawing on the experience of those who are further along the apprentice journey, which businesses in the district can refer to when deciding to recruit an apprentice. The Task and Finish Group also recommends that the Council looks to work closer with schools to ensure they also understand the journey and opportunities of apprenticeships”

DECISION: To consider and refer the Task and Finish Groups' scrutiny review report into Apprenticeships to Full Council on 5th September 2016 and to Cabinet on 29th November 2016.

As a result of the Task and Finish Group's review into Apprenticeships the following recommendations are made:

1. **Businesses need help to understand and navigate the apprenticeship process.**
Work with the Essex Skills Board and Training providers to produce a simple checklist or process chart for businesses.
2. **Businesses need to understand the business case for taking on an apprentice.**
Use positive case studies from companies in the local area to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to other businesses and encourage them to “Grow Your Own Talent”.
3. **Transport can be a major barrier for young people accessing apprenticeships.**
Explore options including, Community Transport, which could be used to help address this situation.
4. **Agencies need to work together to address issues affecting apprenticeships.**
The Essex Skills Board needs to take a lead in pulling together agencies across the district to promote apprenticeships.
5. **The Council should investigate establishing an apprenticeship agency.**
The Council should look into establishing an apprenticeships agency, which would act a central pool of apprentices recruited and hired by the Council to then be “hired out” to businesses.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the committees' report to be referred to Council and Cabinet in accordance with the Procedure Rules for Scrutiny.

Recommended Decision: To refer the Task and Finish Groups' Scrutiny Review Report into Apprenticeships to Cabinet on 29th November 2016 for consideration and response.

TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT APPRENTICESHIPS IN BRAINTREE DISTRICT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2015 the Government announced its commitment to create 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020, and to *“strengthen their reputation, help working people and ensure apprenticeships are recognised as a career path equal to higher education.”*¹

In July 2015, a review of Apprenticeships was added to the Council's Scrutiny Committee's work programme in order to review the following:

1. The take up of apprenticeships in the District relative to:
 - i) Other Essex Districts & Boroughs
 - ii) Essex County Council figures
 - iii) National averages
2. Barriers to employers in taking on apprentices:
3. Barriers to individuals in accessing apprenticeships
4. The District Council role in promoting apprenticeships

A Task and Finish Group of Braintree District Councillors was formed to explore the current state of apprenticeships in the district and make recommendations to the Cabinet going forward. The Task and Finish Group met with apprentices from the Council, representatives from outside organisations offering apprenticeships and gathered evidence from companies and partners across the district.

This report sets out the work undertaken and the recommendations put forward by this Task and Finish Group.

2. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Task and Finish Group would like to thank the following people and organisations for supporting the work of this review:

- Braintree District Council's current and former apprentices
- Colchester Institute
- Essex County Council Employment & Skills Unit
- Milbank Concrete, Earls Colne
- Maycast-Nokes, Halstead
- Village Glass, Witham
- Local Schools

¹ Nick Boles MP, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills - [Government kick-starts plans to reach 3 million apprenticeships](#) - 14 June 2015

3. BACKGROUND

The Braintree District has plans for significant economic growth. Residents and businesses can welcome an array of exciting new opportunities arising within the district, including the development of 14,000 new houses and 20,000 new jobs by 2033.

Braintree is also at the heart of a global economy within greater Essex. It is home of large global businesses and has excellent road, sea and air travel links allowing businesses to access a range of markets including Cambridge, London and Europe. Data highlights Braintree as a well-established district for construction, manufacturing and technology.

With the Government's target of delivering 3 million new apprenticeship starts by 2020 and the planned introduction of an "Apprenticeship Levy" on large employers, apprenticeships will become an increasingly important means of delivering the skilled workforces in the future. Despite increasing media attention and promotion by both national and local agencies, it is clear that there are still gaps in understanding and negative perceptions about status and quality of apprenticeships which will need to be addressed if the government's ambitions are to be met.

4. AN OVERVIEW OF APPRENTICESHIPS

As starting point the Task and Finish Group first sought to gain a greater understanding about what apprenticeships actually are and how they work. Staff from Colchester Institute, Essex County Council Employment and Skills Unit, and Braintree District Council's Learning and Development Consultant attended a meeting with Members to help answer the following questions:

What are Apprenticeships?

An apprenticeship is a paid job which provides training and work experience leading to a nationally recognised qualification.

Learners earn money whilst also gaining a nationally recognised qualification in over 170 Industries including ICT, engineering, construction, accountancy and public services and in 1,500 job roles.

Apprenticeships take between one and four years to complete and are now available up to degree level and beyond. The Apprenticeship equivalence levels are set out below.

Apprenticeship Level	Equivalent to...
Intermediate Apprenticeships (Level 2)	5 A*-C GCSEs
Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3)	2 A Levels
Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4 & 5)	Higher national Diploma or Foundation Degree
Higher Apprenticeships (Level 7)	Master's degree

How much are Apprentices paid?

Apprentices aged under 19 years old, or in the first year of their apprenticeship can be paid the “Apprentice Minimum Wage” of £3.30 per hour. After this the standard national minimum wage levels will apply.

Employers can choose to top-up apprenticeship wages however the costs must be covered by the employers directly.

Apprentices are also entitled to sickness and holiday pay as well as time off for study as agreed with their employer and training provider.

Who can take part up an Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are open to anybody who is:

- Aged 16 or over (there is no upper age limit)
- Living in England
- Not in full-time education at the point of starting their apprenticeship

As well as the criteria set out above, apprentices can also be existing staff within a company, who are undertaking an in-work qualification within the National Apprenticeship Framework.

Students can apply for an apprenticeship whilst still in full time education, so long as their Apprenticeship commences after they have completed their current programme of study.

How are Apprenticeships funded?

The Skills Funding Agency provides financial support of £1,500 per apprentice aged 16-24 years old, for employers who meet the following criteria:

- Have fewer than 50 employees,
- who are new to apprenticeships
- or haven't enrolled a new recruit or existing employee onto an Apprenticeship programme in the previous 12 months.

Employers can be paid up to 5 grants in total.

The Apprenticeship Levy

In April 2017 the government will introduce a new Apprenticeship Levy which will change the way that apprenticeships are funded nationally.

This scheme will require employers with an annual pay bill of over £3 million to contribute to a new apprenticeship levy, at a rate of 0.5% of their annual pay bill. All employers that are required to pay the levy will be entitled to an offset allowance of £15,000 per year.

All employers (including those who do not pay the levy) will then be able to access funding for apprenticeships through a new digital apprenticeship service account which they can pay for training and assessment for apprentices.

All employers (including those who do not pay the levy) will then be able to access funding for apprenticeships through a new digital apprenticeship service account which they can pay for training and assessment for apprentices.

5. HOW DOES THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT COMPARE TO OTHER AREAS?

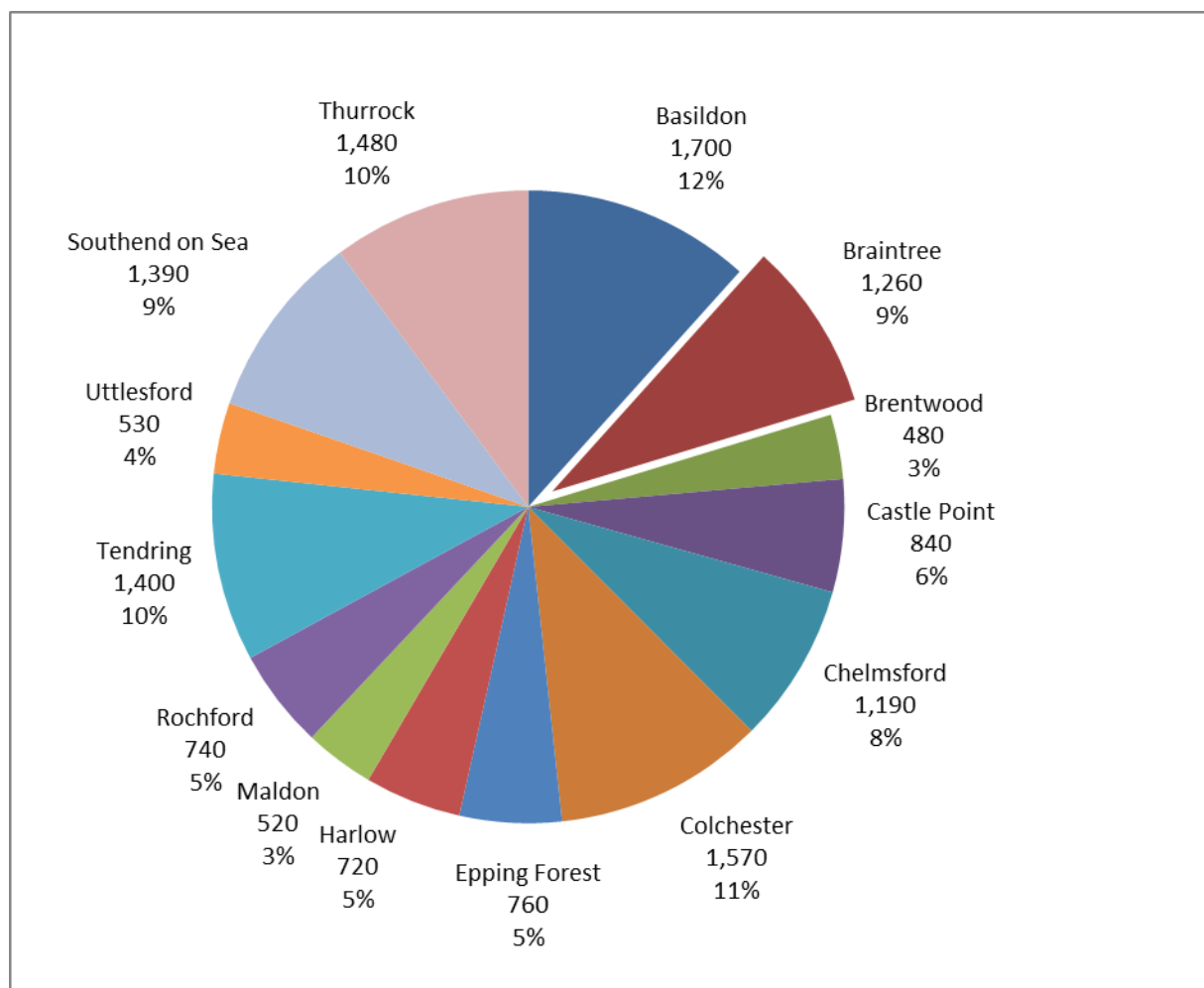
According to data from the Skills Funding Agency and Essex County Council, there were 1,260 new apprenticeship starts in the Braintree District in 2014/15.

This accounts for just over 10% of apprenticeship starts in the Essex County Council area and is the 4th highest of all districts and boroughs. This is also approximately 9% of all apprenticeships in the Greater Essex area (including Southend and Thurrock)

The table and charts below provide further detail on the level of apprenticeships:

Braintree apprenticeship starts:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Braintree	1,390	1,140	1,260
Essex	11,760	10,390	11,710
South East Region	68,960	60,220	65,030
Essex Apprenticeship Programme	121	56	57



Apprenticeship starts in Greater Essex – 2014/15 – Source: Skills Funding Agency

The Task and Finish Group also undertook a literature review of other research into apprenticeships undertaken by outside organisations and by other Braintree District Council Groups and Committees. The findings are summarised below:

The Richard Review (2012)

Between June and November 2012, business owner Doug Richard undertook an independent review of apprenticeships on behalf of the Government. The research carried out as part of this review involved a range of stakeholders including business owners, apprentices and other stakeholders resulted in a large number of recommendations which have subsequently informed revisions to the Government's Apprenticeship policy.

The Richard review highlighted that despite an overwhelmingly positive reaction to apprenticeships from all involved in the review, many school leavers do not consider apprenticeships as an option. Chapter seven of the Richard Review focussed specifically on boosting demand and awareness with participants citing five main factors holding back demand for apprenticeships.

1. **Getting the apprenticeship product right** – *“many employers argued that this is currently being hampered, with apprenticeship standards and quality of training too low.”*
2. **Negative perceptions compared to higher education** - *“A relative lack of demand from more highly qualified school leavers, who are being attracted into Higher Education instead, impacts significantly on employers’ appetite for taking on apprentices.”*
3. **Difficulties for employers in navigating the apprenticeship system** – *“a serious barrier expressed by many was the sheer complexity - both in terms of the number of bodies involved in the current system and, more commonly cited, the issues around access to apprenticeships and the perceived lack of a single point of contact.”*
4. **Perceived poor quality** – *“driven by some poor providers who either have no relevant curriculum or, as cited in previous sections, focus on driving ‘easy to deliver’ units rather than products directly relevant to employers.”*
5. **Lack of impartial advice available** – *“the most commonly cited barrier to demand for learners was the perceived lack of impartial, information and advice, which includes information on apprenticeships, available to all learners, especially though not exclusively at school, and offered early enough to inform subject choices at GCSE”*

The review looked at both concluded that there was still further work to be done to boost numbers of both employers and learners engaging with Apprenticeships although concluded that more work is needed to raise take up from on the learner side. Richard notes that

“The number of apprenticeship places has already increased considerably – but the pace of learner demand has not been matched by employers’ willingness to hire them as apprentices, especially for the younger age group. Employer demand therefore is correctly a key focus, but learner demand is an important challenge which must not be overlooked – while overall it is strong, this conceals considerable variations, with too few young people, and particularly too few of the most capable young people, informed about and choosing apprenticeships.”

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf

***Creating an inclusive Apprenticeship Offer –
Department of Business Innovation and Skills (2012)***

The report “Creating an inclusive Apprenticeship Offer” commissioned by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (2012) set out key advice and guidance relating to the take up of Apprenticeship by people with learning difficulties/disabilities and/or behavioural or mental health problems. This report notes the following:

“Success rates for those with mental ill health, emotional/behavioural difficulties, multiple learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties are consistently lower than other groups and there should be a focus on supporting these groups to achieve in line with their peers.”

“there is cause for concern among specific groups. Both the numbers and proportion of Apprentices declaring a moderate learning difficulty for example have fallen significantly as have those with visual impairments and multiple disabilities.”

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387040/AU-CreatingAnInclusiveApprenticeshipOffer-Report-May2012.pdf

Skills Funding Agency Equality and Diversity Good Practice Fund

The Skills Funding Agency operates the equality and diversity good practice fund provides grants to Skills Funding Agency-funded providers to promote apprenticeships to under-represented groups. Examples from the National Apprenticeship Service include:

- Newcastle City Council and Twisting Ducks produced a [film-based toolkit](#), to raise awareness about the benefits of apprenticeships and traineeships for learners with learning disabilities.
- Prostart Training’s [Passport to Success programme](#) addressed the under-representation of men on Business Administration apprenticeships by giving one-to-one sessions on employability and interview skills.
- Realise Futures’ [Mind the Gap project](#) addressed the under-representation of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) apprentices in the context of skills, enterprise and employability, and worked with businesses to promote the benefits of a diverse workforce.
- National Star College’s [WorkAble project](#) addressed barriers faced by people with disabilities who wish to work, train in the workplace or carry out work experience by supporting employers to become disability confident.

Further examples are also available at <http://equalitystoolkit.com>

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/E-and-D-Good-practice-fund-prospectus.pdf>

Learning a Living – Working Links 2012

This report was published at the peak of national youth unemployment explores ways in which apprenticeships could be used to tackle the youth unemployment

crisis. As part of this report the authors identified a number of barriers which they considered were preventing apprenticeships from being open to all young people. Recommendations from this report on how to tackle these barriers included:

- More government funded pre-Apprenticeship places;
- Improved promotion of Apprenticeships to young people;
- Encourage more effective business to business advocacy of the benefits of Apprenticeships to employers.
- Training providers improving low levels of literacy and numeracy that employers feel are an issue for some young people – but not at the expense of the soft skills employers also value;
- Place a statutory obligation on schools to teach employability skills through the mainstream curriculum;
- Place a legal duty on schools to explain the full educational offer (including Apprenticeships) available to young people of all abilities;

<http://www.workinglinks.co.uk/pdf/Learning%20a%20Living.pdf>

Braintree District Council Scrutiny Review of NEETS 2013/14

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook an Overview and Scrutiny Review of NEETs in 2013/2014 to examine how the Council could support young people into work. Key conclusions from that work relevant to this task and finish group were the need to:

- Raise business awareness of the National Apprenticeship Service support programme for apprenticeships.
- Work to bridge the gap between schools/young people and businesses
- Work with colleges and training providers to change the provision of training in the Braintree District to areas where there is clear skills need
- Raise awareness of the new employment opportunities and skill needs of employers in schools and to young people in the District more generally.

Braintree District Employment and Skills Review - 15th July 2014

Recognising that access to appropriate skills may be a barrier to business growth, Braintree District's Business Leaders Board set up a District Employment and Skills Board in 2014, complementing the work of the Essex Employment and Skills Board. As part of the work in setting up this board, an Employer Skills Review was undertaken which highlighted the following in relation to Apprenticeships:

“For England as a whole, the apprenticeship programme has expanded rapidly since government investment increased in 2009/10. Braintree District has performed well in delivering apprenticeships compared to other Essex Districts, with the 4th highest achievement in the County. Apprenticeships will continue to be the main government programme for helping people gain sustainable employment. There is therefore a need to support employers to take on more apprentices and identify and address any barriers or negative perceptions that employers may have that prevent them taking on an apprentice. However, the move to route funding to employers to purchase apprenticeship training (rather than to the Colleges and training providers) is likely to disadvantage SME's who are less likely than larger employers to have a dedicated HR function.”

At a local level the review also noted that:

“The District does well compared to surrounding areas on total numbers of apprentices and it has a good mix of ages currently undertaking an apprenticeship, but they are mainly at the intermediate or advanced level.”

Report on Educational attainment in the Braintree District – 2015

Prompted by the ongoing low attainment levels as well as recent issues being experienced in some of the academies in the Braintree town, research was undertaken to look at what work was being done in other areas around Essex to improve educational attainment with different age groups.

It was found in some of the other areas that Local Education Authorities and schools *“needed to work more closely with local businesses to identify the skills and qualifications they need from employees to help them grow and meet their business aspirations. It was noted that **that particularly (in the Enterprise Zones) that local candidates often lack the necessary qualifications particularly in STEM subjects.**”*

7. VIEWS OF EXISTING APPRENTICES

Members of the Task and Finish Group met with current and previous members of the Council’s own Apprenticeship programme, and heard from apprentices aged from 16 upwards about their motivation for undertaking an apprenticeship, barriers they had encountered and the role of their friends and family in influencing their decision to take up an apprenticeship. The key findings of this meeting are summarised below:

Motivation

The opportunity to gain a formal qualification at the same time as gaining work experience

This was a major factor in their decision to undertake an apprenticeship, compared to another employment or academic pathway. In particular those who had no set idea about longer term careers noted that an apprenticeship with the Council had enabled them to experience a number of different job roles and gain a range of broad skills to help them in the future.

Apprenticeships offer long term potential

Some highlighted that they had been offered full time work on completion of their course at school/college. It was felt that the long term potential which an apprenticeship would offer outweighed offers of higher immediate salaries in with some companies.

Avoiding Student Loan Debt

Some apprentices commented that they had heard of people coming out of University with high amounts of debt but were unable to get a job due to lack of work experience. An apprenticeship offered a the opportunity to earn both a qualification whilst earning a (albeit initially smaller) wage.

One apprentice commented that despite apprenticeships being seen as a “non-academic” choice, they planned to study at University in the future but felt that

gaining work experience was as important to make them stand out when applying to universities and future jobs.

Barriers

Low Apprenticeship Wages

The Apprenticeship wage was noted as a main barrier when considering taking up an apprenticeship. Some commented that in many cases they would be able to find work full time work which paid more in the short term but felt that these roles would not offer them long term career potential.

Transport

The cost of public transport or operating their own vehicle on an apprenticeship wage was seen as a major barrier, and impacted on where they could apply for apprenticeships. The poor provision of public transport in was also major barrier regardless of whether or not they were seeking employment or undertaking an apprenticeship.

Lack of Information

Current apprentices felt that not enough information was provided about apprenticeships in school or college and that there was a perceived push from education establishments for students to pursue an academic route (A Level's, University etc.) rather than a vocational route. This was considered in part to be due the prestige still attributed by schools or colleges around the number of leavers going onto study at 6th Form or University.

The Influence of Friends and Family

Parents' Knowledge or Perceptions

The majority of those interviewed said that others knew very little about them, or thought that they were either poor quality, cheap labour, or only for those who were "not academic". It was suggested that some negative perceptions particularly amongst parents were, in part, underpinned by a lack of accessible and appropriate information. Parents who had prior familial experience of apprenticeships tended to be more positively inclined towards their children taking part.

Lack of Peer Group Support

Some of the interviewees commented that they knew of other young people who were considering going down a traditional academic route just to "fit-in" or stay with their friends.

Changing Perceptions

All who participated in interviews commented that once their friends and family had more information about apprenticeships they were more supportive, however this only tended to occur after they had already commenced their apprenticeship and the progress/benefits were seen first-hand.

8. THE VIEWS OF EMPLOYERS

Throughout April and May, members visit three local companies all of whom had very different experiences of recruiting and employing apprentices in the local area.

A summary of visits to each of the companies visited is set out below.

Milbank Concrete in Earls Colne



Milbank Concrete is based on the Earls Colne Business Park and is one of the leading manufacturers of high quality precast concrete products including floors and other specialist

and bespoke precast concrete products that include; stair flights, landings, balconies, ground beams, terrace units, wall panels, car park planks and dock levelers. The company employs over 160 people with an annual turnover of £21million.

Managers at Milbank Concrete had previously had difficulties working with providers to recruit apprentices, so had contacted Braintree District Council and the Colchester Institute for additional support to help them to understand the apprenticeship process. Despite this from both organisations Milbank still experiences challenges around apprenticeships and currently only employs one apprentice. Although the company is willing to take on additional apprentices they identified a number of barriers affecting companies like theirs:

- Initially found the apprenticeship system difficult to access and experienced delays in recruiting their first apprentice.
- Transport and access for apprentices is an issue due to the rural location and lack of public transport.
- Schools are not aware of the local opportunities for apprenticeships and are therefore not promoting local apprenticeships or putting students forward as candidates.

Maycast Nokes in Halstead



Maycast-Nokes is a leading manufacturer of high-quality precision castings. The company works across multiple sectors ranging from defence and aerospace to environmental and marine.

Founded over 50 years ago, they remain locally owned and based on single site in the centre of Halstead, employing

145 people with an annual turnover of more than £6.5 million.

Staff at Maycast-Nokes commented on the company's strong track record for staff retention and creating opportunities for new employees, with approximately 10% of its workforce being trainees or apprentices. The company works with training providers to ensure that training programmes to provide workers with industry recognised skills and qualifications but also deliver the skills needed by the employer to ensure that their business continues to grow.

The company has a longstanding experience of employing apprentices which continues to this day. Representatives from Maycast-Nokes attribute their ongoing success to:

- Having developed a good relationship with local schools, which means they are able to choose from good quality applicants.
- A good local reputation and recommendations from existing employees helping recruitment.
- Offering all employees a career path that develops from the bottom upwards.

Village Glass in Witham



Village Glass manufactures specialised glass for residential and commercial purposes across the UK, including the safety glass, self-cleaning, low-e coatings and solar controlled. In the lead up to the London 2012 Olympic Games, Village Glass supplied Laminated High Performance Solar Control IG Units for the Orbital Tower on the Olympic Park at Stratford. The company has a

turnover of over £16million and currently employs 200 people across two sites in Witham.

Members met with representatives from the company including the Managing Director, HR Manager and operational staff who all commented that their experience had been considerably more difficult than originally anticipated despite the staffing resources available to a company of their size. At the time of meeting with Members, Village Glass currently employed two apprentices.

Overall, representatives from Village Glass noted the following about their experience with apprenticeships:

- Initially it was a long Journey to get traction with recruiting apprentices and find a suitable training provider.
- Very labour intensive in both recruiting and then managing the apprentices on a daily basis. This might not be possible in smaller businesses.
- This is not profitable in the short term - Employers have to recognise that this is not a cheap labour solution but an investment in the future of their workforce.

Observations from all businesses visited

Members noted common themes across the three companies visited all of whom commented on the role that schools have in promoting apprenticeships. All three companies commented that Schools are too focussed on academic results and

other targets such as Ofsted inspections. They are not aware of, or not promoting vocation training opportunities.

9. THE VIEWS OF SCHOOLS

As part of the Task and Finish Group's investigation into apprenticeships, survey was sent to all 8 secondary schools in the Braintree District to find out what they do to promote apprenticeships and what barriers they encounter. Three Schools had responded at the time of writing this report. Their comments are summarised below:

1. Does your school currently promote/raise awareness of apprenticeships to your students as a Post-Secondary option? If so how?	All three noted that they provide a combination of classroom based promotion as well as participating in apprenticeship fairs and roadshows. It was noted by one respondent that they also work collaboratively with Notley & Hedingham Schools to organise their own Careers fair which features information about apprenticeships.
How would you rate the information available to schools/teachers about apprenticeships?	One school noted that the information available about the concept of apprenticeships OK, however noted that local level information was lacking.
What additional information, resources or support would help schools improve promotion/awareness of Apprenticeship to students and parents?	It was suggested that single/central place where all local apprenticeships are available is needed. This could include vacancies from employers and details of different training providers. Another suggestion was for more promotion of higher level apprenticeships and more information for parents who do not always fully understand the benefits of apprenticeship and their equivalence to other qualifications.
What (if any) barriers have you encountered when promoting apprenticeships?	All respondents noted that some apprenticeships are perceived as poor quality or do not requiring good GCSE results. One school noted that this has led to some students "giving up" before their exams if "they believe they do not need any qualifications or only minimum entry requirements to gain an apprenticeship".
Do you have any other comments about apprenticeships that you would like to share.	It was suggested that apprenticeships should link to universities in order to should lead to a degrees and add value.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback from participants and observations made by Members, the following recommendations are made to Cabinet:

1. **Businesses, and schools, need help to understand and navigate the apprenticeship process.**

The process for hiring an apprentice can be complex, confusing and time consuming. Even large businesses can struggle with the complexity involved in identifying the

correct programme for an apprentice, fulfilling the requirements of the provider and understanding the correct procedures for monitoring an apprentice's progress.

As the district is largely made up of small businesses, this becomes an even larger barrier and hindrance – making it a real issue specifically for Braintree. Our Task and Finish Group recommends that a checklist is pulled together, drawing on the experience of those who are further along the apprentice journey, which businesses in the district can refer to when deciding to recruit an apprentice. The Task and Finish Group also recommends that the Council looks to work closer with schools to ensure they also understand the journey and opportunities of apprenticeships

2. Businesses need to understand the business case for taking on an apprentice.

Although business leaders appear sold on the societal and moral case for apprenticeships, the business case appears to have less traction. In order to ensure that businesses across our district see apprenticeships as a part of their growth plans, rather than part of their corporate social responsibility plans we recommend positive case studies from companies in the local area are used promote the benefits of apprenticeships to other businesses and encourage them to “Grow Your Own Talent”.

3. Transport can be a major barrier for young people accessing apprenticeships.

Given that the apprenticeship wage is significantly lower than a full employee may expect, transport (as with further education) can be a real barrier – especially within the more rural parts of our district. We recommend consideration is given to how community transport can be used to make it easier for rurally based young people to access apprenticeships, and for rural businesses to recruit apprentices.

4. Agencies need to work together to address issues affecting apprenticeships.

There are a large number of agencies involved in apprenticeships across the district and for businesses the points of contact can be confusing. By working together, these groups can have a larger and stronger voice as well as making the situation clearer for businesses. We recommend the Essex Skills Board should take a lead in pulling together agencies across the district to promote apprenticeships.

5. The Council should investigate establishing an apprenticeship agency.

The district is heavily skewed towards small businesses which struggle to have the HR functionality to handle recruiting, training and monitoring apprentices. Some small businesses also do not have the demand for an apprentice for a full week. Therefore the Council should look into establishing an apprenticeships agency, which would act a central pool of apprentices recruited and hired by the Council to then be “hired out” to businesses.

The Council could recruit apprentices and be responsible for their HR and businesses could be allocated an apprentice for two or three days a week. An apprentice would then experience working across a range of businesses within the district and the opportunity to have an apprentice would be opened up to a much larger pool of businesses.

ENDS

Land at Rear of Braintree Enterprise Centre, Springwood Drive, Braintree – Approval of construction funding		Agenda No:10
Portfolio	Economic Development	
Corporate Outcome:	Corporate Services and Asset Management A well connected and growing district with high quality homes and infrastructure A prosperous district that attracts business growth and provides high quality employment opportunities Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers	
Report presented by:	Councillor John McKee, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Asset Management	
Report prepared by:	Andrew Epsom, Head of Asset Management	
Background Papers:		Public Report
Corporate Strategy 2016 - 2020 District Investment Strategy Cabinet Report 23rd May 2016 Report and Minutes of Cabinet – 18th July 2016		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:		
<p>Braintree District Council owns the vacant employment site situated to the rear of the Braintree Enterprise Centre off Springwood Drive. The site comprises c.1.01 acres (4094m²).</p> <p>On the 18th July 2016, Cabinet approved the construction of 40 car parking spaces on the front half of this site to provide additional car parking for the newly constructed extension to the Braintree Enterprise Centre to support Ignite to market and promote the training and conference facilities within the new centre providing support to help businesses start and grow.</p> <p>On the rear half of this site Cabinet also approved the construction of 4 small workshop units to provide much needed grow on space to District Businesses. These workshop units will be managed by the Council to provide employment opportunities and deliver a revenue income.</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the allocation of funding from the Growth Area Fund and the New Homes Bonus for the construction costs of this development.</p>		

Recommended Decision:

That Council approves:

1. The allocation of £350,000 of Growth Area Funding towards the construction of the car park, access road and retaining wall.
2. The allocation of £610,300 of New Homes Bonus to fund the construction of the workshop units and access road.

Purpose of Decision:

To facilitate the construction of the car park to enable Ignite to market and promote the training and conference facilities within the new centre, and construction of the small workshop units to provide employment opportunities and revenue income for the Council.

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

It is proposed that a contribution of £350,000 from Growth Area Fund monies is put towards the cost of construction of the 40 car parking spaces, access road and retaining wall. The Council is proposing to lease the new car park to Ignite Business Enterprise Limited.

It is proposed to fund the development of the units and access road with an allocation of £610,300 from the New Homes Bonus (part of the funding set aside for the District Investment Strategy).

The estimated cost to construct the four small light industrial workshop units and access road is £610,300. On the basis that the estimated net income from the four units is £39,200 per annum, then this will produce a net yield of 6.4%. This investment provides good value for money for the Council.

These resources are currently invested and therefore their use will result in a reduction of interest earned per annum.

The Council will exercise its option to tax the car park and the units in order that the VAT on the construction works is recoverable.

The Council has applied its Corporate Investment Evaluation Tool to this option which evaluates and scores key investment criteria to provide an overall score for the

	proposed investment which can be measured against other alternative investment opportunities. The evaluation of this option has produced a weighted score of 6.275: the minimum score to progress an investment project is 6.
Legal:	The construction contracts, lease agreements and associated legal documentation will be completed and monitored by the Council's Legal Service and Asset Management Service to ensure the Council's interests are protected at all times.
Safeguarding:	None arising out of this report.
Equalities/Diversity:	The construction of the car park and the workshop units will be required to comply with all disabled access requirements and the employment of staff within the units will need to comply with all equalities and diversity legislation.
Customer Impact:	The car park and workshop units will provide employment support and opportunities within the district.
Environment and Climate Change:	Any newly constructed buildings will need to comply with the current Environmental and Climate Change requirements.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Public consultation will take place when a planning application is submitted. External commercial property agents have been consulted regarding the current demand for small workshop units. Ignite Business Enterprise Limited has been consulted and discussions have been positive.
Risks:	See Risk Matrix in the main body of this report.
Officer Contact:	Janet Whyte
Designation:	Economic Development Officer Infrastructure
Ext. No:	2582
E-mail:	janet.whyte@braintree.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 Braintree District Council owns the vacant employment site situated to the rear of the Braintree Enterprise Centre off Springwood Drive in Braintree. The site comprises c.1.01 acres (4,094m²).
- 1.2 On [18th July 2016 Cabinet](#) approved the construction of 40 car parking spaces on the front half of the site to support Ignite to market and promote the training and conference facilities within the new centre providing support to help business start and grow. Ignite Business Enterprise Limited will lease the car park from the Council and manage this facility going forward.
- 1.3 Cabinet also approved the construction of four small workshop units on the rear half of the site to provide much needed grow on space, which the Council will manage to provide employment opportunities and deliver a revenue income. The Council has recognised that there is a strong demand for small light industrial workshop units ranging in size from 600 sq. ft. to 2,000 sq. ft. The local commercial agent, Joscelyne Chase, has provided a report to the Council confirming this strong level of demand together with current rental levels and features occupiers are looking for in units of this size.
- 1.4 With regard to maintenance obligations in respect of the four units, the Council, as Landlord, will be responsible for the future cost of replacing the roof and repairs to the main structure and foundations. Any costs associated with these parts of the building will be met from the Council's annual planned maintenance budget or revenue maintenance budget and also from any future rent increases.
- 1.5 The tenant will be responsible for all other internal and external repairs and maintenance to the building including all repairs to doors, windows and window frames.
- 1.6 Joscelyne Chase has advised that currently proposed new industrial schemes are not including any units of the size that the Council is proposing to build within its proposed scheme – unit sizes are typically in excess of 2,000 sq. ft.
- 1.7 In terms of the car park, it is proposed that the ongoing repairs and maintenance of this facility will be the responsibility of Ignite Business Enterprise Limited under the terms of their proposed lease of the car park.

2. Development Appraisal

- 2.1 It is proposed that the scheme is funded with allocations of £350,000 from Growth Area Fund monies and £610,300 from New Homes Bonus (part of £3.6million set aside for the District Investment Strategy agreed by Cabinet on [23rd May 2016](#)).
- 2.2 As these resources are currently invested, agreement to use them to fund this scheme will result in a loss of interest.

3. Risk Assessment

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Action</u>
3.1	Abnormal site costs	This would add to the scheme cost and may make it unviable.	The Council has commissioned a soil investigation report which has not revealed any site contamination or other ground issues.
3.2	Build costs increase	This may impact on the viability of the scheme.	A reasonable contingency has been built into the development cost appraisal. The Council would seek to agree a fixed price build contract to reduce this risk element.
3.3	Economic conditions decline	The Council would have to review its development proposals to assess if it is still appropriate to proceed.	Economic conditions are currently very positive and there is very strong demand for smaller start up units. If economic conditions decline the Council would offer incentives to tenants to achieve lettings. The Council will review the economic conditions prior to proceeding with the construction of the units.
3.4	Planning permission refused	The Council is unable to obtain a satisfactory planning permission.	This site is allocated for employment uses in the local plan and early discussions between the Council's architect and Planners has not raised any issues.

3.5	Congestion on Springwood Drive	The traffic congestion on Springwood Drive impacts on the ability to let the unit	Joscelyne Chase has confirmed that there is a strong demand for this size of unit in this area. Council owned units are fully let in Warner Drive. The Council is working with the developer to bring forward the Spine Road from Panfield Lane to ease congestion.
3.6	Council funding	If Council declines to approve funding this will stop the construction of the proposal agreed by Cabinet.	Scheme terminated. Cabinet would need to consider new proposals regarding the use of this site.

4. Proposed Car Park Management Arrangements

- 4.1 The Council is proposing to lease the new 40 space car park to Ignite Business Enterprise Limited subject to negotiation of the lease terms and conditions which would include Ignite being fully responsible for the ongoing repair and maintenance of the car park.

5. Value for Money

- 5.1 The Council has applied its Corporate Investment Evaluation Tool to this option which evaluates and scores key investment criteria to provide an overall score for the proposed investment which can be measured against other alternative investment opportunities. The evaluation of this option has produced a weighted score of 6.275: the minimum score to progress an investment project is 6.
- 5.2 The Council will be receiving a net income of £39,200 plus VAT per annum which equates to a 6.4% return. This investment provides good value for money for the Council.

6. Summary

- 6.1 These units will complement the existing Enterprise Centre and provide much needed grow on space, enabling businesses to expand and move on to larger accommodation to grow their business, which will assist Ignite to meet their 'churn' targets.
- 6.2 This development scheme can be funded from the Council's new District Investment Fund. This scheme is in line with the Council's District Investment Strategy by providing opportunities for new businesses and employment while delivering a good return for the Council. This will be one of the first projects to be delivered under this strategy.

6.3 The scheme can be phased with the car park constructed as a priority to provide essential parking for the training and conference facilities, with the workshop units constructed as a second phase.

7. Recommendations

7.1 It is RECOMMENDED to Council that it approves:

- a) The allocation of £350,000 of Growth Area Funding towards the construction of the car park, access road and retaining wall.
- b) The allocation of £610,300 of New Homes Bonus to fund the construction of the workshop units and access road.

Block B at The College at Braintree, Church Lane, Braintree – Proposed acquisition, grant of lease and funding for conversion works for a medical centre.		Agenda No:11
Portfolio	Corporate Services and Asset Management	
Corporate Outcome:	A well connected and growing district with high quality homes and infrastructure Residents live well in healthy and resilient communities where residents feel supported Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers	
Report presented by:	Councillor John McKee, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Asset Management	
Report prepared by:	Andrew Epsom, Head of Asset Management	
Background Papers:	Public Report	
Corporate Strategy 2016 - 2020 District Investment Strategy Report and Minutes of Cabinet – 18th July 2016 Disposal Heads of Terms Lease Heads of Terms Valuation Report	Key Decision: No	
Executive Summary:		
<p>The recently adopted District Investment Strategy identifies the need for infrastructure improvements to support future growth in the District. Improved healthcare provision is a priority area.</p> <p>Working in partnership with NHS England, the Council has an opportunity to facilitate the delivery of the replacement St. Lawrence Doctors Surgery, Bocking End, Braintree and to create a valuable property investment for its commercial portfolio.</p> <p>On the 18th July 2016, Cabinet approved the freehold purchase of Block B at The College at Braintree and the funding of the conversion costs to a medical centre to accommodate the new surgery provider.</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek Members’ approval for the allocation of funding from balances set aside for the District Investment Strategy for the costs of this development.</p>		

Recommended Decision:

That Council approves the funding from balances set aside for the District Investment Strategy.

Purpose of Decision:

To enable the proposed relocation of the St. Lawrence Doctors Surgery to more suitable premises and to create an additional property investment for the Council's commercial portfolio.

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

The purchase of this investment property will realise net revenue income of £139,000 plus VAT per annum. The net initial yield is 7.66%. This investment provides good value for money for the Council.

Members are requested to approve capital funding from balances set aside for the District Investment Strategy for this transaction which includes the freehold purchase of the building, fixed priced contract for the conversion works and an allowance for purchase costs.

This resource is currently invested and therefore its use will result in a reduction of interest earned per annum.

The Council will opt to tax the property in order that the VAT on the purchase and conversion works is recoverable.

The Council has applied its Corporate Investment Evaluation Tool to this option which evaluates and scores key investment criteria to provide an overall score for the proposed investment which can be measured against other alternative investment opportunities. The evaluation of this option has produced a weighted score of 8: the minimum score to progress an investment project is 6.

Legal:

The Council's Legal Service is instructed to act on the Council's behalf in respect of the documentation and to ensure that the Council's interests are protected.

Safeguarding:

None for the Council. Virgin Healthcare shall comply with Medical Centre safeguarding standards.

Equalities/Diversity:	Conversion works to adapt the premises suitable for use as a Medical Centre include disabled car parking, a new lift at the entrance and appropriate signage to meet the requirements of disabled users.
Customer Impact:	Improved healthcare provision for the patients of St. Lawrence Surgery. This purchase will also provide a valuable additional source of income which will enable the Council to continue to deliver good quality services to its customers and provide value for money.
Environment and Climate Change:	The building has been constructed to a good standard with low maintenance materials.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	NHS England completed a tender process leading to the appointment of Virgin Healthcare as the Surgery Provider. The purchase of this property has been approved by Cabinet and is subject to the scheme funding being approved by Full Council.
Risks:	See Risk Matrix in the main body of this report.
Officer Contact:	Andrew Epsom
Designation:	Head of Asset Management
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1. Background

- 1.1 The St. Lawrence Doctors' Surgery at Bocking End, Braintree occupy their premises on the terms of a lease that expired on 31st May 2016 and are 'holding-over' until alternative premises are available for occupation.
- 1.2 NHS England has recently awarded the contract for healthcare provision at this surgery to Virgin Healthcare Holdings Ltd (Virgin Healthcare) and resolved to relocate the facility to more suitable premises.
- 1.3 At present, the surgery has some 12,000 registered patients and this is forecast to rise to 13,200 over the next 5 years.
- 1.4 The College at Braintree is prepared to release a 2 storey office building (Block B), situated at the entrance to their Campus, comprising a net internal floor area of 7,237 square feet and including 23 parking spaces for use as a medical centre. The building is suitable for conversion to this use and has been maintained to a good standard.
- 1.5 Conversion works on both floors and remodelling of the adjoining car park for patients and emergency vehicles are required to make the property suitable for use as a medical centre. NHS England has agreed a fixed price contract for these works.
- 1.6 The proposed medical centre will be accessible via a shared vehicular and pedestrian access from Church Lane but it will become a separate, self-contained facility. A new footpath is proposed leading from Broad Road to the front entrance and a new lift and staircase to be located at the entrance is planned in a second phase of improvement works. The site will also contain patient car parking and is on a regular bus route with a bus stop situated adjacent to the premises on Church Lane.
- 1.7 Once the conversion works are complete, the property will provide modern and much larger medical provision for the St Lawrence Surgery which is needed to meet both current and future demand for General Practice Services.
- 1.8 The recently adopted Corporate Strategy 2016-2020 sets out District priorities for the next 4 years. As well as the need for more homes, the Strategy identifies the need for more investment in the District through a District Investment Strategy.
- 1.9 The Corporate Strategy also identifies that there is a need for the Council to work in partnership to improve health provision in the District. Relocation of the St. Lawrence Surgery could be one of the first initiatives to take forward through the new District Investment Strategy.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Premises were identified at The College at Braintree to facilitate the relocation of the Doctors Surgery.

- 2.2 Following discussions with College Management and their representatives, it was agreed that the freehold interest in respect of the property would be available for the Council to purchase. In this way, the Council could then let the property direct to Virgin Healthcare (or other Surgery Provider) and create a valuable property investment and The College at Braintree could realise a valuable capital receipt.
- 2.3 As a condition of the purchase, the Council will fund the capital cost of converting the building suitable for use as a Medical Centre. This work will be arranged by NHS Property Services and following a tender exercise a fixed price contract has been agreed with a suitable contractor.
- 2.4 Simultaneous with completion of the purchase of the building, the Council shall grant a 15 year lease to Virgin Healthcare for use as a Medical Centre.
- 2.5 Both the purchase and lease terms are supported by external valuation advice as being an appropriate market value.
- 2.6 With regard to maintenance obligations the Council, as Landlord, will be responsible for the cost of repairs to the roof, main structure and foundations. Any costs associated with these parts of the building will be met from the Council's annual planned maintenance budget or revenue maintenance budget and also from any future rent increases. The tenant will be responsible for all internal repairs and maintenance to the building including all repairs to doors, windows and window frames. The tenant will also be responsible for the landscaping, car park and estate road maintenance costs which will be collected via a service charge.
- 2.7 The site is suitable in planning terms and does not require a change of use to be granted, as this is a replacement community facility.
3. VAT
- 3.1 The Council will opt to Tax the property to enable recovery of any VAT payable on the purchase cost, conversion works and other associated costs of the transaction. This option to Tax will be in place for a minimum of 20 years and means that VAT will be chargeable by the Council on rent and service charges.
4. Financial Appraisal
- 4.1 To proceed on the proposed basis, the Council could expect a net initial yield of 7.66%, as illustrated in the below financial appraisal. This represents a good return on the capital investment and is consistent with current yields for this type of investment property.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the scheme is funded with an allocation from balances (part of £5million set aside for the District Investment Strategy agreed by Cabinet on [23rd May 2016](#)).
- 4.3 As this resource is currently invested, agreement to use it to fund this scheme will result in an estimated loss of interest.

5. Risk Assessment

	<u>Risk Item</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Action</u>
5.1	Financial stability of tenant	If the tenant got into financial difficulties and could not pay the rent falling due, then this would put the Council's finances under pressure.	The Council shall carry out 'due diligence' on the soundness and financial standing of the tenant. NHS England has undertaken to pay rent during any void period in the first 15 years.
5.2	Economic conditions change and rents/values decline	This would impact on the Councils ability to obtain a rental increase at review or potentially dispose of the property in the open market in excess of the price and costs incurred in purchasing the property.	<p>The proposed lease shall contain 5 yearly upwards only rent reviews which means that the current rental received by the Council would not decline.</p> <p>If the Council was minded to dispose of this property then this would need to be subject to prevailing market conditions to ensure that best value could be achieved.</p>
5.3	Changes to commissioning of General Practice Services	This may have an impact on Virgin Healthcare's core business and impact on profitability.	<p>This appears to be a growth industry, particularly with the ageing population in the UK.</p> <p>In any event, the lease shall have the security of a 10 year rental until the first break option</p>

5.4	Virgin Healthcare withdraws as the Healthcare Provider prior to the purchase of the office building.	The Council must complete a lease with Virgin Healthcare simultaneous with the purchase of the building. To proceed with an alternative Surgery Provider will lead to delay in completing the purchase.	The Council has agreed detailed lease terms with Virgin Healthcare. Legal representatives have been instructed to prepare the documentation.
5.5	The costs of the conversion works exceed the tender price.	Additional costs would be borne by the building contractor or NHS England.	Following a tender exercise, a fixed price contract has been agreed for these works.
5.6	Delays in completing the conversion works.	Relocation of the St Lawrence Doctors' Surgery would be delayed.	Rental is payable to the Council from lease commencement (completion of the purchase) to avoid any rental void.
5.7	Council funding	If Council declines to approve funding this will prevent the proposal agreed by Cabinet from proceeding.	Scheme terminated. Cabinet would need to consider new proposals for regeneration/reuse of site.

6. Value for Money

- 6.1 The Council has applied its Corporate Investment Evaluation Tool to this option which evaluates and scores key investment criteria to provide an overall score for the proposed investment which can be measured against other alternative investment opportunities. The evaluation of this option has produced a weighted score of 8: the minimum score to progress an investment project is 6.
- 6.2 The Council will be receiving a net income of £139,000 plus VAT per annum which equates to a 7.66% return. This investment provides good value for money for the Council.

7. Summary

- 7.1 Cabinet has approved the purchase of the property and delivery of the necessary conversion works to accommodate the new surgery provider.

- 7.2 This would enable NHS England to proceed with the proposed relocation of the St Lawrence Doctors Surgery.
- 7.3 The Council would be purchasing an attractive investment property secured by a medium term lease and having the prospect of expanding healthcare provision into an adjoining building in the medium term.
- 8. Recommendations
- 8.1 It is RECOMMENDED to Council that it approves the funding from balances set aside for the District Investment Strategy.

Braintree Town Centre Regeneration Scheme – Approval of funding		Agenda No:12
Portfolio	Economic Development	
Corporate Outcome:	A sustainable environment and a great place to live, work and play A well connected and growing district with high quality homes and infrastructure A prosperous district that attracts business growth and provides high quality employment opportunities Residents live well in healthy and resilient communities where residents feel supported A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers	
Report presented by:	Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Economic Development	
Report prepared by:	Andrew Epsom, Head of Asset Management	
Background Papers:		Public Report -
Reports and Minutes of Cabinet - 9th June 2011 , 30th November 2015 , and 18th July 2016 Corporate Strategy 2016 - 2020 District Investment Strategy Cabinet Report 23rd May 2016		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:		
<p>On 30th November 2015, Cabinet was provided with an update on the latest scheme proposals submitted by Henry Boot Developments Limited (Henry Boot) which were a variation from the original retail led scheme to a doctors’ surgery / restaurant led scheme. At that meeting, Cabinet approved the latest indicative scheme proposals submitted by Henry Boot and delegated powers to the Director of Sustainable Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development for the approval the final scheme design, specification and associated financial arrangements.</p> <p>Following the meeting Cabinet on 30th November 2015 Henry Boot confirmed that they were unable to agree terms for the acquisition by Mount Chambers of the accommodation they require within the scheme and subsequently advised, following a further assessment of costs, values and rents, that in relation to their corporate targets this scheme was no longer financially viable for them to fund, construct and manage.</p>		

As a result, and in line with the Council's District Investment Strategy to invest and deliver improvements across the District, [on 18th July 2016](#), Cabinet approved the termination of the existing contract with Henry Boot Developments Limited and the negotiation of Intellectual Property Rights Transfer and approved the delivery of this scheme by the Council.

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the funding of the scheme from balances and borrowing being part of the funds identified for the District Investment Strategy.

Recommended Decision:

That Council approves the funding for the scheme from balances and borrowing being part of the funds identified for the District Investment Strategy.

Purpose of Decision:

To agree the financial arrangements for the Braintree Town Centre regeneration site to enable this project to move forward.

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

Financial:

It is estimated that the Council would receive a net annual rental income from the scheme of £500,000 plus VAT. On the basis of the total cost of the scheme this would produce a return of 4.4%. This scheme provides good value for money for the Council.

Any financial terms agreed in respect of building contracts and leases will be subject to the Council obtaining independent commercial property advice.

It is proposed that the scheme is funded with an allocation from balances and borrowings. As the allocation from balances is currently invested, agreement to use it to fund part of this scheme will result in a loss of interest.

The Council will opt to tax the development in order that the VAT on the construction works and associated costs is recoverable.

The Council has applied its Corporate Investment Evaluation Tool to this option which evaluates and scores key investment criteria to provide an overall score for the proposed investment which can be measured against other alternative investment opportunities. The evaluation of this option has produced a weighted score of 6.83: the

	minimum score to progress an investment project is 6.
Legal:	<p>The construction contract, lease agreements and associated legal documentation will be completed and monitored by the Council's Legal Service and Asset Management Service to ensure the Council's interests are protected at all times.</p> <p>Cabinet has approved that the Council undertakes the development scheme and exercises the termination provisions in the Development Agreement with Henry Boot Developments Limited to formally bring this agreement to an end.</p>
Safeguarding:	None arising out of this report.
Equalities/Diversity:	The construction of new premises will be required to comply with all disabled access requirements and the employment of staff therein will need to comply with all equalities and diversity legislation.
Customer Impact:	A modern and much larger doctors' surgery will be made available to the residents of Braintree together with the availability of new restaurants in the Town Centre which are currently lacking.
Environment and Climate Change:	The newly constructed buildings will need to comply with current environmental and climate change requirements.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	<p>Community consultation was previously undertaken as part of the process of appointing Henry Boot as the Council's development partner to regenerate the site behind the Town Hall in Braintree. Further public consultation will take place when a planning application is submitted.</p> <p>A briefing session was held with Members prior to the Cabinet meeting on the 30th November 2015 to provide Members with an update on the progress of the scheme and answer any queries. Ongoing updates will be provided to Members as the scheme progresses.</p>
Risks:	See Risk Matrix in the main body of the report.
Officer Contact:	Andrew Epsom
Designation:	Head of Asset Management
Ext. No:	2921
E-mail:	andpe@braintree.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The Development Agreement was agreed in 2012 based upon a retail led scheme. Henry Boot has advised that they can no longer proceed with the scheme under the terms of the Development Agreement as the scheme viability criteria cannot be met even with substantial variation. The Council through Cabinet has decided to terminate the agreement.
- 1.2 On 16th July 2016 Cabinet approved the delivery of this scheme by the Council in order to achieve its corporate objectives and the objectives of the District Investment Strategy which was approved at Cabinet on the 23rd May 2016. The District Investment Strategy identifies the need for the Council to work in partnership to invest and deliver improvements across the District including improvements in health provision across the District, improvements to the District's town centres, increased opportunities for new businesses and employment, and investment opportunities in the District that support growth and provide a return for the District Council and its taxpayers.
- 1.3 The latest scheme proposals comprise (although this will be subject to refinement as detailed work is undertaken):
- GP Surgery/Pharmacy – 14,894 sq ft net area at first floor and part ground floor.
 - Restaurants – 4 units totalling 13,638 sq ft. net area at ground floor level.
 - GP car parking – 40 spaces.
 - Public car parking – 146 spaces (currently 108 spaces on site)
 - Bus interchange – 6 bay self-contained bus interchange.
 - Enhanced public realm.
- 1.4 The Council has applied its Corporate Investment Evaluation Tool to this option which evaluates and scores key investment criteria to provide an overall score for the proposed investment which can be measured against other alternative investment opportunities. The evaluation of this option has produced a weighted score within acceptable parameters. The investment evaluation tool covers the following key criteria:-

1.4.1 Financial:

a) Cost of Implementation.

The Council's independent cost consultant has assessed the gross development cost for the scheme which includes all costs from scheme inception to completion e.g., construction costs, all professional fees and letting costs etc. The Council has also added an allowance for its internal project management costs and a contingency to arrive at a total scheme cost.

b) Revenue Implications

The Council would receive a significant gross income from the scheme.

c) Return on Investment

After allowing for lease management costs, car park outgoings and loan repayments, the Council would have a positive net return.

d) Confidence Level

The Council's cost consultants have carried out a full assessment of current build costs and all of the other associated scheme costs based on comparable current market information to come up with a detailed scheme cost plan for the Council. This independent advice will give the Council confidence in relation to the overall costs and risks related to this scheme when compared with the Henry Boot proposals which contained elements of uncertainty e.g., the Henry Boot proposals lacked design detail and planners had raised concerns regarding design and quality issues. This scheme delivery option will also give the Council more control in terms of delivering a good quality scheme.

1.4.2 It is proposed that the scheme is funded with an allocation from balances (part of the set aside for the District Investment Strategy agreed by Cabinet on 23rd May 2016) with the balance of borrowings (part of the borrowings agreed under the District Investment Strategy agreed by Cabinet on 23rd May 2016).

1.4.3 As the allocation from balances is currently invested, agreement to use it to fund part of this scheme will result in a loss of interest.

1.4.4 Although not directly part of the financial appraisal which is being relied upon, on completion the scheme would produce significant business rates income.

1.4.5 The various lease agreements will contain rent review provisions which will provide the opportunity to review and potentially increase rents in the future. The Council will also review its car parking charges on a regular basis which could potentially increase car parking income in the future.

1.4.6 Corporate Strategy

a) Corporate Priorities

This project contributes to a number of the Council's key corporate priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2016-2020 including:-

- Economic Development:
 - Supporting our urban and rural economy
 - Enabling suitable employment sites and premises.
- Health and Communities:
 - Supporting our residents to be healthy and live well.
- Strategic Growth and Infrastructure:
 - Developing a Local Plan that meets the future needs of the District.
- Overall Strategy and Direction:
 - Working with other public bodies to deliver better outcomes for residents.

- Develop and deliver a District Investment Strategy that invests in improved and new infrastructure, economic growth and regeneration projects and new health facilities to meet the needs of the District now and in the future.

b) Fit with Objectives

- The objectives of this project are to regenerate the site situated behind the Town Hall in order to improve the attractiveness and vibrancy of the town centre, provide improved facilities in the form of a large modern Doctors' Surgery, restaurants and increased car parking. This scheme will help to meet the needs and demands of the residents in the District, support the Council's healthy communities agenda, provide the necessary infrastructure to support the Council's housing growth projections, invest in the regeneration of the town centres and provide the Council with a commercial return on its investment.
- The scheme will provide modern and much larger medical premises for Mount Chambers' surgery which is desperately needed to meet both current and future demand for GP Services in Braintree. It is anticipated that Mount Chambers' surgery will increase its patient numbers from 13,000 to 18,000 in the medium term.
- Braintree Town Centre has limited restaurant offer and the additional restaurant units will help improve the variety and quality of the offer in the Town centre for residents and benefit the night-time economy.

1.4.7 Impact Assessment

a) Customer

Delivery of this scheme will have a significant beneficial and positive impact on patients of Mount Chambers Surgery, town centre businesses and users and local residents.

b) Organisational Implications

Delivery of this scheme will have a significant and positive impact on the Council's reputation.

c) Environmental

An important, high profile town centre site would be regenerated providing a modern and attractive surgery, restaurants and enhanced car parking together with high quality public realm.

d) Stakeholders

The key stakeholders (residents of the District, patients of Mount Chambers Surgery and the NHS) will greatly benefit from this new scheme through improved health provision. There will also be a greater choice and availability of restaurants in the town centre and enhanced car parking.

2. Risk Assessment

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Action</u>
2.1	Potential challenge by original bidders and potential new bidders.	The contract arrangements have changed therefore the original and potential new bidders have not had an opportunity to bid on the revised scheme delivery proposals.	The Council will undertake a new procurement process. Given this is for a new scheme, there will be very little risk from the original bidders.
2.2	Economic conditions decline	The Council would have to review its development proposals to assess if it is still appropriate to proceed.	Economic conditions are currently positive and the Council will be looking to proceed quickly with the scheme if the revised scheme delivery proposals are approved by Members.
2.3	Mount Chambers do not complete an Agreement for Lease with the Council.	The Council must have a binding contractual commitment from Mount Chambers surgery to enter into a lease prior to commencement of construction.	The Council will agree lease terms and complete an Agreement for Lease with Mount Chambers in advance of commencing construction.
2.4	Abnormal site costs.	These would add to the cost of the scheme reducing viability and potentially make it unviable.	The Council to carry out full due diligence on the site prior to tendering the construction works.
2.5	Build Costs increase.	This may impact on the viability of the scheme.	The economy is going through a period of low inflation, however, in contrast, build costs have been increasing over recent months. The Council's cost consultants will be researching current build costs and building in an inflation allowance plus an appropriate contingency sum for the scheme.
2.6	Planning Permission refused.	The Council is unable to obtain a satisfactory planning consent for the scheme.	Early discussions have been taking place between Planning, ECC Highways and BDC Licensing to highlight key issues the scheme needs to address. This

		should put the Council in a good position to submit appropriate plans, reports and supporting information at both the Pre- Application discussions and when submitting a full planning application. BDC has appointed a dedicated planning officer to deal with this scheme and consult key stakeholders etc.
2.7	Time delays while the Council appoints consultants and obtains a planning consent.	<p>The Council has already experienced a number of delays and setbacks and requires this scheme to move forward quickly.</p> <p>The Council has already engaged cost consultants and has commenced tendering procedures for architects and other consultancy support following Cabinet Members approval. This will enable appointments to be made following the Council meeting on the 5th September 2016.</p>
2.8	Delays in appointment of a contractor if the Council must follow the OJEU procurement process.	<p>The Council has already experienced a number of delays and setbacks and requires this scheme to move forward quickly.</p> <p>The Council's Procurement service is currently reviewing public sector construction framework agreements to see if an appropriate construction contractor can be identified in this way. Alongside this, the Procurement Service will set out a timetable relating to the OJEU process if the Council is required to follow this procurement route.</p>
2.9	Identifying pre-lets for the ground floor accommodation.	<p>Ideally the Council wants tenants signed up to occupy the ground floor accommodation prior to completing the construction of the scheme.</p> <p>National, specialist restaurant/commercial agents will be appointed on the grant of a planning consent to identify and sign up suitable tenants for the ground floor accommodation. The</p>

		Council will review and consider all appropriate opportunities and options for this space.
2.10	A negative impact on the Council's reputation if the scheme suffers from delays, cost over- runs or poor construction quality/defects.	<p>The Council's objective is to provide a cost effective and good quality regeneration scheme which provides much needed facilities that will greatly benefit residents in the District and enhance the vibrancy and viability of the Town Centre.</p> <p>The Council is undertaking early engagement with stakeholders and planners. It has progressed the early tendering of consultants, following the Cabinet meeting. This will enable appointments to be made following the Council meeting on the 5th September 2016. The Council's Procurement Service has also been engaged to advice on all procurement issues.</p>
2.11	Time delays while trying to resolve highways issues.	<p>The scheme will need to look at relocating the bus stands around the site, review the location of the taxi rank and consider the direction of traffic flows around the site.</p> <p>If Members are minded to approve the scheme delivery proposals, the Council will seek to appoint a Highways Consultant to prepare the necessary traffic impact study and liaise with ECC Highways at the earliest opportunity to agree solutions in relation to the bus stands, taxi rank and traffic flows around the site.</p>
2.12	Termination of Development Agreement with Henry Boot.	<p>Henry Boot challenges the termination of the Development Agreement with the Council.</p> <p>The Council has carefully exercised the termination provisions in the Development Agreement in order to bring it to an end. Henry Boot may avoid termination by waiving conditions in the Development Agreement including obtaining a satisfactory planning consent and the scheme meeting its viability criteria. Legal advice has</p>

		been sought regarding the mitigation of this risk and this process is continuing.
2.13	Council funding	If Council declines to approve funding this will stop the construction of the proposed scheme agreed by Cabinet. Scheme terminated. Cabinet would need to consider new proposals for regeneration/reuse of site.

3. VAT

- 3.1 The Council will opt to Tax the development to enable recovery of any VAT payable on the construction works and other associated costs of the development. This option to Tax will be in place for a minimum of 20 years and means that VAT will be chargeable by the Council on rent and service charges. This is a normal commercial decision for schemes of this nature.

4. Cost Consultant's Advice

- 4.1 The Council's cost consultants have independently reviewed and assessed all costs associated with the Braintree Town Centre Regeneration Scheme as proposed by Henry Boot Developments Limited. They have identified all costs that would be incurred from scheme inception to practical completion on the basis that the Council develops the scheme itself.
- 4.2 This independent cost assessment has provided the Council with a higher level of confidence in respect of the overall costs and risks related to the scheme when compared with the Henry Boot proposals which lacked detail and were provided to the Council on a very 'high level' basis.

5. Valuation Advice

- 5.1 The Council has engaged the services of an independent Valuation Consultant to review the rents and values associated with the scheme and provide guidance in relation to current market rental values which have been used in the financial appraisal.
- 5.2 A specialist restaurant/leisure/commercial consultant will be engaged to undertake market research to assess the extent of the demand for the ground floor accommodation, the appropriate mix of uses and unit sizes and associated market rents. This research will form part of the scheme design process. These consultants will also be engaged to market the accommodation and agree suitable pre-lets. The Council will consider all appropriate opportunities and options for this accommodation.

6. Ongoing Scheme Repairs and Maintenance

- 6.1 The Council will be responsible for carrying out the repairs and maintenance to the exterior of the building and the common parts and will recover these costs on a pro-rata basis from the occupiers of the scheme via a service charge.
- 6.2 The Council will be responsible for the cost of the ongoing repair and maintenance of the car park within the scheme.
- 6.3 The tenants occupying the building will be responsible for all internal repairs and maintenance to the premises they lease from the Council.

7. Project Timetable

The anticipated project timetable is:

Cabinet	18th July 2016
Tendering architects/consultants	25th July 2016
Council	5th September 2016
Appointment of architects/consultants	1st October 2016
Planning submission	July 2017
Obtain planning consent	November 2017
Tender issued	February 2018
Appointment of construction contractor	May 2018
Practical Completion	February 2020

8. Summary and Recommendation

- 8.1 The Council has applied its Corporate Investment Evaluation Tool to this option which evaluates and scores key investment criteria to provide an overall score for the proposed investment which can be measured against other alternative investment opportunities. The evaluation of this option has produced a weighted score of 6.83: the minimum score to progress an investment project is 6.
- 8.2 The Council will be receiving a net income of £500,000 plus VAT per annum which equates to a 4.4% return. This scheme provides good value for money for the Council.
- 8.3 Taking all factors into account, the most advantageous and beneficial option at the present time would be for the Council to develop the scheme itself.
- 8.4 It is therefore RECOMMENDED to Council that it approves the funding for the scheme from balances and borrowing being part of the funds identified for the District Investment Strategy.

**LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL - OVERALL
CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DIRECTION**

Agenda No: 13a

Devolution Update

In my last report to Council in June I updated Members on the outcome of the Devolution Board meeting held on 26th May 2016. To recap, the next step was for Councillor Howard Rolfe, Leader of Uttlesford District Council and Chairman of the Greater Essex Devolution Board, to seek a meeting with the Minister or their nominees, in order to set out Greater Essex's position and explore options and a possible way forward. A copy of Councillor Rolfe's letter of 3rd June was included in my previous report to Council. Councillor Rolfe received a reply to his letter on 21st June 2016 (a copy is attached) and a meeting was held with two senior civil servants on 28th July 2016. A note was made of the meeting and a copy is below.

E-mail sent on behalf of Cllr Howard Rolfe

Dear Leaders,

On the 28th July, along with Cllr Finch, Cllr Whitbread and Cllr Lamb I had the opportunity to meet with Carly Freeston and Cath Goodall from the Government's Devolution Strategy Team to discuss the opportunities for Greater Essex.

Within the meeting we discussed governance and also the key area of interest in terms of a potential deal and I wanted to provide you with the key points discussed (as below). This was a positive meeting and there is a clear desire from Government to achieve a deal, but we also need to consider the points they have made around governance.

There are a number of areas where they will come back to us and we will use these responses and the other outcomes of the meeting as the basis of our next devolution meeting.

Regards

Cllr Howard Rolfe
Chairman of Devolution Board

Tel: 01799 510405
cllrrolfe@uttlesford.gov.uk

Governance

- Confirmed that there is a still a preference within Government for the elected mayor model of governance. The feeling is that this provides a clear chain of

accountability.

- There have so far been five directly elected mayors within the core city regions and there is a preference for this model, as they believe it works. There is an acceptance that there have been no deals in the South East, and while other governance structures could be put forward, this would not be accepted before November's autumn statement.
- While it is clear that councils are working closely together this is not strong enough in terms of devolving powers – we would need to demonstrate a clear governance structure with rationalised decision making and strong accountability.
- Some authorities such as Leicester and Dorset are now looking to form Combined Authorities ahead of pushing forward for powers - doing this will garner more interest from Government, as good governance is key to a deal.
- We have a strategic advantage over others through our primary public services acting within our geographic boundary.
- To formalise a CA it would require: constituent authorities to be signed up, a chair voted for by members, agreeing a voting model (usually two thirds). It would need to be passed by parliament and therefore would require the support of MP's. One example was cited of the two-tier model in Sheffield and Carly will send details on this.

Key areas of interest

- Government are particularly interested in economic growth, housing, skills, and also visible public sector reform.
- It is important to demonstrate what we actually need e.g. what can be done around housing without additional powers and where do new powers add worth
- There was interest in the proposals for a land commission with a further meeting to be arranged to discuss proposals in more detail.
- It was acknowledged that infrastructure is a key part of delivering housing and Cath will look to arrange a meeting with transport civil servants to discuss closer working
- Skills is an important area for consideration, but again we need to be clear on what we require to be able to tackle the issues. Examples were cited of Stoke gaining funding and Hull through bringing together colleges – more details will be provided to us on this as well.

LGA Conference: 5th to 7th July 2016

I attended this conference along with Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt, Councillor David Mann and the Chief Executive. Key topics of debate were the outcome and possible impacts following the EU referendum result held on 23rd June 2016; health and social care; future funding for public sector; devolution; building new homes and communities – during this conference plenary session I am pleased to report that Braintree District Council was specifically mentioned by the Chief Executive of the Housing and Finance Institute for its record in tracking the progress of every planning application in terms of the number of new homes built and those still to be delivered, plus our excellent rating on being housing business ready.

Great Notley Country Park

On 20th July, I attended the Great Notley Joint Venture Partnership Board which

oversees the development and management of the park. Issues discussed at this meeting were the regular site report and future maintenance requirements, possible car parking improvements, usage and management of the all-weather football pitches and outline of future strategic review of the park. The next meeting is in December 2016.

Police and Crime Commissioner meeting

On 17th August 2016, Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt and I met with Roger Hirst, the new PCC to discuss strategic community safety and police issues affecting Essex and the District.

Councillor Graham Butland
Leader of the Council

Contact:	Councillor Graham Butland
Designation:	Leader of the Council
E-mail:	cllr.gbutland@braintree.gov.uk



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Our Ref: 2491234

21 June 2016


Dear Councillor Rolfe

GREATER ESSEX DEVOLUTION

Thank you for your letter of 3 June updating me on your progress in Essex on developing proposals for devolution. I know that you have been putting substantial work into discussions on this across the county.

I welcome the enthusiasm in Essex to continue exploring how you might take this forward in order to deliver the ambitions for the Essex economy that you set out in your September proposals.

My officials, Louise Morgan and Catherine Goodall, would be very happy to meet with a delegation of Essex Leaders to discuss the Government's position on devolution and potential options for moving forward with this agenda in Essex. Please contact Katie Jackson on 0782 593 555 or by email at: katie.jackson@bis.gsi.gov.uk to arrange a date.

With best wishes


THE RT HON GREG CLARK MP

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

Agenda No: 13b

Tax Collection rates as at end of July:

Council Tax - 40.11% (compared to 40.06% at the same time last year) amount collected was £32.1million

Business Rates – 40.02% (40.25%) amount collected £17.88million

Housing Benefit performance:

Average time taken to process - new claims – 16.02 days (target 18 days)

Average time taken to process - changes in circumstances – 6.0 days (target 6 days)

Audit:

External auditors commenced their audit of the Council's 2015/16 accounts on 18th July and this is expected to be substantially completed by 19th August. The outcome of the audit will be reported to the Governance Committee on 28th September.

Business Rates Retention:

The Government published two documents regarding Business Rates in July:

'Business Rates Reform – Fair funding review: call for evidence on Needs and Redistribution'; and

'Self-sufficient local government: 100% Business Rates Retention – consultation document'

The consultation sees the start of the process to achieve the Government's intention that 'by the end of this Parliament, local government will retain 100% of taxes raised locally. This will give local councils in England control of around an additional £12.5billion of revenue from business rates to spend on local services. In order to ensure that the reforms are fiscally neutral, councils will gain new responsibilities, and some Whitehall grants will be phased out.' - Quote from the introduction to the consultation document.

Officers are working with other Essex authorities to prepare draft responses to these documents. Closing date for receipt of responses is 26th September 2016.

Financial Performance:

An overall positive variance for the year is forecast of £204,000 (-1%) against the budget

of £13.107million. Income is forecast to be overachieved by £98,000; and there is a projected net underspend of £106,000 on staffing and other expenditure.

Councillor David Bebb
Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Agenda No:13c

Enterprise Centres

Ignite Business Enterprise Limited has now been operational from Ignite House for two months and has secured six new tenants. As part of the Council's ongoing industrial estates improvement programme, the Economic Development Team organised a meeting on 30th June 2016 with businesses on the Springwood Industrial Estate and Essex Highways to discuss the ongoing issue of congestion at the Rayne Road junction, as well as identifying some additional improvement works needed onsite. A number of businesses in attendance have also agreed to help form a new business group for the area which will be able to collectively represent the view of companies on the estate and help to further drive forward improvement works. Ignite House provided the venue for the meeting which was an excellent opportunity to showcase the training and conference facilities to the existing businesses on Springwood Industrial Estate.

A proposal was approved at Cabinet on 18th July 2016 for the construction of additional car parking adjacent to Ignite House which would enable Ignite to market and promote the new training and conference facilities. In addition four small workshop units will be constructed to provide much needed grow-on space to District businesses, with funding available from the Growth Area Fund (GAF) and from the District Investment Package (subject to Council decision on 5th September 2016).

Committed as we are to ensuring maximum opportunities for businesses to start-up across the District, we continue to work with Essex County Council to develop plans and the funding package for a new Enterprise Start-up Centre in Witham. We have already negotiated a Section 106 land contribution and £1.8million capital outline funding has been agreed with Essex County Council.

We are continuing to work with the developer on the Rural Business Hub proposal as part of the Premdor development in Sible Hedingham.

Industrial Estates

Officers have also been liaising with Witham Industrial Watch over additional funding for a range of improvement works in Witham and are contacting landowners on the Bluebridge Industrial Estate, Halstead, about possible works going forward.

Regeneration

Our design work for town centre improvements in Halstead and Witham Town Centre has been developed through a series of workshops with the Town Teams and Town Councils, as well as other stakeholder groups in each town. These workshops also took on board the specialist design advice received from our Wayfinding Consultants to

help us improve the pedestrian signage in Braintree, Witham and Halstead. This has united them behind our plans and secured their support for us to proceed to delivery. We are in dialogue with other agencies, such as the Highways Authority, to work up our delivery plans and focussing on starting construction in the first half of next year

With town centre improvement masterplans well underway in Halstead and Witham, our focus in the coming year will continue to develop a masterplan for Braintree Town Centre, building upon our successful improvements to date at St. Michael's fountain, the South Street/ Fairfield Road enhancement, and our completed improvements at Sandpit Lane as well as our developed thinking around Braintree's pedestrian signage. We are in discussions with ECC on how we work together on the masterplan.

Business Engagement

On 7th July the Economic Development Team joined forces with Planning Policy Officers to organise a special business breakfast briefing on the Local Plan. The event was attended by over 60 business representatives who had the opportunity to network, watch a presentation on the current Local Plan proposals and engage in a Question and Answer session. Following on from this event attendees have also been sharing their views about future business events which will help guide plans for future business engagement events.

On 8th July, Cllr Rose and I were present at the opening by The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP of EBM Ltd's new showroom in Witham and were delighted to be there to mark the start of an exciting new stage of expansion for the company.

Cllr Rose and I met separately with small business start-ups in July to discuss a wide range of issues including the immediate impact of Brexit and other business related concerns. Cllr Rose and I will continue to have informal engagement with our businesses in addition to our programmed business engagement events over the coming months.

Cllr Rose was delighted to join the Vice Chairman of Braintree District Council in Boreham to see Blok and Mesh awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise by Lord Peter, Lord Lieutenant of Essex. Blok and Mesh, who are based at Driberg Way, Braintree, manufactured and installed the locatable security fencing at the Olympic Site in Stratford in 2012.

In August Chairman of the Council, Councillor Frankie Ricci, and I had the opportunity to visit two of our local farming businesses Bucknells Farm in Great Saling and Boydells Dairy in Wethersfield. I was greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm that both family run businesses still have for the work that they do, and found it an excellent opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the farming community. More visits are being scheduled until the next March, which will culminate with a special event at the end of the civic year.

Broadband

In June 2016 the Superfast Essex programme reached the end of the Phase One of the rollout programme. So far the programme has enabled the 87% of Essex premises to gain superfast connectivity, however in the Braintree District our coverage levels still lag behind the Essex average at an estimated 73% due to low levels of commercial

coverage at the start of the programme. In order to address this coverage gap Superfast Essex is exploring a range of options to bring coverage up to 95% of the premises in the District during phase 2 of the programme. Areas have been identified for upgrades however Superfast Essex is currently working with BT on issues around the schedule for the additional works. Representatives have met with Officers from Braintree District Council to discuss this matter and are providing regular updates on the situation, which is hoped, will be resolved soon.

Any residents or businesses whose premises are not currently in the Superfast Essex programme might be eligible for a subsidy under the government's the Basic Broadband Scheme (also referred to as the UK Government Subsidy Scheme). This gives eligible premises a voucher towards the cost of equipment and installation of a satellite or wireless broadband connection as an interim solution. Further information about this scheme and the rollout programme can be found on the Superfast Essex website.

Councillor Tom Cunningham
Cabinet Member for Economic Development

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF
CORPORATE SERVICES AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Agenda No:13d

Governance

The annual canvas of electors is underway, we have recently sent out reminder letters to those households who have not responded. We would encourage everyone to respond either through one of the range of electronic options or by returning their form directly.

Business Solutions

Following a three day assessment in June 2016 we were successful in retaining the Customer Service Excellence Standard across all of our services. This is a nationally recognised standard that demonstrates our commitment to seeking to continually improve the services that we provide.

ICT have started rolling out the cyber awareness programme to staff. This will run for August and September. An on-line training course has also been developed and a series of posters posted throughout the building. Awareness sessions for members will be held later in the year.

The council had two separate file corruptions in August which were spread through spam emails. Services were operational throughout this issue, with minimum customer service interruption for 2 ½ hours. Full internal service was restored within 36 hours. Steps have been taken to prevent delivery of future similar spam emails.

Asset Management

There has been significant progress since my last report on a number of investments that form part of our overall investment strategy. As a result, you will see that there are reports to Council for this September meeting on the Braintree Town Centre Scheme, The St. Lawrence surgery relocation, and the Springwood drive scheme.

Communications and Marketing

The residents magazine 'Contact' will be delivered week commencing 5th September. A new contractor has been employed to deliver the publication.

The award winning 'Don't be a Tosser' anti litter campaign launched on the 15th August. The campaign will run for a 6 week period. We continue to work with Local Authorities across Essex and over 300 business partners on the litter agenda. These partners will be using a 'softer' version of the campaign entitled 'Don't toss it – bin it'.

HR and Organisational Development

Two of our Level 2 Apprentices were shortlisted for the North Essex Business Awards – Lauren Wiffen (Marketing and Communications) and Michelle Hutchings (Benefits). Both apprentices went to a presentation night where Lauren was successful in winning "Apprentice of the Year". Lauren now goes forward to the Countywide Awards which will take place in December.

BDC has held its first apprentice conference in July; 60 apprentices from across Essex all came together to learn, develop and share experience of being an apprentice and to celebrate the vital contribution they make in business. The event was opened by James Cleverly MP, and delegates heard from inspirational key speaker Danny Crates, Essex Paralympian Gold Medallist. The event was a massive success and we are now looking at how we can build on this for both apprentices in Local Government but also in local business.

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

Agenda No: 13e

Infrastructure

Essex County Council is continuing to work on the options for a new or improved route for the A120 from Braintree to the A12. I am attending the Members Forum for this work and I also attended the A120 Braintree Community Engagement Forum which engages with Parish Councils as part of the programme of stakeholder consultation. This work will be completed and full public consultation undertaken by April 2017 with a preferred option put to the Secretary of State by August or September 2017.

The Millennium slip road scheme project has been submitted in the Government's third round of Growth Funding through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). Should this project be funded then it will help reduce congestion at Galleys Corner roundabout and improve access to Braintree town.

A meeting was held on 30th June 2016 with the businesses on Springwood Industrial Estate to address their specific concerns around congestion with representatives from Essex County Council Highways and Braintree District Council.

I am part of the Members Forum for the A12 widening work and attended a meeting on 3rd August 2016.

Planning Policy

The new draft Local Plan was approved for public consultation on the 20th June 2016. The consultation started on the 27th June 2016 for an 8 week period concluding on the 19th August. To maximise public awareness of the Plan notices were placed in the local press; the Council website; and a special edition of contact magazine was distributed to all households in the district, which provided a summary of the Local Plan; a timetable of exhibitions; and instructions on how to comment on the Plan.

15 exhibitions have been held across Sible Hedingham, Earls Colne, Witham, Halstead, Kelvedon, Great Saling, Silver End, Braintree, Coggeshall, Hatfield Peverel and Feering. A joint exhibition was also held with Colchester Borough Council at Marks Tey. Nearly 1300 people attended the exhibitions. Officers also attended a Local Plan Business consultation event on 7th July 2016 which was attended by over 90 representatives of the local business community.

An unmanned exhibition has been displayed at Witham, Halstead and Braintree libraries, which had summary leaflets and response forms available for people to take away.

As of 24th August, we have processed and published 2,238 responses from 1,021 individuals or organisations. We are still processing responses received on paper and via email in the last days of the consultation which closed at 5pm on 19th August and we expect the final number of comments to be around the 3,000 mark. We have also received over 30 new development sites which will need to be assessed.

Housing

The number of households accommodated under our statutory housing duties in temporary accommodation at the end of July 2016 was 37, at the same time last year there were 50 households.

Discussions have been held with Essex County Council Social Care about the possible impact of the reduction in the household benefit cap which will be introduced from early November 2016. Agencies are committed to working together to prevent homelessness for families known to both services.

Essex County Council's proposals regarding the re-commissioning of the support contracts for supported accommodation has created some uncertainty for the future of some schemes for young people aged 16 to 25. Following lobbying from providers and districts, officers from Essex County Council are consulting further before letting the new contracts for housing-related support for young people. Officers from this Council are currently consulting with all supported housing providers to see how the District can help plan a sustainable future for supported housing schemes.

The Council's Housing Strategy consultation was completed on 20th August 2016. The final draft will be considered by the Cabinet on 29th November 2016.

The delivery of new affordable housing is badly affected by the result of the Planning Appeal at Premdor, Sible Hedingham. The scheme was expected to provide 58 affordable homes. The Appeal Decision states that the only affordable housing will be the 16 homes already provided. As a result, the number of new affordable homes is likely to be 51 this year, rather than the 69 completions expected at the beginning of the year.

Councillor Lady Patricia Newton
Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF HEALTH
AND COMMUNITIES**

Agenda No: 13f

Be Healthy and Livewell

Health & Wellbeing

In order to raise the profile of the Livewell campaign the leisure centres are operating free sessions for elderly residents to try out various activities including exercise classes, short tennis, badminton and table tennis.

The sessions are proving extremely popular with over 160 people already having attended this summer.

These will be repeated in the future as part of the Council's strategic objective of supporting residents to be healthy and live well.

In addition the Council's policy of providing leisure activities outside of leisure centres has been further developed this year. Events have been held in shopping centres, community open spaces, cycle ways and footpaths and are being very well attended.

On 2nd August 2016 your Chairman and I visited the Council's Leisure Centres with the aim of meeting staff, management and users and to review the facilities. We continue to be impressed by the number of people of all ages and abilities using the centres and the quality and maintenance of the sites.

Health provision in the District

The Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group is holding a consultation exercise and workshop in the District to outline its proposals for future health provision. The public workshop is to be held in Causeway House on 12th September 2016 and all Members are invited which should provide an opportunity to express current concerns and help shape health provision in the future.

Protect the Vulnerable

Braintree, Halstead and Witham Citizens Advice Bureau

Detailed information about the work of the CAB is now being provided.

Once the second quarter has been completed in the autumn a report will be provided to all Members via the Members' Hub.

A report produced by the CAB on access to essential services as required by the funding agreement between the Council and CAB will be added to the hub in the near

future. A detailed comparative study between the Three Fields and Silver End & Cressing has already been carried out.

Safeguarding

The Council has certain legal responsibilities and a duty of care to co-operate and report instances relating to the safeguarding of children/young people and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding Training including hidden harm has been offered to Members and staff at Causeway House and at Unit 4 for our Street Scene and Parks and Open Spaces Team.

Dementia Action Alliance

The Braintree District has officially been awarded “Working to become Dementia Friendly Status 2016-2017”. The work carried out to date by the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) has met the required criteria and partners are now able to use the official logo. Publicity was received celebrating the fact that the District is working towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Community.

The District will host the National Alzheimer’s Society Roadshow on Tuesday 23rd August 2016 in George Yard, Braintree, providing information from trained staff and volunteers on local services.

The group will meet again on 21st October 2016.

Encourage Independent and Resilient Communities

Grant Aid Opportunities

A guide for Members to advise constituents on how to access various grant opportunities is to be included in the Members Hub.

Councillors’ Community Grant Scheme

A reminder that the Councillors’ Community Grant Scheme launches on 1st September 2016. Application forms are only available directly from Members.

Essex Rural Strategy “Respecting our past, embracing our future”

Councillor Schwier, the Council’s Campaign to Protect Rural Essex representative, and I attended the launch of the Essex Rural Strategy.

The well attended event set out a clear vision, aims and priorities for rural Essex designed to harness the enormous economic potential rural areas have to offer.

An interesting fact that emerged is that the County is composed of 72% of rural landscape and that the four key priorities of the strategy mirror those of this Council with access to health services, broadband connectivity, improved traffic road safety and speed control and more affordable housing being highlighted.

Copies of the strategy are on the website: www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk along with supporting documents and evidence. An abbreviated copy of the strategy has

been placed on the Members Hub.

Councillor Peter Tattersley
Cabinet Member for Health and Communities

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**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF
ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE**

Agenda No: 13g

Environmental Services

Licensing

The Licensing Committee received the results of the Survey on Unmet Taxi Demand and agreed that with the 84 taxis available that there was no unmet demand and the number of Hackney Carriage Licenses issued will remain at 84.

Pest Control

The National Pest Advisory Panel has produced new guidance to help professionals deal with ticks and tick-borne disease, following a rise in their numbers. Ticks are important both to human and animal health because of the role they play in the transmission of diseases and the ill health they cause. Knowledge of their biology, ecology and the pathogens they transmit is essential for developing appropriate strategies that can help to reduce exposure to ticks and protect against tick-borne diseases.

Coggeshall, Feering and Kelvedon Flood Alleviation Scheme – Update from the EA

The EA are further investigating the favoured Hybrid option combining the measures of flood storage, tree planting and flow reduction together with additional protection closer to the affected properties.

The EA Project Team met in May with the Forestry Commission to discuss the favoured locations and future management for the Tree Planting aspect of the scheme. The meeting also discussed and agreed the principles of joint working to maximise potential partnership funding and identify landowners who could work with the two agencies. The next step for the EA is to receive and review the Draft Outline Business case in the next couple of months prior to it moving forward for final review.

Longer Term Flood Risk Information

In July 2016, the Environment Agency added longer term flood risk information to the existing live flood information service on GOV.UK. Residents will be able to search by postcode to find out the flood risk for an address. Residents will then be given relevant actions depending on their risk and can access maps to view the potential extent of flooding. This service has been developed using customer feedback and input and will replace the existing flood hazard maps on the Environment Agency legacy web pages.

Sustainability

The next Energy Switching Scheme is now open and will close on 10th October 2016; the

application form can be found at www.braintree.gov.uk/essexenergswitch or for residents without computers they can ring the Council and ask for the Sustainability Team. Since the beginning of the scheme 1,683 households have participated with an average saving per household of £270 from October 2015 to May 2016.

Operations

New Vehicles

The Council has placed an order for 8 new Dennis dustcarts which are expected to be delivered in November. The vehicles have Euro 6 engines which mean that they have improved fuel efficiency and will be more environmentally friendly, with lower emissions. The new vehicles will make a real difference to service delivery in terms of their reliability and performance.

Recycling Performance

The final outturn for 2015/16 for recyclable waste in the Braintree District was 30,018 tonnes, giving an annual recycling percentage of just under 53%. This puts us in 3rd place in Essex (average recycling rate 47.46%) and in the top quartile nationally (average recycling rate 44%).

Annual Refuse & Recycling Sack Deliveries

Recycling sack deliveries run from June through to September and, this year, will include a list of '**Do's**' and '**Don'ts**' to encourage better use of the sacks. A delivery schedule is available to view on the Council's website so that residents can see when to expect their supply. Our refuse crews continue to report any abuse of recycling sacks i.e. where they are being used for general refuse instead of recyclable waste as intended. Properties that have remained on black sack collections will receive their supplies in October.

Food Waste (DCLG project)

I am pleased to report that the project in Braintree remains on track with the roll-out of new bins to flats (2,563 dwellings) and associated door-stepping having been completed. In addition, 32 of our 52 Junior and Infant Schools are now recycling their food waste. The 'Reward' element of the scheme is due to start mid-October for both flats and schools, when it is hoped that more customers will sign up to the scheme.

National Recycling Awards

Tendring Reuse and Employment Enterprise (TREE) won the 'Best Private/Public Sector Partnership' prize at the National Recycling Awards ceremony in London on 6th July 2016. The service, which was set up with funding from Braintree District Council and Greenfields Community Housing, only started in November 2015 and offers all local residents quality pre-owned and discounted white goods and furniture. The Company has been providing the Council's bulky waste service for some years now and this was the catalyst for the TREE workshop and shop project, which not only offers residents the chance of buying quality items at a good price, but also delivers employment opportunities into the bargain.

Anglia in Bloom

The annual Anglia in Bloom judging of Halstead Town and Public Gardens took place in late July. The judges were joined on their tour by representatives of Halstead in Bloom, Halstead Town Council and District Council staff. The judges' comments were very positive, but we won't know the outcome until the Awards Ceremony which takes place in Great Yarmouth on 9th September 2016.

District Boundary Signage

We have recently renewed the District boundary signage on the A120 at Marks Tey and will also be erecting a new sign on the A120 border with Uttlesford District.

New Powers for Fly-tipping Enforcement

A report will be presented to Cabinet on 12th September 2016 outlining the new powers available to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for small-scale fly-tipping offences. Fly-tipping is the illegal deposit of waste on land that is not licensed for that purpose and it covers anything from a single bin bag to thousands of tonnes of waste. Enforcement Authorities may elect to set their own penalties from anything between £150 and £400 per offence (otherwise the default penalty is £200). Cabinet is being recommended to adopt the maximum penalty, with a reduction to £300 if paid within 10 days. This will certainly be a disincentive to those intent on blighting the countryside.

Street Cleansing

In August 2016, the Council took delivery of 3 new Scarab road sweepers. The sweepers are already in action across the District, boosting the Council's ability to maintain high standards of cleanliness.

Garden Waste

Green waste will not be collected from 5th December 2016 to 27th February 2017.

Great Notley Country Park

The park has been awarded a Green Flag by Keep Britain Tidy.

Community Safety

Scamnesty Month

We took part in National Scam Awareness Month in July 2016 in partnership with Essex Trading Standards and Essex Police. A Scamnesty Bin was placed in BDC reception to encourage residents to fill it with any scam mail that has come through their door, or to print off any emails they have received. All material put in the bin will be collected by Trading Standards who will collate it and use it to co-ordinate further work both nationally and internationally. Trading Standards will be able to check out any scams which are found to be based in Essex.

Safeguarding

We provided 1000 copies of a booklet 'Child Sexual Exploitation: a guide for parents and carers' to Braintree College for distribution.

Essex Police

The Police and Crime Commissioner will be holding a public meeting on Wednesday 12th October 2016 from 6.30–8.30pm at the New Rickstone's Academy, Witham.

Essex Police have launched a new look website www.essex.police.uk which will allow people to report non-emergency crimes and road traffic collisions as well as lost and found property, fraud, hate crime etc. This is in addition to the 101 service.

You can also sign-up for the www.essexpolice@essexcommunitymessaging.org which sends out information.

Police and Crime Panel

At the latest meeting a Confirmation Hearing was held regarding the appointment of the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. Jane Gardner was confirmed in the position.

I was elected as Deputy Chairman of the Police and Crime panel.

The PCC is looking into Blue Light Co-operation, the working together of Essex Police and Essex Fire and Rescue; I am a member of this sub-group.

Green Heart

The latest Love Essex (and parts of Suffolk and Kent) litter campaign was launched on 15th August 2016. In Braintree District we are re-visiting the Don't Be a Tosser Campaign. Once again the public is being encouraged to report people who throw litter from their vehicles.

Landscapes and Countryside

Swift boxes, with camera and calls, were placed on Braintree Museum to help this endangered iconic species.

I attended the Local Government Assembly AGM.

Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt
Cabinet Member – Environment and Place

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List of Public Meetings Held Since Last Council Meeting		Agenda No:14
Portfolio: Not applicable		
Corporate Outcome: Not applicable		
Report presented by: Not applicable		
Report prepared by: Chloe Glock, Governance and Members Officer		
Background Papers:		Public Report
Published Minutes of the meetings listed within the report below.		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:		
<p>Since the last Council meeting held on 27th June 2016, the following Minutes have been published for meetings held in public session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Council – Special Meeting of Council for the Local Plan – 20th June 2016 (2) Planning Committee – 21st June 2016 (3) Council – 27th June 2016 (4) Governance Committee – 30th June 2016 (5) Planning Committee – 5th July 2016 (6) Braintree Local Highways Panel – 11th July 2016 (7) Local Plan Sub-Committee – 12th July 2016 (8) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13th July 2016 (9) Cabinet – 18th July 2016 (10) Planning Committee – 19th July 2016 (11) Licensing Committee – 20th July 2016 (12) Planning Committee – 2nd August 2016 (13) Planning Committee – 16th August 2016 		
Recommended Decision:		
Members are invited to note the Minutes published.		
Purpose of Decision:		
Not applicable.		

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

Financial:	Not applicable
Legal:	Not applicable
Safeguarding:	Not applicable
Equalities/Diversity:	Not applicable
Customer Impact:	Not applicable
Environment and Climate Change:	Not applicable
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Not applicable
Risks:	Not applicable
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