

COUNCIL

AGENDA



THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

(Please note this meeting will be webcast)

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

Date: Monday, 10th December 2012

Time: 7:15pm

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

Membership:

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

QUESTION TIME

Immediately after the Minutes of the previous meeting have been approved there will be a period of up to 30 minutes when members of the public can speak. Members of the public wishing to speak should contact the Council's Member of the public can remain to observe the whole of the public part of the meeting. The Council's question time leaflet explains the procedure and copies of this may be obtained at the Council's offices at Braintree, Witham (library) and Halstead (library).

Health and Safety. Any persons attending meetings in the Council offices are requested to take a few moments to familiarise themselves with the nearest available fire exit, indicated by the fire evacuation signs. In the event of a continuous alarm sounding during the meeting, you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by the fire evacuation officer who will identify him/herself should the alarm sound. You will be assisted to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building. Any persons unable to use the stairs will be assisted to the nearest safe refuge.

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

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

Braintree District Council welcomes comments from members of the public in order to make its services as efficient and effective as possible. We would appreciate any suggestions regarding the usefulness of the paperwork for this meeting, or the conduct of the meeting you have attended.

Please let us have your comments setting out the following information:

Meeting AttendedDate of Meeting.....

Comments.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Contact details.....

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence to Alastair Peace on 01376 551414 or email alastair.peace@braintree.gov.uk

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

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

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

Members of the Council are requested to attend the above meeting to transact the following business: -

PUBLIC SESSION

Prior to the start of the meeting there will be a presentation to mark the retirement of Allan Reid, the Chief Executive.

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. **Question Time.** (See page i).
5. **Minutes.** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8th October 2012 (Copy previously circulated).
6. **Policy Recommendations and References – Cabinet – 29th October 2012.**

To consider any policy recommendations which have arisen since the last Council meeting –

- a) **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 to 2015/16 Update.** Report attached (page 1).
- b) **Treasury Management – Combined Annual Report 2011/12 and Mid Year Report 2012/13.** Report attached (page 4).
- c) **Reference from the Local Development Framework Sub – Committee, 27th September 2012 – Draft Master Plan for Land at North-West, Braintree.** Report attached (page 19).
- d) **Reference from the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee, 27th September 2012- Draft Master Plan for The Premdor/Rockways Regeneration Site, Sible Hedingham.** Report attached (page 28).

7. **Policy Recommendations and References – Cabinet – 3rd December 2012**

To consider any policy recommendations which have arisen since the last Council meeting –

- a) **Welfare Reform - Localised Council Tax Support Scheme.** Cover report to follow.

- b) **Recommendations from the Local Development Framework Subcommittee – 7th November 2012 – Draft Master Plan for the Premdor/Rockways site at Sible Hedingham – Amendments.** Report to follow.

8 **Policy Recommendations and References – Overview and Scrutiny – 28th November 2012**

- a) **Task And Finish Group Report - Scrutiny of the Council's Land and Property Investment Policies** (page x)

9 **Question Time Reports of the Leader and Cabinet Members**

- (i) **Reports from the Leader and Cabinet Members.** To receive the following reports from each Portfolio Holder:
 - a) Councillor Butland, Leader of the Council (Page 38);
 - b) Councillor Beavis, People and Participation (Page 41)
 - c) Councillor Bebb, Performance and Efficiency (Page 44);
 - d) Councillor Lady Newton, Planning and Property (Page 47);
 - e) Councillor Schmitt, Place (Page 49);
 - f) Councillor Siddall, Prosperity and Growth (Page 53).
- (ii) **Oral questions** without notice on matters related to a particular portfolio, the powers or duties of the Council or the district. (Procedure Rules 7.1 to 7.3 apply). Where a verbal response cannot be given, a written response will be issued to all members.

(A period of up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item).
- (iii) **Chairmen's Statements.** To receive statements from those Chairmen who have given prior notification in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7.9 and to respond to questions on such statements. ***None have been received.***
- (iv) To raise any matters arising from the minutes of **meetings that have been held in public session** since the Council meeting on 8th October 2012. (Report attached – Page 56).

10 **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 7.6. ***There are none.***

11 To receive reports about and receive questions and answers on the **business of external organisations.** ***None have been received.***

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.

12 **PRIVATE SESSION**

Note: At the time of publication there are no items for Private Session.

13 **Statements by Members – Private Session**

To receive and give responses to statements by Members which contain confidential or exempt information of which the appropriate written notice has been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7.6. The Chairman will invite the Leader or relevant Cabinet Member to comment on each statement.

There are no statements

14 **Question Time - Private Session**

- (i) **Leader's Statement** or statement by Cabinet Members containing exempt information on a key issue.
- (ii) **Oral questions** without notice on matters related to a particular portfolio, the powers or duties of the Council or the district. (Procedure Rules 7.1 to 7.3 apply). Where a verbal response cannot be given, a written response will be issued to all members.

(Please note that the time set aside for item 15(ii) shall not exceed 30 minutes)

- (iii) **Chairmen's Statements.** To receive statements containing exempt information from those Chairmen who have given prior notification in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7.9 and to respond to questions on such statements - ***There are none.***
- (iv) To raise any matters arising from the minutes of meetings that have been held in private session since the Council meeting on 8th October 2012.

15 **Private Session Policy Recommendations.** To consider any policy recommendations (in private session) that have arisen within the last meetings' cycle – ***There are none.***

N BEACH
Chief Executive Designate

| | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| Recommendation from Cabinet – 29 th October 2012 | | Agenda No: 6a |
| Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 to 2015/16 Update | | |
| | | |
| Portfolio Area: | Performance and Efficiency Councillor Bebb | |
| | | |
| Background Papers: | | Public Report |
| | | |

Minute Extract:

CABINET – 29TH OCTOBER 2012

57. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2012/13 TO 2015/16 UPDATE

Extract of decision for Council consideration only.

DECISION:

That it be recommend to Council:

4. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director to approve annually the business rates base for the district.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure good governance arrangements through the proactive management of the Council's finances over the short and medium term.



CABINET
29th October 2012

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 to 2015/16 Update | | Agenda No: |
| Corporate Priority: We deliver excellent, cost effective and valued services Portfolio Area: Performance and Efficiency Report presented by: Cllr David Bebb Report prepared by: Trevor Wilson, Head of Finance | | |
| Background Papers: Council Budget and Council Tax 2012/13 (including Medium Term Financial Strategy) report to Cabinet 14 th February 2011 and Full Council 23 rd February 2011. | | Public Report |
| Options: | | Key Decision: No |
| Executive Summary: <i>Extract of the Cabinet Report for Council consideration.</i> <i>The full report considered by Cabinet is available to all members on the Council's website</i> http://www.braintree.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/443/cabinet <i>Hard copies are also available on request from Member Services.</i> Approving the Council Tax base is a function delegated to the Corporate Director; it is recommended that the same approach would be appropriate as the formal process to achieve the Council sign-off of the business rates as required by DCLG. | | |
| Decision: Members are asked to: Recommend to Full Council that: d. delegated authority be granted to the Corporate Director to approve annually the business rates base for the district. | | |
| Purpose of Decision: Good governance arrangements through the proactive management of the Council's finances over the short and medium term. | | |

| Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail | |
|---|--|
| Financial: | Identified in report |
| Legal: | None at this stage but legal implications will be considered, as necessary, for all budget saving proposals as they are prepared as part the budget setting process. |
| Equalities/Diversity | None at this stage but equalities and/or diversity implications will be considered, as necessary, for all budget saving proposals as they are prepared as part the budget setting process. |
| Customer Impact: | None at this stage but customer impact will be considered, as necessary, for all budget saving proposals as they are prepared as part the budget setting process. |
| Environment and Climate Change: | None at this stage but environment and/or climate change implications will be considered, as necessary, for all budget saving proposals as they are prepared as part the budget setting process. |
| Consultation/Community Engagement: | Identified in the report |
| Risks: | The assumptions made prove to be incorrect resulting in either an increase or reduction in the savings required. |
| | |
| Officer Contact: | Trevor Wilson |
| Designation: | Head of Finance |
| Ext. No. | 2801 |
| E-mail: | Trevor.wilson@braintree.gov.uk |

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|---|---|----------------------|
| Recommendations from Cabinet – 29th October 2012 | | Agenda No: 6b |
| Treasury Management – Combined Annual Report 2011/12 and Mid Year Report 2012/2013 | | |
| | | |
| Portfolio Area: | Performance and Efficiency Councillor Bebb | |
| | | |
| Background Papers: | | Public Report |
| | | |

Minute Extract:

CABINET – 29TH OCTOBER 2012

58. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT – COMBINED ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 AND MID-YEAR REPORT 2012/13**

DECISION:

That it be recommended to Council:

1. That the Treasury Management Combined Annual Report 2011/12 and Mid-Year Report 2012/13 be accepted.
2. That the removal, from the Council's Investment Policy, of the reference to short term ratings in the Council's minimum definition of a "highly credit rated" financial institution for the purposes of selecting suitable investment counterparties be agreed.

REASON FOR DECISION: The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services which requires that Full Council receives an annual report and mid-year review of its treasury management function. It is also a requirement under the Council's Constitution that Cabinet must consider and make recommendations to Full Council for any proposed changes to investment policy.

CABINET
29th October 2012



| | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Treasury Management – Combined Annual Report 2011/12 and Mid-Year Report 2012/13 | | Agenda No: |
| Corporate Priority: We deliver excellent, cost effective and valued services Portfolio Area: Performance and Efficiency Report presented by: Councillor David Bebb Report prepared by: Phil Myers, Financial Services Manager | | |
| Background Papers: Treasury Management Strategy 2011/12 and 2012/13 | | Public Report |
| Options: To recommend the combined Treasury Management report to Council with or without amendment. To support or not support the proposed removal of reference to short-term ratings in the Council's definition of a "highly credit rated" institution. | | Key Decision: No |
| Executive Summary: The Council's treasury management activities are regulated by statutory requirements and by a Code of Practice ("the Code") issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA). One of the key elements of the Code is that, along with an Annual Strategy to be approved prior to the commencement of financial year, the Council should also receive an Annual Report after the financial year-end and, as a minimum, a Mid-Year Report. This report incorporates these latter requirements for 2011/12 and 2012/13 respectively. Appended to the report is the latest Treasury Management Monitor which provides a snapshot of the current treasury management position – this is the standard information that is provided to the Governance Committee as part of its regular report on Key Financial Indicators. Council approved the latest Treasury Management Policy in February 2012 as part of the overall Budget and Council Tax setting for the financial year 2012/13. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy has focused for some time focused on two key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing borrowing whenever opportunity arises. • Setting parameters for managing the inherent risks associated with the investment of cash balances based on the primary objectives of security and liquidity, after which yield (return) would be considered. | | |

At the 31 March 2012, the Council's treasury management position comprised:

- Total debt and liabilities of £8.381 million, including market loans and finance lease commitments
- Investments of £37.776 million including the carrying value of deposits at risk and funds held in Icelandic escrow accounts.
- Net investments were £29.395 million

The economic climate impacting on the Council's treasury management activity included:

- Low interest rate environment
- Concerns over the Euro zone – sovereign debt and impact on banks – leading to downgrades to the credit ratings of several major UK and Non-UK financial institutions
- Gilt yields offering attractive long-term borrowing opportunities but with a short-term high “cost of carry” where funds not required immediately are invested.

Interest rates across most periods within the range of those used by the Council remained fairly static, with some gradual upward movement being reversed in more recent months. Base rate has been held at 0.5 % since March 2009.

Capital expenditure in 2011/12 was financed mainly from receipts from asset sales and capital grants and contributions, with a net reduction in the Council's borrowing needs, measured by the Capital Financing Requirement or CFR. Actual debt of £8.381 million was higher than the CFR of £489,000. This position exists for two main reasons: (1) legacy debt which the Council continues to monitor for opportunity to repay early; and (2) finance lease commitments that were previously “off balance sheet” until new accounting rules were introduced from April 2010. This debt position is currently expected to reduce over the current year as lease payments are made (funded from the revenue budget). The level of debt is contained within the limits approved by Council prior to the commencement of the respective financial years.

The investment strategy continued to focus on: security, liquidity, and then yield. Funds have typically been placed with banks and building societies meeting the Council's definition of “highly credit rated”, along with Money Market Funds (MMFs), the Debt Management Office, and other UK local authorities. Funds are also held with the Council's own bank, the Co-operative Bank plc on overnight/ instant access terms.

In response to changing market conditions the Council has revised its investment policy where it has been deemed appropriate and in full consultation with the Council's external treasury management advisors, Arlingclose. The report contains a proposal to revise further the Council's investment strategy by removing reference to short-term ratings from the definition of “high credit rated”. This will bring the criteria into line with that used by most institutions when considering creditworthiness by putting the focus on the longer-term and support ratings of institutions. Short-terms rating will still be considered, along with a range of other information before determining whether an institution will be used. The change will permit the reintroduction of the Royal Bank of Scotland for the placing of deposits.

Cash balances have remained broadly consistent between years, adopting the profile of peaking around September/ October, before reducing down by the year-end. Average cash balances have been maintained higher than originally predicted due to a combination of re-profiled capital spends, under spend on revenue, and recovery of

sums from deposits at risk. However, the higher cash balances have enabled the Council to meet its budget forecasts for investment income despite the prolonged low interest rates.

The Council's investments have, apart from in one instance, consistently averaged the 'double-A' long-term credit rating category or "very high credit quality". Since the final quarter of 2011 there have been wide-ranging credit ratings downgrades to the institutions traditionally used by the Council. However the average credit quality of the Council's portfolio has not suffered, due to the use of more highly rated counterparties, e.g. MMFs, other UK local authorities, and the DMO.

Recoveries have been made from the deposits at risk in Icelandic banks – with a total of £2,322,653 received from the Icelandic-domiciled banks, plus a further £211,832 (sterling equivalent) held in Icelandic escrow accounts. This latter amount is subject to ongoing review of options to repatriate funds in accordance with Icelandic currency controls. In addition, the Council received a further £102,885 from the Administrators for Kaupthing, Singer, and Friedlander in 2011/12, and an equivalent sum to date in 2012/13. Taking account of the latest information available a reduction of £75,336 in the impairment charge previously charged to the revenue account was made in the 2011/12 Accounts reflecting the overall improvement in the level of recoveries anticipated from the banks.

The Council has retained the services of Arlingcose as external and independent treasury management advisors, with their contract renewed in November 2011 for a further three years. The Council has also signed up to the Institutional Cash Distributors Money Market Fund portal which provides single point access to the Council's MMFs as well as extensive reporting tools around risk management.

The treasury management function is subject to extensive reporting throughout the year, including specific reports to Council on proposed changes to investment policy due to changing circumstances. Training continues to be provided where appropriate, which included a member's seminar in November 2011, which was attended by members representing executive and scrutiny responsibilities.

One of the responsibilities of the Governance Committee is to undertake scrutiny of the Council's treasury management function, including receiving reports for consideration prior to their formal submission to Council. The Governance Committee, on 19th September 2012, considered this report and endorsed the recommendations.

Decision:

To recommend to Full Council:

1. Acceptance of the Treasury Management Combined Annual Report 2011/12 and Mid-Year Report 2012/13: and
2. Agreement of the removal, from the Council's Investment Policy, of the reference to short term ratings in the Council's minimum definition of a "highly credit rated" financial institution for the purposes of selecting suitable investment counterparties.

Purpose of Decision:

The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services which requires that Full Council receive an annual report and mid-year review of its treasury management function. It is also a requirement under the Council's Constitution that Cabinet must consider and make recommendations to Full Council for any proposed changes to investment policy.

| Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail | |
|---|---|
| Financial: | The change in the Council's credit criteria will allow deposits to be placed with the Royal Bank of Scotland, including utilising an existing instant access account that attracts interest currently at 0.90%. The alternative is likely to be higher funds continuing to be placed with the Debt Management Office attracting interest currently of 0.25%. |
| Legal: | The Council's treasury management activities are subject to regulation by a number of professional codes, statutes, and related guidance. There are no new legal implications from this report. |
| Equalities/Diversity | None |
| Customer Impact: | None |
| Environment and Climate Change: | None |
| Consultation/Community Engagement: | None |
| Risks: | The elimination of short term credit ratings from the Council's definition of "highly credit rated" is not expected to increase adversely the risk profile of the Council's investment portfolio, which will still be based on the widely used long-term credit ratings, along with a range of other factors used to assess an institution's overall credit worthiness. |
| | |
| Officer Contact: | Phil Myers |
| Designation: | Financial Services Manager |
| Ext. No. | 2810 |
| E-mail: | Phil.myers@braintree.gov.uk |

Treasury Management – Combined Annual Report 2011/12 and Mid-Year Report 2012/13

1. Background

The Council's treasury management activities are regulated by statutory requirements and by a Code of Practice ("the Code") issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA).

One of the key elements of the Code is that, along with an Annual Strategy to be approved prior to the commencement of the financial year, the Council should also receive an Annual Report after the financial year-end and, as a minimum, a Mid-Year Report. This report incorporates these latter requirements for 2011/12 and 2012/13 respectively.

Appended to the report is the latest Treasury Management Monitor which provides a snapshot of the current treasury management position.

2. Treasury Management Policy and Strategy

Full Council approved the latest Treasury Management Policy in February 2012:

Policy Statement:

The Council defines its treasury management activities as:

“the management of the Council’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of its treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the Council and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

The Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance management techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

The Council’s borrowing will be affordable, sustainable and prudent and consideration will be given to the management of interest rate risk and refinancing risk. The source from which borrowing is taken and the type of borrowing should allow the Council transparency and control over its debt.

The Council’s primary objective in relation to investments remains the security of capital. The liquidity or accessibility of the Council’s investments followed by the yield earned on investments remain important but are secondary considerations.

The Council’s Treasury Management Strategy focuses on two key areas:

- Reducing existing borrowing whenever opportunity arises.
- Setting parameters for managing the inherent risks associated with the investment of cash balances based on the primary objectives of security and liquidity, after which yield (return) is considered.

3. Treasury Management Position at 31 March

The treasury management position at the close of the last financial year (along with the previous year) is set out below:

| | Principal 31 Mar 2011 £'000 | Principal 31 Mar 2012 £'000 |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Market Loans | 6,000 | 6,000 |
| Finance Lease Liabilities | 2,608 | 2,381 |
| Total Debt and Liabilities | £8,608 | £8,381 |
| Loans and deposits | 25,000 | 24,212 |
| Cash & cash equivalents | 9,760 | 11,760 |
| Investments at risk | 3,482 | 1,804 |

| | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Investment Exposure | £38,242 | £37,776 |
| Net Investment (debt less investments) | £29,634 | £29,395 |

Market loans comprise two Lender's Option, Borrower's Option (LOBO) type loans of £3 million each, which permit the lender to vary the interest rate at six month call dates, subject to the Council being able to repay the loans without penalty. To date the lender has not sought to exercise this option – the loans currently run at an average interest rate of 4.7%.

Finance lease liabilities relate to the outstanding principal element of leases used to acquire property, vehicles, and plant. Annual payments are made each year to repay these liabilities over the lease term.

Loans and deposits include amounts placed with UK banks and building societies, money market funds, and other local authorities. The sum also includes £212,000, being the sterling equivalent of Icelandic kroner held in escrow accounts to the benefit of the Council in Icelandic banks.

Cash and cash equivalents includes money held in call accounts with immediate access, including the Council's own bank, the Co-operative Bank plc.

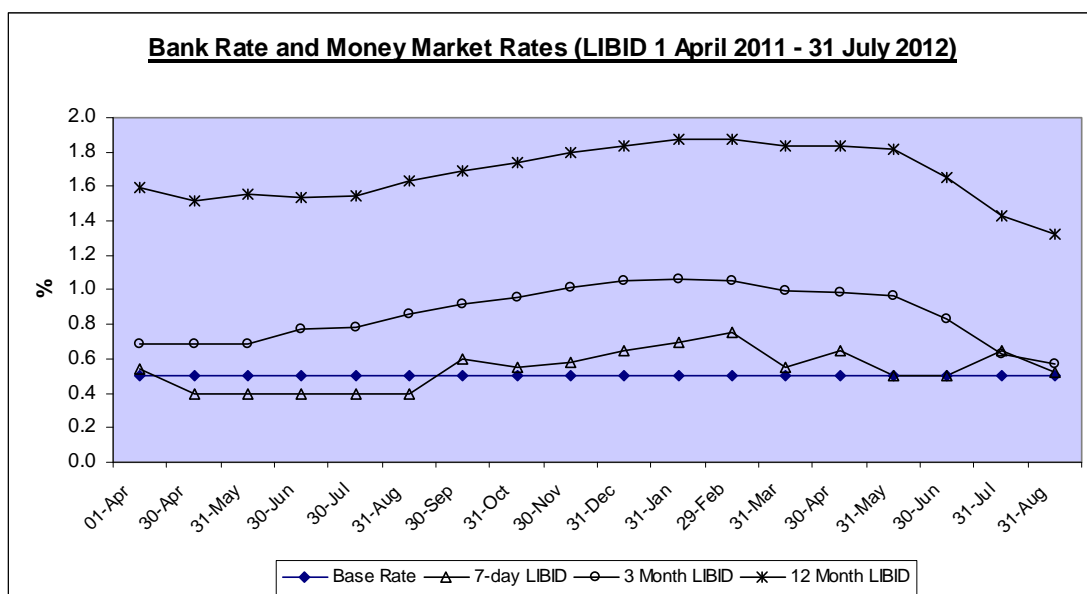
Investments at risk relates to the balance of deposits with Icelandic banks which has yet to be repaid. The amount stated is the outstanding principal estimated to be recovered at a future date, discounted to "today's" value.

4. Economy and Interest Rate Outlook

Economic issues that continue to impact on the Council are:

- The continued low interest rate environment as the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee maintains the Bank Rate at 0.5% since March 2009, whilst undertaking Quantitative Easing (QE).
- European sovereign debt problems, inextricably linked to the banking sector created issues around creditworthiness, with reassessments by rating agencies resulting in downgrades to the long-term ratings of several major UK and non-UK financial institutions.
- "Flight to quality" has maintained strong demand for UK treasury gilts reducing yields significantly, which in turn offers the prospect of low Public Works Loan Board funding for local authorities in need of capital resources. However, where such funds are not required immediately, the "cost of carry" where monies are temporarily invested remains high.

The following chart shows the path of LIBID rates (the inter-bank lending rates) which impact on the interest rate at which the Council can place funds on deposit.



Whilst the Base Rate remained static, there was some upward movement in LIBID rates over the last financial year, although this has gradually dropped away over first five months of the current year.

5. Capital Expenditure and Financing

Total expenditure in 2011/12 and source of financing is shown in the table below:

| | 2011/12 Actual £'000s |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Total Capital expenditure | 6,837 |
| Resourced by: | |
| Asset sales and other receipts | (4,929) |
| Capital grants and contributions | (1,787) |
| Sums set aside from revenue | (458) |
| Net change underlying need to borrow or CFR | (337) |

The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is a balance sheet derived amount which measures the extent to which the Council has invested in capital but not resourced from internal resources (e.g. sale of assets, grants etc), and which therefore theoretically could be matched by external borrowing. Actual borrowing could be plus/ minus the CFR, the circumstances of which should be understood.

| | 2011/12 Actual £'000s |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Capital Financing Requirement | |
| Opening CFR | 826 |
| Change in CFR as per capital expenditure and financing | (337) |
| Closing CFR | 489 |
| Actual debt | 8,381 |
| Difference between actual debt and CFR | 7,892 |

Actual debt is greater than the CFR for two reasons:

- Legacy borrowing which was taken out to fund capital expenditure in the past. The Council has been reviewing opportunities to repay this debt early; however, progress on this has been deferred due to the high penalty charge that would be incurred at the present time.
- Finance leases were previously “off balance sheet” debt until new accounting rules introduced from April 2010 required outstanding liabilities to be recognised. Provision for repayment of these liabilities is made through the annual lease payments which have always been provided for in the Council’s revenue budget. This repayment through the annual lease payment meets the Council’s requirement to set aside a Minimum Revenue Provision (or MRP) from its revenue resources where it has a positive CFR.

Taking account of the balance of investments at 31 March 2012, the Council’s net investment position is £29.395 million meaning that the Council complies with the Prudential Code requirement that net borrowing should not exceed the CFR.

5. Borrowing and Finance Lease Liabilities

The following table shows the change in actual borrowing and other liabilities in the 2011/12 financial year and expected movements in 2012/13.

| | Borrowing £000 | Finance Leases £000 | Total £000 |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Balance b/fwd 1 April 2011 | 6,000 | 2,608 | 8,608 |
| Additions | - | 81 | 81 |
| Repayments | - | (308) | (308) |
| Balance c/fwd 31 March 2012 | 6,000 | 2,381 | 8,381 |
| Estimated repayments 2012/13 | - | (264) | (264) |
| Estimated Balance c/fwd March 2013 | 6,000 | 2,117 | 8,117 |

The Council sets borrowing limits within its Annual Strategy, including an Operational limit to cover expected borrowings and liabilities – the limit for 2011/12 was £11 million, and is £8.5 million for 2012/13. Actual debt may fluctuate around this limit. An Authorised limit is also set which cannot be breached without prior Council approval. This limit was set at £15 million for 2011/12 and £14 million for 2012/13. The above table shows that borrowing has been and is expected to continue to be maintained within these limits.

6. Investment Strategy

The Annual Treasury Management Strategy includes the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS), required under rules set by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The AIS sets out the parameters which apply when selecting suitable counterparties for investment along with any limits around duration and amounts.

Investment priorities are:

- Security – minimising the risk of cash not being repaid
- Liquidity - having cash available when it is required

Having ensured these two priorities are met, the Council will consider highest yield.

Review of 2011/12

During 2011/12 investment activity typically focused on placing funds with:

- Highly credit rated UK banks/ building societies (as determined by the credit criteria approved by Council) – using a range of call/ instant access accounts and term deposits
- Money Market Funds (MMFs)
- Direct with the UK Government via the Debt Management Office (DMO)
- Other UK local authorities
- Co-operative Bank – the Council's own bank used only for overnight/ immediate access cash.

Counterparty credit quality is assessed and monitored in conjunction with the Council's external treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, by reference to:

- Credit ratings from the three leading rating agencies (Fitch, Moody's, and Standard and Poor's)
- Credit default swaps- traded insurance used to measure market sentiment over risk of default)
- Sovereign data, e.g. Gross Domestic Product, National Debt
- Support mechanisms from either sovereign or a well resourced parent organisation
- Share price

The AIS is kept under review and changes were made in-year in response to market conditions:

- Deposits placed early in the year with highly rated institutions for periods up to one year in order to gain some value from the positive interest rate yield curve – this provided some protection to the 2011/12 budget from the prolonged period of low interest rates.
- In response to concerns across the Euro zone maturity periods were scaled back
- Temporary cessation of deposits with Santander UK plc whilst its exposure, via parent bank Banco Santander, to the Spanish debt problems was being considered.
- A revised Investment policy was approved by Council which introduced Tier 1 and Tier 2 criteria with differing exposure limits for deposit amounts and duration being imposed. The revision also increased the sums that could be placed with the highest credit rated (triple A) money market funds, which also triggered the reintroduction of the use of the Goldman Sachs MMF increasing the number of active funds to four.
- Greater use of the Debt Management Office (DMO) Account was necessary as cash balances were higher than anticipated and limits were reached with other institutions. Deposits were also placed with other UK local authorities as an alternative to the DMO Account.

Activity during 2012/13 to date

Since April 2012, the Council has continued to monitor events affecting creditworthiness, particularly across the Euro zone. Consequently, a revision to the 2012/13 agreed investment policy was proposed and approved by Council in June 2012, taking into account the outcomes from the Moody's rating review of European banks and market conditions. Key points of the revised strategy were:

- Include non-UK banks that meet the Council's Tier 1 criteria
- Extend the maximum duration of investments with Tier 2 counterparties to six months, subject to any tighter restriction recommended by Arlingclose
- Increase the limit for investments placed with Tier 2 counterparties to £3.5 million (previously £3 million)
- Increase the total amount that can be placed in MMFs from £12 million to £15 million.

These changes have now been reflected in the treasury activity, including:

- Placing funds with the Australia and New Zealand Banking Corporation (£5 million in total)
- Increasing the amounts held with MMF to £15 million
- Placing £3.5 million in the Santander UK plc call account facility (previously suspended - Arlingclose's current advice is a maximum duration of up to 35 days).

One of the consequences of the Moody's rating review was a reduction in the short-term rating of the Royal Bank of Scotland from P-1 to P-2, which means that it no longer meets all the requirements of the Council's current credit criteria. The £3.5 million of funds which were held on a call account earning 0.90% have been withdrawn from this institution and has effectively resulted in a greater level of cash held with the DMO earning 0.25%. This situation has been reviewed with Arlingclose and it is **proposed to amend the Council's definition of a "highly credit rated" bank to remove the specific reference**

to short-term ratings. This change is proposed bearing in mind the following:

- It is generally the case that the capital markets perceive credit standing by reference to long-term ratings
- The long-term rating is the principal driver of a bank's funding costs and perceived creditworthiness internationally
- Long-term ratings will normally take prominence over other ratings, i.e. they are seen as the most important to promote or market an institution.

It will still remain the case that credit ratings (both long and short) will be factors, along with other issues, taken into account to assess an institution's overall credit worthiness.

If approved, this change will allow the reintroduction of the Royal Bank of Scotland as an institution to place deposits.

7. Cash Balances

Cash balances includes 'core' cash held for the medium-longer term, reflected in revenue and capital reserves and balances, as well as cash required to maintain short-term liquidity, i.e. working capital taking account of movements in debtors/ creditors.

In 2011/12 the average cash invested amounted to £44.9 million (£44.6 million the previous year), with balances peaking at £52.17 million but reducing to £35.76 million by the end of the year. In the current year average cash balances for the period April to end of September 2012 amounted to £49.5 million. Projections indicate an average for the year of circa £40 million, compared to the original budget assumption of £31.9 million. The main reason for the increased cash balances includes re-profiling of the capital programme spend, including projects funded from Growth Area Funds, the increase in revenue reserves/ balances following last year's outturn financial position, and recovery of sums from deposits at risk.

8. Investment Returns

The return on investments is a combination of contractual investments made in previous years and re-investment of maturing investments. The actual return achieved for 2011/12 was as follows:

| <u>Interest secured:</u> | Average balance | Return | Interest |
|--|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Investments prior to start of the year | £7,702,740 | 2.18% | £167,932 |
| Investments made in-year to date | £37,247,520 | 0.85% | £318,330 |
| Total 2011/12 | £44,950,260 | 1.08% | £486,262 |
| | | | |
| Budget 2011/12 | £37,408,000 | 1.24% | £463,000 |

In the current year returns secured to date amount to £161,000 which reflects a return of 0.55% compared to the Budget of 0.70%. However, higher cash

balances, plus the impact of the revised investment policy, means that it is currently projected that interest earned for the year will be in line with the budget of £224,000.

9. **Credit Risk**

Credit risk is assessed through the credit rating of institutions with which investments are placed – this has been weighted in terms of both the value of investments placed with an institution and the duration with which an investment has been placed. The following table shows the quarter end position for the Council's investments:

| Date | Amount at quarter end (excluding investments at risk) | Value Weighted Average Credit Rating | Time Weighted Average Credit Rating | Average life of portfolio (days) |
|------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 30/03/2011 | £34.76m | AA+ | AA- | 82 |
| 30/06/2011 | £46.00m | AA- | AA- | 68 |
| 30/09/2011 | £46.92m | AA | AA- | 15 |
| 31/12/2011 | £44.73m | AA- | A+ | 27 |
| 31/03/2012 | £35.76m | AA | AA+ | 17 |
| 30/06/2012 | £48.47m | AA | AA- | 21 |

The table shows the Council's investments have, apart from in one instance, consistently averaged the 'double-A' long-term credit rating category or "very high credit quality". Since the final quarter of 2011 there have been wide-ranging credit ratings downgrades to the institutions traditionally used by the Council. However the average credit quality of the Council's portfolio has not suffered, due to the use of more highly rated counterparties, e.g. MMFs, other UK local authorities, and the DMO.

10. **Update on Deposits at Risk**

During the year the Icelandic Supreme Court ruled that UK local authorities' claims in the administration of both Landsbanki Islands hf (Landsbanki) and Glitnir Bank hf (Glitnir) qualified as priority claims under Icelandic bankruptcy legislation. Subsequent to this decision the Winding Up Boards have made distributions to creditors.

Landsbanki

To date the Council has received £1,486,082: in three distributions from Landsbanki – two in a basket of currencies - which after conversion to Sterling amounted to £917,531 and £183,431, with a third distribution wholly in GBP of £385,120. In addition, an amount of Icelandic Kroner is held to the benefit of the Council in an interest bearing escrow account in Iceland, which has a Sterling equivalent value of £21,413 at the 31 March 2012. In total the amount recovered represents roughly 50% of the Council's claim. The latest estimate is that priority creditors will recover 100% subject to any foreign exchange implications.

Glitnir

The Council has received a single and full distribution of funds – again in a basket of currencies – which amounted to a Sterling equivalent £836,571. In

addition, an amount is held in an Icelandic escrow account with an equivalent value of £190,419 at 31 March 2012.

The Council is currently exploring in conjunction with the other UK local authority creditors via the Local Government Association and appointed legal advisors options for repatriation of funds held in escrow accounts in Iceland.

A detailed report to the Governance Committee was made to the meeting on 28 June 2012, setting out the implications of receiving distributions in foreign currencies.

Kaupthing, Singer and Friedlander (KSF)

The Council received two distributions from KSF in 2011/12 amounting to £102,885, and has received a further distribution so far in 2012/13 of an equivalent amount. In total the amount received so far is £751,063 representing 73p in the £ pound. The latest estimate by the Administrator is for final recoveries to be in the range of between 81p and 86p in the £.

Taking into account the latest information available to the Council a reduction of £75,336 in the impairment charge made to the revenue account in previous years was made in the 2011/12 Account, reflecting the overall improvement in the level of recoveries anticipated from the banks.

11. Use of Treasury Management Advisors

The Council employs Arlingclose Limited to provide on-going treasury management advice and information. This service is separate to the services of brokers who occasionally are used to transact deposits. The contract with Arlingclose was reviewed in November 2011 and extended for a further three-year period.

The Council has on-line access to the Institutional Cash Distributors Ltd Money Market Fund portal, which facilitates trades with the Council's selected MMFs and provides a reporting tool on risk based analysis of fund holdings for individual funds and/ or aggregated across all active funds. The tool also provides a one-stop shop to review the performance and features of other MMFs to enable the Council to monitor and assess opportunities from accessing other funds. This service is provided to the Council at no charge as fees are paid by the actual MMFs.

Whilst the Council may engage external advisors, overall responsibility for treasury management remains with the Council.

12. Reporting on Treasury Management Activities

Reporting on treasury management activities has involved:

- An annual strategy approved by Council in advance of the year
- Monthly performance returns to Finance Senior Management and the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Resources and his deputy
- Reference to treasury management matters (if necessary) in the finance section of the corporate quarterly and annual performance report

- Regular reports to the Governance Committee (previously the Audit Committee) as part of a suite of key financial indicators, as well as specific reports requested by the Committee (e.g. previous reports have been made on the implications of the deposits at risk)
- The Statement of Accounts includes comprehensive disclosures in accordance with accounting rules about the Council's treasury management activities (referred to in the accounts as Financial Instruments), including the management of the associated risks.
- Updates on the Medium Term Financial Strategy from time to time will include treasury management activities when necessary.
- A mid-year and an Annual report on treasury management.
- Proposed changes to investment policy have approved by Council when circumstances have dictated.
- Scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies, along with reports to Council is carried out by the Governance Committee prior to consideration by the full Council.

13. Treasury Management Training

It is a professional requirement that the Corporate Director should ensure that members tasked with treasury management responsibilities, including the scrutiny of the treasury management function, receive appropriate training. In November 2011, a treasury management seminar was provided for members with presentations made by Arlingclose.

Senior finance officers have an on-going professional responsibility to keep up to date with the regulatory regime and professional codes on treasury management.

Through the services of Arlingclose officers have had access to regular training events and workshops covering current treasury management matters. These events also provide opportunity to network with other local authorities and share best practice, in addition to the established Essex wide officer groups.

| | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| Referral from Cabinet – 29 th October 2012 | | Agenda No: 6c |
| Recommendation from the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee, 27 th September 2012 - Minute 22, Draft Master Plan for Land at North-West, Braintree | | |
| | | |
| Portfolio Area: | Planning and Property | |
| Report Presented by: | Councillor, R Walters, Chairman Local Development Framework Committee | |
| Report Prepared by: | Alan Massow | |
| | | |
| Background Papers: | | Public Report |
| | | |

Minute Extract:

CABINET – 29TH OCTOBER 2012

63. REFERENCE FROM THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUB-COMMITTEE, 27TH SEPTEMBER 2012 - MINUTE 22, DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR LAND AT NORTH-WEST, BRAINTREE

DECISION: That it be recommended to Council:

That the Master Plan for North-West, Braintree be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications, subject to the following amendments:-

- the inclusion of a reference to the Council's Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document;
- the addition of the phrase 'HGV Restriction' to the link road on the illustrative Master Plan;
- the addition of a reference on page 25 to the parking standards for stadia;
- that the Master Plan includes a reference to the supermarket at the Neighbourhood Centre having a maximum net floor space of 1250 sq metres;
- the area identified for community sports shall be enlarged to be of sufficient size to accommodate a full-size football pitch with run-off area;
- the removal of references to hotel provision at the site.

REASON FOR DECISION: To agree recommendations to Council on the Master Plan for North-West, Braintree.



CABINET
29th October 2012

Referral from the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee – 27th September 2012

Agenda No:

Draft Master Plan for Land at North-West, Braintree

**Portfolio Area: Planning an Property
Councillor Lady Newton**

Background Papers:

Public Report

Minute Extract:

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUB-COMMITTEE – 27TH SEPTEMBER 2012

22 DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR LAND AT NORTH-WEST, BRAINTREE

INFORMATION: Members of the Sub-Committee considered a report on the draft Master Plan for land at North-West, Braintree.

Members were reminded that the Core Strategy adopted in 2011 had allocated land at North-West Braintree as a strategic growth location for housing and employment uses. It was proposed that the site could accommodate a minimum of 600 dwellings, 15ha of employment land, a new site for Braintree Town Football Club, and a spine road linking Springwood Drive with Panfield Lane.

Informal consultation on the draft Master Plan had taken place in March 2012, with a second period of consultation from 2nd to 27th July 2012. The representations received and the Officers' responses to each were set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

It was anticipated that the proposed spine road would be used as an alternative route for traffic, which could ease congestion on local roads. An HGV restriction would be required in order to prevent large vehicles, other than buses and emergency vehicles, from using the link road. Detailed traffic matters would be considered once a planning application had been submitted.

In addition to the land identified for use by the Football Club, it was proposed that a football pitch should be provided as part of the community sports and play facilities area. However, currently this pitch was too small to meet the requirements of Sport England and it was proposed that the community sports area shown on the Master Plan should be enlarged to accommodate a full-size, adult pitch.

Members were advised that Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP), who were updating the Council's retail evidence base, had been asked to give advice on the size of the store/supermarket which would be the anchor for the Neighbourhood Centre. NLP had recommended that the net floor space of the store, excluding parking and service areas, should be 1000-1250 sq metres.

DECISION: That it be Recommended to Cabinet and to Council:-

That the Master Plan for North-West, Braintree be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications, subject to the following amendments:-

- The inclusion of a reference to the Council's Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document.
- The addition of the phrase 'HGV Restriction' to the link road on the illustrative Master Plan.
- The addition of a reference on page 25 to the parking standards for stadia.
- That the Master Plan includes a reference to the supermarket at the Neighbourhood Centre having a maximum net floor space of 1250 sq metres.
- The area identified for community sports shall be enlarged to be of sufficient size to accommodate a full-size football pitch with run-off area.
- The removal of references to hotel provision at the site.

Local Development Framework Sub-Committee
27th September 2012

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Report on the North- West Braintree Masterplan Public Consultation | | Agenda No: |
| <p>Corporate Priority: Environment is clean and green, business is encouraged and local economy prospers, housing and transport meet local needs</p> <p>Report presented by: Alan Massow</p> <p>Report prepared by: Alan Massow</p> | | |
| <p>Background Papers: Braintree District Council Core Strategy (2011) http://www.braintreenorthwest.co.uk/</p> | | <p>Public Report Yes</p> |
| <p>Options: To approve, or not approve the draft North- West Braintree Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document. To approve, or not approve the inclusion of B1 employment uses at the Local Centre.</p> | | <p>Key Decision: No</p> |
| <p>Executive Summary: This report sets out a summary of comments made during the consultation in July 2012 on the North- West Braintree Draft Masterplan, together with officer responses to the issues raised in those comments. It recommends alterations to the Masterplan in response to the public consultation comments. The consultation responses are set out in Appendix 3 to this report.</p> | | |
| <p>Decision: That it be recommended to Cabinet and to Council that the North- West Braintree Masterplan be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications, subject to the following amendments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That a reference is included to the Council's Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document • That the phrase HGV Restriction is added to the link road on the illustrative Masterplan • That a reference concerning the parking standards for stadia is added to page 25 • That a reference to the maximum size of the convenience retailing at the neighbourhood centre is added. (The appropriate size will be discussed at the meeting, following advice from the retail consultants' report, which is being finalised). • That the area identified for the community sports pitch is enlarged to be of sufficient size to accommodate a full sized playing pitch with run-off area. | | |

| | |
|--|---|
| | |
| Purpose of Decision: | |
| To provide a Masterplan to support and guide any future planning applications for the Council's growth location at North-West Braintree. | |
| Corporate implications [should be explained in detail] | |
| Financial: | Community benefits and infrastructure requirements will be linked to future development. |
| Legal: | The masterplan and its consultation must be carried out in line with regulations, in order to be approved by the Council as planning guidance. |
| Equalities/Diversity | Proposed development and protection of the environment have an impact upon equality/diversity |
| Customer Impact: | Impact of planning proposals and future planning decisions |
| Environment and Climate Change: | The masterplan proposes to develop the land in line with sustainability principles, including retention of hedgerows and trees and provision of sustainable urban drainage. |
| Consultation/Community Engagement: | A public consultation took place which involved writing to residents in the locality, press releases and adverts and publicity via a website. A public exhibition was also held which was attended by the developer and Council Officers. |
| Risks: | Risk of Master Plan not being approved which could delay the delivery of the Core Strategy |
| | |
| Officer Contact: | Alan Massow |
| Designation: | Senior Planner |
| Ext. No. | 2577 |
| E-mail: | Alan.massow@braintree.gov.uk |

1. Introduction

1.1 Braintree District Council adopted its Core Strategy in September 2011. This document allocated strategic growth locations for development in the District. A strategic site at North- West Braintree was allocated comprising housing and employment uses, as set out in policy CS1 Table 1. The development site is 44.3ha, which is proposed to accommodate a minimum of 600 dwellings, with 15 ha of employment land, which could include a new site for Braintree Town Football Club. The growth location also provides a spine road linking Springwood Drive with Panfield Lane, which will be designed with an HGV restriction. The Core Strategy indicates that the growth location housing would be phased between 2018 and 2026. The employment element of the site is not phased. A map showing the proposed layout of the site is shown at Appendix 1. Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy stated that "The development of the mixed use growth locations will be in accordance with Master Plans to be approved as supplementary planning documents by the Council."

1.2 An initial informal consultation took place in March and included two well attended public exhibitions. The outcome of this consultation was report to the Panel on the 23rd May 2012.

1.3 The second consultation took place between the 2nd and 27th July 2012. This included the consultation documents being made available to the public to view on a website and at the Council Offices. A press release was also issued.

2. Publication of the changes from the previous version

2.1 The following changes have been made to the Masterplan following the first consultation;

- Hedgerows- More green areas have been provided throughout including enhanced hedgerows along Panfield Lane and green corridors linking the development with the countryside.
- Open Space – The revised Master Plan gives further consideration to the possible location of additional open space uses such as allotments and children’s play space.
- Sports – Following the initial consultation it was felt that the initial proposal for recreation was too football focussed and that a broader range of sports provision should be provided.
- Northern Site Boundary – A wider buffer area to the north boundary is shown to take account of potential habitat issues and the need to accommodate land for surface water attenuation. This will also improve access to the countryside and form an extension to the existing woodland.
- Neighbourhood Centre – The approach to delivering the neighbourhood centre has been reviewed, and the revised Master Plan looks to create a more substantial mixed- use area that would include space for small business uses, alongside shops and community uses, forming a wider mixed-use “heart” to the development.
- Protecting existing residents – the revised Master Plan includes new areas identified as “buffers” between the new development and existing properties along Panfield Lane.

3. Consultation Responses

3.1 In total 31 responses have been received. These include comments from Natural England, Sport England, Anglia Water, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation, Essex Police and Panfield Parish Council.

3.2 Other comments were received from local residents, Xpect Leisure, Vincent and Gorbing Planning Associates, UNEX, Braintree Town Football Club, Friends of Braintree and Henry Davidson Developments. In addition, a petition with 98 signatures was also received.

3.3 The consultation responses can be summarised as follows;

- Environmental – Request that TPO’s should be put in place to protect trees and hedgerows on site and that local wildlife sites and wider biodiversity should be assessed. Green infrastructure should be an integral part of the development.
- Highways – Concerns regarding traffic safety, safety of the proposed junctions onto Panfield Lane, congestion in the wider area and the need for restrictions between the growth location and the proposed spine road.

- Design – Concerns regarding overlooking and the number of storeys for the new development and suggestions for boundary treatment fronting onto Panfield Lane. Also a comment was made regarding security and safety of the scheme.
- Sport/Recreation – Public footpaths should be retained. The number of football pitches appears to have been reduced and that the site for the club and pitches should be of a sufficient size. There should be general provision for sport/recreation over the entire site.
- Housing Numbers – Concerns over the term minimum and that the number of houses proposed is 600. Concerns that the phasing should not be brought forward.
- Neighbourhood Centre – Concerns about the introduction of employment uses and its position within the growth location. A proposal to allow for expanded supermarket provision for the local centre was also received.
- Adjacent Development Sites - A site adjacent to Xpect Leisure should be developed for residential uses and be included within the growth location. Also an objection that the extent of the spine road should not preclude development potential at the former Towerlands site.
- Naming – That appropriate road names should be used and suggestions of what the area should be called as a whole.

3.4 All representations are included in Appendix 3.

4. Officer Response

4.1 A response has been given to each comment received in Appendix 3.

4.2 The draft Master Plans purpose is to agree the general principles of the growth location, the majority of comments received relate to detailed matters of design and highways safety, which are issues for consideration during the later planning application stage. Other comments have already been addressed through the Core Strategy process, for example traffic impact on the local area has already been assessed and road infrastructure improvements that will be required in response to that assessment are identified in the Core Strategy. However, an updated traffic assessment will be necessary to support any future applications.

- Environmental – The draft Master Plan shows the retention and strengthening of many of the natural features on the site, it also shows provision for sustainable drainage systems. The single public right of way is shown as being retained on the Master Plan. Landscape officers have been asked to assess any trees on the site in order to determine whether or not they should be subject to any Tree Preservation Orders.
- Highways - It is expected that the spine road will be used as an alternative route for some vehicles currently using the Aetheric Road/Rayne Road junction. This location is currently very heavily congested and the spine road will be able to help relieve this congestion. There will be consideration of the use of traffic regulation orders and traffic calming when a planning application is submitted and Essex County Council Highways will be consulted on further

traffic matters at that time. An HGV restriction will be required in order to prevent large vehicles, other than buses and emergency vehicles, from using the link road between Springwood Drive and Panfield Lane.

- Design - In terms of the design concerns and the issue of building height, officers are of the view that it is not appropriate to place restrictions on building heights in the Master Plan. These issues will be considered when planning applications are submitted for the site, in order to facilitate good design, protect amenity and provide an acceptable street scene in the new development. The design and layout will be expected to be in accordance with the Council's design policies and can be guided by the principles in the Essex Design Guide in terms of appropriate distances between buildings and the protection of private amenity space.
- Sport Recreation - It is necessary to ensure that the area of land identified for Braintree Football Club is of a sufficient size to accommodate its re-location and future needs. This would include sufficient space for the stadium and associated parking and facilities. It would be desirable for the stadium site to have a segregated access for away and home fans. The illustrative Master plan indicates two entrances. In order to provide sufficient car parking on site it is estimated that between 300-400 spaces would be required depending on the ground capacity. Sufficient provision for parking for people with disabilities, cycles, motorbikes and coaches is also required. It should however be noted that the parking provided to serve the stadium could also serve the proposed adjacent employment area, because their peak use times are different. The development will also have to provide sufficient open spaces for the development in accordance with the Council's Open Spaces SPD. The community sports and play facilities area shows a football pitch. However this pitch is too small to meet the required pitch size as set out in Sport England's Comparative Sizes of Sports Pitches & Courts (April 2011), which specifies that a pitch should be between 93.66m x 49.16m minimum and 126m x 96m maximum. As such it is recommended that the Master Plan community sports area should be enlarged to enable it to accommodate a full sized adult pitch (including run off area and landscaping).
- Housing Numbers – The Council cannot stipulate a maximum housing figure as this would be contrary to the adopted Core Strategy requirement. The exact number of houses will be determined through the planning application process.
- Neighbourhood Centre - In terms of the Neighbourhood Centre, a local centre should be provided to support the development as it is necessary to have local services and facilities. The inclusion of employment uses has been proposed to off-set a slight under provision of the Core Strategy requirement of 15ha of employment land. The local centre employment is restricted to B1 office type units, which would be able to integrate with the other uses. Increasing the size of the main employment area is not an option, as the position the spine road is fixed by the course of a water main and the desire to have recreational uses between the employment and housing area. Members can choose whether or not to support provision of B1 uses at the local centre. Officers are seeking advice from the retail consultants' evidence study on an appropriate maximum size of store for the local centre and will report on this matter verbally at the meeting.

- Adjacent Development Sites - Comments relating to the former Towerlands site and land adjacent to Xpect Leisure. Both sites are outside the boundary for the growth location. The Towerlands site has been given a draft allocation by the LDF Sub Committee for a mixed use of commercial/leisure type, such as conference facility/hotel and leisure uses. Once detailed proposals have been formulated by UNEX then they can be given further considerations before agreeing an extent for the development. Any highways implications would have to be assessed and access options considered when a plan for the site is drawn up. The Xpect leisure site is also outside the boundary of the growth location and outside the scope of the Master Plan. As the site is readily accessible from Springwood Drive and is currently allocated for employment uses it is not proposed to include it within the growth location. Any future allocation for the site could be determined through the Council's Development Management and Site Allocation Development Plan Document.
- Naming – The streets in the development will be named in accordance with the Council's street naming policy.

5. Recommendations

That it be recommended to Cabinet and to Council that the North- West Braintree Masterplan be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications, subject to the following amendments;

- That a reference is included to the Council's Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document
- That the phrase HGV Restriction is added to the link road on the illustrative Masterplan
- That a reference concerning the parking standards for stadia is added to page 25
- That a reference to the maximum size of the convenience retailing at the neighbourhood centre is added. (The appropriate size will be discussed at the meeting, following advice from the retail consultants' report, which is being finalised).
- That the area identified for the community sports pitch is enlarged to be of sufficient size to accommodate a full sized playing pitch with run-off area.

6. Future Steps.

6.1 Once approved, the Master Plan can be used to determine any future planning applications for the growth location.

6.2 Further work will continue between the Council, Highways Authority and the developer in order to bring this development forward in accordance with the phasing in the Core Strategy.

Appendix 1 – Proposed illustrative Master Plan

Appendix 2 – Previous illustrative Master Plan

Appendix 3 – Responses Received

| | | |
|--|---|----------------------|
| Recommendation from Cabinet – 29th October 2012 | | Agenda No: 6d |
| Reference From The Local Development Framework Sub-Committee, 27th September 2012 - Minute 21, Draft Master Plan For The Premdor/Rockways Regeneration Site, Sible Hedingham | | |
| | | |
| Portfolio Area: | Planning and Property Councillor Lady Newton | |
| | | |
| Background Papers: | | Public Report |
| | | |

Minute Extract:

CABINET – 29TH OCTOBER 2012

64. **REFERENCE FROM THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUB-COMMITTEE, 27TH SEPTEMBER 2012 - MINUTE 21, DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR THE PREMDOR/ROCKWAYS REGENERATION SITE, SIBLE HEDINGHAM**

DECISION: That it be recommended to Council:

That the Master Plan for the Premdor/Rockways Regeneration site, Sible Hedingham, including the alternative option for the provision of a registered care home on the Rockways part of the site, be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications with the exception of the land of 0.2 hectares safeguarded for new medical facilities which be referred back to the Local Development Framework Sub-committee for consideration as to whether this area could be expanded.

CABINET
29th October 2012

| | | |
|---|--|---------------|
| Referral from the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee – 27 th September 2012 | | Agenda No: |
| Draft Master Plan For The Premdor/Rockways Regeneration Site, Sible Hedingham | | |
| | | |
| Portfolio Area: | Planning and Property | |
| Report Presented by: | Councillor R Walters, Chairman Local Development Framework Committee | |
| Report Prepared by: | Emma Goodings | |
| | | |
| Background Papers: | | Public Report |
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Minute Extract:

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUB-COMMITTEE – 27TH SEPTEMBER 2012

21 DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR THE PREMDOR/ROCKWAYS REGENERATION SITE, SIBLE HEDINGHAM

(Councillor J C Beavis (District Council Ward Councillor for Hedingham and Maplestead) and Councillor G Massey (Chairman of Sible Hedingham Parish Council) attended the meeting and spoke on this item).

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a further report on the draft Master Plan for the Premdor/Rockways Regeneration Site, Sible Hedingham. It was noted that a petition requesting the provision of a medical centre at the site had been submitted which would be considered at the Council meeting on 8th October 2012.

Members were reminded that the Core Strategy adopted in 2011 had identified Sible Hedingham as one of six Key Service Villages within the District, and the former Premdor and Rockways sites as a regeneration area. The Core Strategy required a Master Plan to be prepared for the area and this had been subject to public consultation between 12th June 2012 and 10th July 2012.

Following consideration of the comments submitted, amendments had been made to the draft Master Plan and a final Master Plan had been prepared, which was attached as an Appendix to the Agenda report. The Master Plan proposed the development of approximately 230 dwellings, open space provision, a work hub, space for a new health centre, the creation of new footpath/cycleways and new crossing points on Station Road and Swan Street. The main differences

between the original draft Master Plan and the amended Plan were the safeguarding of an area of 0.2ha for the provision of a doctor's surgery/health centre to be delivered by Mid Essex NHS; detailed information about the design of the Local Equipped Area for Play and informal open space; and updated requirements for the provision and delivery of infrastructure, details of which were set out in the report.

In addition, the agent acting for the proposed developer of the Rockways part of the site had put forward an alternative option to limit residential development on the frontage of Station Road and to provide a registered care home. This proposal could provide up to 60 full and part-time jobs. Sible Hedingham Parish Council had indicated their support for a care home at the site. It was noted that approval of the care home option would reduce residential development at the site by approximately 30 dwellings, with a corresponding decrease in affordable housing provision.

DECISION: That it be Recommended to Cabinet and to Council:-

That the Master Plan for the Premdor/Rockways Regeneration Site, Sible Hedingham, including the alternative option for the provision of a registered care home on the Rockways part of the site, be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications.

LDF Sub Committee – 27th September 2012



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| Report on the Master Plan for the Premdor/Rockways Development at Sible Hedingham | | Agenda No: |
| Corporate Priority: Housing and Transport meet local needs, business is encouraged and local economy prospers and the environment is clean and green Report presented by: Emma Goodings Report prepared by: Emma Goodings | | |
| Background Papers: BDC Core Strategy 2011 LDF Sub Committee minutes 25 th July 2012 Premdor/Rockways draft Masterplan June 2012 Public consultation responses, including a petition. | | Public Report |
| Options: To approve or not approve the Premdor/Rockways Masterplan as planning guidance in the determination of planning applications | | Key Decision: NO |
| Executive Summary: The former Premdor and Rockways premises were identified in the Core Strategy as a site for regeneration. A draft masterplan for the site was produced and was the subject of public consultation in June and July. Following the responses received during this consultation, amendments have been made to the masterplan including safeguarding 0.2ha of land for a new doctor's surgery/health centre to serve the villages of Castle and Sible Hedingham. This is proposed as the final masterplan to be considered for approval by the Members. | | |
| Decision: That it be Recommended to Cabinet and to Council that the Premdor/Rockways Sible Hedingham Masterplan be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications. | | |
| Purpose of Decision: To agree or not agree the Council's position on the Premdor/Rockways site masterplan which will inform the determination of planning applications received on the site. | | |
| Corporate implications [should be explained in detail] | | |
| Financial: | Community benefits and infrastructure requirements will be linked to future development | |
| Legal: | The masterplan and its consultation must be carried out in line with regulations, in order to be approved by the Council | |

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| | as planning guidance. |
| Equalities/Diversity | Proposed development and protection of the environment will have an impact on equalities/diversity |
| Customer Impact: | The redevelopment of the site will have an impact on the residents, especially those that live in close proximity of the site |
| Environment and Climate Change: | The masterplan proposes to develop the land in line with sustainability principles, including improvements to the local wildlife site |
| Consultation/Community Engagement: | The masterplan has been the subject of a 4 week consultation. A public exhibition has been held and the document has been available on the Council's website |
| Risks: | That the masterplan will not be approved by the Council which could delay a planning application for the site |
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1. Introduction

1.1 The BDC Core Strategy, adopted in 2011, identifies Sible Hedingham as one of the six Key Service Villages within the District. Paragraph 4.20 states that; *"More limited development to serve the local area, or deal with specific local issues such as the regeneration of important sites, can be located in the Key Service Villages"* To this end paragraph 6.13 stated: *'In order to promote the economic viability of the Key Service Villages, the Council will promote the regeneration of the following areas in two of the Key Service Villages.'* This identified the former Premdor site and adjoining Rockways premises as a regeneration area in Sible Hedingham, with uses to include housing, employment, a doctors surgery, riverside nature reserve and open space and allotments.

2. The Masterplan

2.1 A draft masterplan was produced earlier in the year, which was subject to a four week public consultation period in June and July 2012. An exhibition and a public meeting, organised by the Parish Council, were held in the village and a total of 53 responses were received to the consultation. The Parish Council received a further 38 responses to its own questionnaire.

2.2 The Council has listened to the comments made during the public consultation period by the statutory consultees, the Parish Council and local residents as well as those expressed at the LDF Sub Committee meeting on the 25th July 2012. Amendments have been made to the masterplan to take into account these comments and a final masterplan has now been produced, which is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

2.3 The masterplan proposes around 230 dwellings on the site of the old Premdor and adjacent Rockways factory, as well as significant amounts of open space, in particular through public access to the Hedingham Station Marsh Local Wildlife Site, a work hub, space for a new health centre and the creation of new footpath/cycleways and new crossing points on Station Road and Swan Street.

2.4 The main changes between the draft masterplan and this one are;

- The safeguarding of an area of 0.2ha for the provision of a doctor's surgery/health centre to be delivered by Mid Essex NHS.
- The text sets out in more detail the design of the LEAP and informal open space at the centre of the site and makes clear that this area will be fenced to ensure that there is no conflict with the open culvert in this location. An artist's impression, of how this part of the site may look, is also included.
- The table setting out the infrastructure requirements and delivery from the area has also been updated to take into account the most recent information. It specifies that the site will be delivering the following infrastructure provision;
 - 30% affordable housing across the site
 - Provision of 0.1ha of land and construction of a work hub/enterprise centre
 - Provision of 0.2ha of land to be safeguarded for a health centre and used in the interim by the Parish Council
 - Refurbishment of the old bank building and provision of a community park adjacent to Swan Street
 - A financial contribution to education as requested by Essex County Council
 - River Chamel restoration on culverted channel running under the site
 - Contribution requested by Essex County Council for the provision of extra land for early years/childcare places
 - Public open space, play and recreation areas in line with the standards set out in the Council's Open Space SPD
 - Enhancement of the local wildlife site (Hedingham Station Marsh)
 - A contribution to allotments offsite, in line with the standards set out in the Council's Open Space SPD
 - Financial contribution requested by Essex County Council for the provision of public transport and other highway improvements
 - Public realm improvements such as street furniture and trees to be included on the site
 - A footpath and a footpath/cycleway through the local nature reserve and further pedestrian links through the site and to new crossing facilities in Swan Street and Station Road.

2.5 These contributions are in line with the requirements set out in Table 2 of the Core Strategy in relation to the regeneration of this site and in the Council's adopted policies relating to affordable housing and open space. Bloor Homes, who are developing the Premdor part of the site, are confident that all of these requirements can be delivered.

3. Alternative Option

3.1 The District Council has received correspondence from the agent acting for the proposed developer of the Rockways part of the site, included in Appendix 2, stating that they may wish to promote an alternative option to housing for this part of the site, which would contain;

- A limited amount of residential development on the frontage of Station Road
- A registered care home

3.2 The option of a care home on the site had been considered previously by the District and Parish Council and was considered to be a good option, as this would provide further employment on the site. The Market Position Statement, produced by Essex County Council and previously reported to this sub committee in June, noted that the District was meeting its identified needs in terms of care home places. However, this provision is mainly located in the main towns and the existing care home in Sible Hedingham is over-subscribed. The letter states that this proposal could provide up to 60 full and part-time jobs at a variety of skill levels.

3.3 Sible Hedingham Parish Council have been informed of the proposed alternative development of Rockways for a care home. At their meeting on the 10th September the Parish Council unanimously supported a proposed care home which they felt would make a good facility and provide employment.

3.4 It is considered therefore that the option of a care home on the Rockways part of the site, would be a viable alternative to the residential development set out in the masterplan, subject to design and layout work. However, it should be noted that this proposal would reduce the level of 'normal' residential dwellings on the site by around 30, with a corresponding decrease in affordable housing provision.

3.5 If this option were to be progressed, the Council would expect the applicant to engage in a significant level of public consultation before the submission of an application.

Recommendation

To approve the Premdor/Rockways, Sible Hedingham Masterplan, including the alternative option of a registered care home on the Rockways part of the site, as planning guidance in the determination of planning applications.

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| Referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 28th November 2012 | Agenda No: 8a |
| Task and Finish Group - Scrutiny of the Council's Land and Property Investment Policies | |
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| Presented by: | Councillor Tattersley, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group |
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| Background Papers: | Public Report |
| | |

Minute Extract:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 29TH OCTOBER 2012

24. **TASK AND FINISH GROUP - SCRUTINY OF THE COUNCIL'S LAND AND PROPERTY INVESTMENT POLICIES**

DECISION:

1. That the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group, the conclusions and recommendations reached in the report be noted.
2. That Council be invited to consider the report and refer it to Cabinet.

REASON FOR DECISION: To consider the Task and Finish Group's Scrutiny of the Council's Land and Property Investment Policies

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
28th November 2012

Council, 10th December 2012
Agenda Item 8a



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| Task and Finish Group - Scrutiny of the Council's Land and Property Investment Policies | | Agenda No: |
| Corporate Priority: Prosperity and Planning Portfolio Area: Planning and Property Report presented by: Cllr P Tattersley, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group Report prepared by: Andrew Epsom, Head of Asset Management | | |
| Background Papers: Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings 13 th July 2011, 22 nd March 2012 and 11 th July 2012. | | Public Report |
| Options: To refer the report to Council and Cabinet. To refer the report back to the group for further consideration. | | Key Decision: No. |
| Executive Summary: At its meeting on the 13 th July 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that a Task and Finish Group be established to scrutinise the Council's general property and land investment policies. The composition of the Group was formally approved by Committee on the 12 th October 2011 and the Group subsequently conducted a number of meetings to examine this matter. A progress report from the Task and Finish Group went to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 22 nd March 2012. A report on the Task and Finish Group findings was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 11 th July 2012. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee raised a number of queries that have now been addressed within the Group's revised report (enclosed separately). | | |
| Decision: That the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group, the conclusions and recommendations reached in the report be noted and that the report be referred to Council and Cabinet. | | |

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| Purpose of Decision: | |
| To consider the Task and Finish Group's Scrutiny of the Council's Land and Property Investment Policies | |

| Corporate implications | |
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| Financial: | None |
| Legal: | None |
| Equalities/Diversity | None |
| Customer Impact: | The Task and Finish Group exercise has enabled Members to be better informed by improving their knowledge and understanding of the work undertaken by the Asset Management Service. A number of lessons learnt from previous property transactions have been identified to enable a best practice approach to be applied to future property transactions. |
| Environment and Climate Change: | None |
| Consultation/Community Engagement: | N/a |
| Risks: | N/a |
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LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

Agenda No: 9(i)(a)

Report covers activity ending 26th November 2012

1. Visit to Alec Hunter Humanities College – 11th October 2012

I visited Alec Hunter College at the invitation of the Headmaster, Mr Trevor Lawn. I entered a number of the classes that were in progress and was particularly impressed with the rapport between pupils and teachers. Mr Lawn and I discussed some of the challenges facing the college and the relationship between parents and the school.

2. Braintree Locality Board – 12th October 2012

I attended, along with Cabinet colleagues, a meeting of the Braintree Locality Board. This was a very productive meeting which discussed a number issues including

- The South Street, Braintree project
- Essex Community Budgets
- The Integrated County Strategy and its application to Braintree
- Strategic approach to the Braintree to Witham rail loop
- Broadband
- Education in the district

3. Witham Industrial Watch (WIW) – 18th October 2012

I opened the WIW Trade Fair on the Faulkbourne Trading Estate. Over thirty local businesses exhibited their services and I was delighted to meet so many owners of SMEs based in the Witham area. The overwhelming majority of those I spoke to were relatively optimistic about the trading opportunities for their businesses. I am always amazed at the variety of SMEs that we have in the district and it is pleasing to note how many of them have received advice and support from Braintree Business Development Services.

4. Colchester Borough Council Oyster Feast – 26th October 2012

At the kind invitation of Cllr Anne Turrell, the Leader of Colchester Borough Council, I attended the historic Oyster Feast in the Guildhall, Colchester. This event has its origins in the 14th Century and the 'modern' feast dates back to 1845.

5. Cabinet Strategy Workshop – 2nd November 2012

The Cabinet held a workshop in the Town Hall to consider the future strategic direction of the Council. We reviewed our key objectives and discussed the impact that new policies emanating from central Government will have. Along with Cabinet colleagues I shall be attending the meeting of Overview & Scrutiny on Wednesday 28th November to share with members the approach we intend to take.

6. Launch of Ignite Business Enterprise Ltd – 8th November 2012

It is always pleasing to see a long cherished aim come to fruition. For many years the Council had been trying to bring together Business Development Services (BDS) and Braintree Enterprise Acorn Units (BEAU). The launch of Ignite sees a new local Enterprise Agency established which aims to make the Braintree district the best place in Essex to start and grow a business. The new organisation, which is chaired by Mr Nigel Harley, offers a free service to businesses, operates from its town centre base at The Corner House in Braintree with the Braintree Enterprise Centre offering flexible office and light industrial space for small and start up businesses in the Springwood Industrial Estate.

7. Correspondence from County Councillor Peter Martin, Leader of Essex County Council – 15th November 2012

Along with the Leaders of all other local authorities in Essex I received an email from Councillor Martin informing me that Lord Hanningfield is not to face any criminal procedures relating to his corporate credit card expenditure during his time as Leader of Essex County Council.

As Cllr Martin promised the County Council has now published the information relating to this issue on its website. The information can be found at <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Your-Council/Councillors/Allowances/Pages/Governance-Report-November-2012.aspx>

In September 2010 the Audit Commission reported their findings of an audit of member expenses and other governance issues. The report concluded:

‘My review and the Internal Audit reviews indicated significant governance failings at the Council. These include:

- the absence of basic systems, controls and procedures, including for proper scrutiny of claims;
- it was difficult to demonstrate that some expenditure incurred was appropriate, or that it was properly and necessarily incurred on legitimate Council business; and
- a failure to publish members' allowances and expenses promptly after the year end, which is a statutory requirement.’

There are clearly a number of questions that remain to be answered at the County Council. I can assure local residents that no member of this Council has the use of a Corporate Credit Card. I can also assure residents that no BDC member is able to self-certify their own expenditure as was the case at the County Council.

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| Cllr Graham Butland Leader | |
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**COUNCILLOR JOANNE BEAVIS –CABINET MEMBER,
PEOPLE AND PARTICIPATION**

Agenda No: 9(i)(b)

**Report to Council on Portfolio Area of People and
participation for the period ending 25th November 2012**

Witham Leisure Centre

A letter from the Minister of State for Schools advised us that Essex County Council has now been granted Schedule 1 consent for the land. The next stage is for the County Council to apply for Section 77 consent to dispose of playing fields, as part of the land we will build on includes the old hard courts. This application has now been made and we should know the outcome in February 2013. Once these consents are granted, the lease can be completed giving BDC access. The contract for the building of the new Witham Leisure Centre, awarded to Barr Construction, will commence in December with the detailed design stage (this does not require site access). Barr Construction is due to start work on site in the spring of 2013 (subject to section 77 consent). The Witham Leisure Centre is now due to open in summer 2014. All key stakeholders have been written to and the next Leisure Bulletin will soon be available to all members, customers and partners.

The Leisure Contract

Fusion Lifestyle, the Council's new leisure provider, is providing monthly performance data that allows us to closely monitor the overall performance at all of our leisure facilities. Football, membership, concession types and access to services are areas of current interest and I'm pleased with the early progress to date. The building of the new fitness facilities at Braintree Swim Centre and Braintree Leisure Centre are on track to commence in 2013. Fusion Lifestyle is creating new relationships with the Academies and Colchester United Trust to investigate greater sports development opportunities within our district.

Public Health

The new Health and Social Care Act 2012 will see the responsibility of Public Health devolved to the upper tier local authorities from the 1st April 2013 with the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards. From the 1st of April the new Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) will be formally established. The districts of Braintree, Chelmsford and Maldon will make up the new Mid Essex CCG. The Mid Essex CCG is made up of local GP's and others with the responsibility and the budget to plan and buy health services on your behalf.

Public Health Integration Within our District.

Each district has been designated a "Health Liaison Link" to discuss the health profile of a district and how, through greater collaboration, health priorities in a district can be resolved through working in partnership. Our "Health Liaison Link" is meeting with Fusion Lifestyle to discuss how sport, fitness and wellbeing classes could help to resolve some of our district's health issues around life expectancy for women, hip fractures in those over the age of 65, smoking and the number of obese adults. The new links will ensure that Patient Referrals are tracked at a local level and will ensure that Fusion Lifestyle is delivering the services most needed.

New Localism Board.

The first meeting of the Localism Board has taken place. Its purpose is to act as a strategic body to ensure that the specific duties and responsibilities from the Localism Act are prepared and carried out. The following projects were agreed by Cabinet in July 2012:

- To progress the Witham Joint Agreement.
- To progress the Witham Neighbourhood Pilot.
- To progress the programme of Community Rights.
- To input into the Whole Essex Community Budget project.
- To develop the role of the Community Councillor.

Silver End Village Hall

The day to day management of Silver End Village Hall has been transferred to local management, with the lease for the ground floor completed in November 2012. This is the last of the Council's Community Halls to be transferred under the Council's plans to devolve community assets. The new management team is working closely with the community of Silver End and ward members to ensure that the community ambitions and needs are understood and met.

The Royal British Legion Community Covenant

On behalf of The Leader of the Council it was a pleasure to attend the Essex Covenant Signing Ceremony on 6th November 2012. In agreeing to become a signatory local authorities will be helping to ensure that the Armed Forces community in Essex, serving personnel and their families, and former personnel who live in the county, receive the recognition and support they deserve. The signing of the Essex Communities Covenant will also enable groups and individuals across the county to bid for monies from a fund, announced by the MoD, of £30m over a four year period to help communities undertake projects that promote understanding between military and civilian populations.

Member development

Braintree District Council is committed to investing in lifelong learning and development for all of its Members. The Council recognises the contribution that such investment can make in supporting Members in their roles as Community Leaders and in meeting the increasing challenges within Local Government. At a recent meeting of the Member Development Group members discussed the work programme of member training throughout 2013. Topics included: The Council Budget and Risk Management, Response to the Localism Act and the work of the Community Services Team, Public Health, Leisure, The Local Strategic Partnership, Safeguarding and IT. The take-up for training in-house and with partners outside of the organisation continues to attract good member attendance numbers.

Town and Parish Summit

An invitation has been sent to the Town and Parish Councils inviting them to attend the Town and Parish Summit. The Summit is being hosted in partnership with the Rural Community Council of Essex and will be held on January 31st 2013. Proposed agenda items will include: The Council's budget and corporate priorities. The Localism Act and Community Rights.

Further information on the contents of this report can be obtained by contacting: Cllr Joanne Beavis and Cllr Peter Tattersley (Deputy Cabinet Member for People).

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**COUNCILLOR DAVID BEBB, CABINET MEMBER FOR
PERFORMANCE & EFFICIENCY**

Agenda No: 9(i)(c)

**Report to Council on Performance & Efficiency for the
period ending 30th November 2012**

Project and finance performance to end of second quarter

At the December 3rd Cabinet meeting I gave a status update of projects, key performance indicators, and financial performance. In summary, for 40 projects in hand, 3 are completed, 33 are on track, 3 have amber status, and 1 has red status. Of the 17 reportable key performance indicators against target 10 have achieved target, 4 missed target by less than 5%, and 3 by more than 5%.

The second quarter of the year has been challenging which has impacted on some areas of performance but overall the performance at the end of the second quarter remains good.

Financial Performance

The current projected outturn is a net spend of £15.524 million, compared with a budget of £16.159 million, giving a projected under spend of £635,090.

The projected under spend of £635,090 equates to -4% against the budget, and is a combination of expenditure variances of minus £420,350, and net over achievement of income of £214,740.

Strategy Day

At the November 2nd Cabinet Strategy Day I reviewed achievements of this portfolio over the past year and set out our proposed programme of initiatives.

Key achievements include

- Balanced the MTFS under difficult circumstances through reviewing our procurement, reviewing the efficiency of our services and sound financial management.
- Feedback from our auditors was that our accounts process and financial management has been excellent again this year.
- Refurbished Causeway House, and successfully let a floor to ECC securing over £300,000 per annum in rent and contribution towards costs
- Implemented a new ICT contract, which will save £1.2 million 5 years, through a joint tender (also reducing the costs of procurement by over ¾ of the cost 10 years before).
- Secured a cost neutral position of the procurement hub through effective letting of framework agreements

- Successfully implemented a number of systems, including our HR and Payroll system, creating a foundation for our staff and members to self-serve in the future.
- Integrated all of our face to face customer teams and now provide a one stop shop for services for County and District council customers.
- Continued to deliver good front line customer service, meeting our customer expectations despite an increase in demand for these services and reducing resources in the teams.

Priorities include:

- Planning for the medium term, and specifically finding ways to address the shortfall predicted in 2015/16
- Plan for the new funding mechanisms through the business rate relief legislation changes.
- Plan for the welfare reforms changes, by ensuring that we have the resources, systems and training in place to address issues that this may raise.
- Ensure that our technology continues to meet our changing requirements, and is fit for purpose.
- Introduce a bespoke management development programme, which will ensure that our people have the skills needed for the future and helping them to develop the skills to deliver more with less.
- Ensure that whatever the circumstances, our front line teams continue to deliver excellent customer service.
- Continuing the programme of business efficiency reviews and strategic commissioning, to ensure that our services continue to deliver value for money.
- Review key contracts to support the business efficiency programme and deliver savings
- Review the member development offer in line with the role of the community councillor
- Continue work to manage sickness absence in the organisation to ensure that the excellent performance from 2011/12 is maintained.
- Ensure that we continue to get good value from partnerships

Financial Strategic Planning

Those of you who attended the November 28th Overview and Strategy Committee will be aware of the general parameters that are driving development of the evolving budget strategy. This is focused upon being a low tax authority, delivering a balanced budget over a 4 year period, and maintaining minimum balances of at least £1.5m. In addition there is the imperative for a constant drive for efficiencies to reduce costs, but at the same time maintain focus upon residents priorities. Building in assumptions of inflation, interest rates, and a range of government grant reduction possibilities, options are being calculated on overall budget impact and council tax options. Matters will become somewhat clearer once DCLG have announced LA grant allocations expected in the third week of December.

Treasury Management Strategy

We met with our Financial Advisors, Arlingclose, on November 21st both to scrutinise our current investment portfolio and review changes in the current investment climate, with opportunities to improve our overall investment returns, without unduly compromising security and liquidity. The meeting was timely and very productive, throwing up new options which will now be appraised further with a view to developing a revised treasury management strategy to bring before Council early in 2013.

Efficiency Board

I chaired the autumn Efficiency Board on November 6th. The Board received reviews on 3 services, Development Management, Building Control, and Facilities Management, and approved action plans. The Board also approved the Project Initiation Document for efficiency review of Procurement (internal purchasing) and the Procurement Hub*.

Vehicle maintenance was amongst arising issues, with discussion upon costs of vehicle procurement versus leasing. The board have requested that the cost of financing and owning our own stock is considered as part of future procurements and could be considered as part of the procurement hub review.

For development management and building control, customer satisfaction is being considered as part of the review. It was also agreed that the Board should review performance and outcomes after six months to ensure that recommendations have been implemented.

(*For information, the Procurement Hub was set up in September 2006 to provide procurement services to a number of Councils across Essex. Current members include:

- Braintree District Council
- Castle Point District Council
- Colchester Borough Council
- Epping Forest District Council
- Maldon District Council

This is a shared service arrangement, hosted by BDC, with each partner having equal status regardless of size, spend or membership duration. The funding model is through a subscription from each authority.

The business model for the procurement hub includes the generation of income through the creation and management of framework agreements. When these are used by local authorities (nationwide) they generate a rebate payable by the supplier to the hub.

The hub has been successful financially, and in 2011/12 was able to provide a cost neutral service on behalf of the authorities in the hub (including apportioned expenses).

Staff Awards ceremony

On November 21st I attended an Awards Event at the Town Hall for BDC staff who have achieved long service and individual learning and development qualifications during the course of the last year.

Cllr David Bebb
Cabinet Member – Performance & Efficiency

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

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| | |
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**COUNCILLOR LADY NEWTON – CABINET MEMBER
FOR PLANNING AND PROPERTY**

Agenda No: 9(i)(d)

**Report to Council on Portfolio Area of Planning and
Property for the period ending 26th November 2012**

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD

The LDF Sub-Committee will be considering further draft development management policies and allocations for retail and other land-uses at their meetings on 5th and 13th December. They will also approve the revised Statement of Community Involvement, updated LDF Plan preparation timetable and proposed arrangements for public consultation on the Site Allocations Plan.

Public consultation on the Draft Site Allocations and Development Management Plan is planned to commence on 10th January 2013.

Braintree to Witham Branch Line

Socio Economic Study, Braintree Branch Line

The Great Eastern Main Line Capacity Study commissioned by the GEML Vision Group is due to be launched shortly. This study will detail core and supplementary schemes required to deliver the improvements required to achieve the vision for the GEML. The study will help provide evidence in responding to the consultation on Greater Anglia Franchise, which is due to commence in December or early 2013.

Freeport Foot/Cycle Bridge

The Braintree Freeport Footbridge crosses the Braintree to Witham railway line, and will provide easy access to the station for residents of the Heathlands residential estate and beyond. The bridge was successfully lifted into place during the early hours of Sunday 30th September. The contractors are due to finish on site in early December. An opening ceremony will be arranged once the project is completed, with representatives from Essex County Council and Braintree District Council. The scheme was funded by Braintree District Council (Growth Area Funding and s106 contributions) and Essex County Council.

Homelessness

Earlier this year the government announced that £20 million was being made available to Local Authorities to ensure front line provision prevents single homelessness and rough sleeping nationally. Braintree is in a grouping with the following councils: - Colchester, Maldon, Tendring, Uttlesford, Babergh, Ipswich, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal. A grant of £362,000 has been provided to the group for supporting work to prevent and tackle rough sleeping, single homelessness and the development of a generic early intervention and prevention service across the grouping.

The funding is intended to enable a co-ordinated approach across traditional local authority boundaries and draw upon good practice examples within the groupings. The funding was not intended to be split between the authorities within the designated group.

In our grouping, we are currently in the process of selecting organisations to help deliver on two projects. The first is for rough sleepers with complex needs, the second is aimed at preventing homelessness by helping single people to access the private rented sector combined with support to help sustain a tenancy.

Affordable Housing

The affordable housing development programme in the district for 2012/13 is on track with 36 completions to date. Over half of this year's programme is scheduled for completion in the last quarter of the year, so numbers are a little uncertain but we are predicting a minimum of 79 completions of affordable homes for this financial year.

This includes:

- 19 flats and houses on the Station Approach development in Braintree by Persimmon Homes;
- a rural housing scheme of 12 homes for local people in Great Bardfield; *and*
- the first 2 developments undertaken by Greenfields Community Housing on its land since the stock transfer 5 years ago, in Rayne and Hatfield Peverel.

In addition, Greenfields are undertaking a programme of purchasing 20 homes on the open market, some of which are likely to be completed during this financial year.

Good progress is being made on the proposals to develop affordable housing on the site of the former garage site in South Street, Braintree. Colne Housing Society has successfully negotiated to acquire the site and has submitted a planning application for 24 affordable rented flats on the site.

Spring Lodge, Witham

On the 5th November 2012, Members and Officers met with representatives of the Witham Community Association (WCA) to discuss a number of issues which included repairs to the heating system and the need for the WCA to create a management committee to run the financial affairs and overall strategic management of the Community Centre. The Council has placed an order with a heating contractor to undertake these works as soon as possible.

Further information on the contents of this report can be obtained by contacting Councillor Lady Newton.

Councillor Lady Newton
Cabinet Member – Planning and Property

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| | |
| Contact: | Councillor Lady Newton |
| Designation: | Cabinet Member |
| E-mail: | cllr.ladynewton@braintree.gov.uk |

COUNCILLOR SCHMITT, CABINET MEMBER, PLACE

Agenda No: 9(i)(e)

Report to Council on Portfolio Area of Place for the period ending 22nd November 2012

WASTE MANAGEMENT

New Vehicles. The Council took delivery of six new refuse collection vehicles these are more environmentally friendly, having fuel efficient engines and electric bin lifts and they are also much quieter in operation and so residents should notice an improvement. Riverside Truck Rental will maintain the vehicles throughout the seven year contract.

Recycling Performance. Current performance stands at 60.3%

Food Waste. The tonnage of food waste that we collect weekly averages 93 tonnes.

Cordons Farm. Work is continuing with ECC on their proposed purchase of land at Cordons Farm to build a co-located waste transfer facility in conjunction with BDC. The planning application will be submitted in January 2013 with the aim of ECC completing the legal purchase of the site by end April, subject to planning consent.

Member Review Group. A group, chaired by Cllr. Abbott, has been formed to look at the future of recycling in Braintree. The first meeting of the Group takes place on 5 December. The Group is aiming to complete the review by 31 March 2013.

STREET CLEANING

Cleaning of strategic routes: The recent cleansing of the A12 removed 6 tonnes of waste including litter and accident debris from the verges. This will be continually monitored and cleaned as required. In an effort to encourage the public to act responsibly, we have now put litter bins in all of the lay-bys. In addition, staff have completed an Autumn spring clean of the A-roads in the District.

The Beat Barrows continue to be deployed in the three town centres and this has improved cleanliness standards significantly.

We are yet again in the finals of Keep Britain Tidy

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Britain in Bloom: Following on from their success in the Anglia in Bloom Competition, Members will have heard that Halstead also won GOLD in the Town Category of the RHS Britain in Bloom Awards. Credit not only goes to the In-Bloom volunteers, but also to our own cleansing and horticultural staff who worked very hard to ensure that the Town looked its best on judging day. The Group's success clearly demonstrates what can be achieved by working in partnership with the District Council.

Best Kept Playing Field Awards: I am delighted to report that the Council received the highest ever number of awards to date for the quality and standards of its play areas. The Chairman attended the awards ceremony at the Essex County Cricket Club on 25 October and was presented with 29 awards in total including two for the Albert Moss Recreation Ground, Rivenhall being Class Winner for both children's playgrounds and for playing fields. Meadowside, Braintree and Witham Town Park were joint runners up in the latter category.

In addition to the above, our play areas won 7 Gold, 4 Silver and 5 Merit awards and our playing fields won 2 Gold and 7 Silver awards. This demonstrates our commitment to making sure that play areas across the District are well maintained, welcoming and safe for the enjoyment of children and their families.

Refurbishments: Two play areas have been fully refurbished at a cost of £40k each, Fisher Field, Braintree and Bramble Road, Witham. In addition, we have completely refurbished 3 of our 4 cemetery chapels: Braintree, Halstead & Bocking. The Witham chapel is also planned for refurbishment

RURAL FACILITIES

Finchingfield Public Toilets have been transferred to the Parish Council and work is continuing to transfer the toilets at Castle Hedingham, together with the car park at Coggeshall and the allotments, toilets and car park at Earls Colne later in the year.

HIGHWAYS

In conjunction with Essex Police, ECC and Braintree Town Football Club, the Council implemented its Traffic Management Plan for the high profile football match between Braintree Town and Tranmere Rovers held on 12 November. This included parking restrictions in and around the Club's ground in Clockhouse Way and using the Council's car park at its depot for visiting fans to park. We have listened to feedback from local residents and made adjustments this year resulting in fewer roads having restricted parking. By introducing no parking along the main routes and some side streets, we help ensure residents' homes and drives aren't blocked and that traffic keeps flowing through the area.

ENVIRONMENT

LGA's Climate Local Initiative. In May the Government commissioned a report on how local authorities can help towards reducing emissions and minimising risk imposed by climate change. In response to this report the Climate Local Initiative has been set up to support councils' efforts to both reduce their own and their districts carbon emissions and to improve authority and community resilience to the effects of the changing climate and extreme weather. Currently our commitment is documented in the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change which BDC signed back in 2006, this declaration needs updating to reflect our current and future commitment to climate change and carbon reduction. In addition, our Climate Change Strategy is due for review and this initiative offers an opportunity to review our position and set new targets for the future.

BBE Our officers have now received joint training on the following subjects, which will enable better regulation and less burden for our local businesses:-

RIPA/ PACE / Internet investigations training delivered by Trading Standards to increase the scope of our investigations when investigating rogue traders that are using the internet to illegally trade or advertise their business.

Food training on allergens for Braintree food inspectors, which will provide additional safeguards for the residents who eat in local restaurants, as our officers are now able to check for allergens when carrying out an inspection and pass on information to catering staff about allergens.

Health and Safety hazard recognition training this training will be provided by Braintree staff to Trading Standards staff so that Trading Standards officers can give authoritative feed back to our officers on any Health & Safety issues they may encounter whilst visiting premises in our district.

Enforcement

Dog poo 4 campaign is underway in partnership with Friends of Flitch Way and Greenfields Housing Association to educate and report serial offenders who allow their pets to foul the Flitch Way. Officers have increased the frequency of patrols and enforcement and educational activities to discourage dog owners to clear up after their dogs.

A concerted effort to clean up the high street in the three main towns is underway. Officers have increased their patrols in the towns with additional signage being erected this links to "Loving Your High Street"

Over the last 3 months, 36 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued;

- 33 for littering
- 1 for failure to provide waste documents
- 2 for breaching section 46 (failing to present refuse in the required manner)
- 1 for dog fouling

Emergency Planning. The Get Ready for Winter initiative has been launched to encourage individuals and communities to prepare for winter.

www.metoffice.gov.uk/getreadyforwinter highlights advice. A link has been put on BDC web site and Parishes have been informed.

LANDSCAPES AND COUNTRYSIDE

Local Nature Reserve, Hoppit Mead. Wetland Invertebrate Survey Report received including recommendations for habitat enhancement. BDC has now received full title ownership of the unregistered land in the centre of Hoppit Mead. Natural England has advised that the LNR submission process can be started, a list of stakeholders and a management plan are being looked at and a consultation process will begin.

Public Open Space Enhancement Projects. Halstead River Walk the eastern section of the River Walk, is now being constructed, works are due to complete around the end of the calendar year.

Hedingham River Walk The wall alongside Alderford St is in a far worse condition than thought; ECC is seeking funding for the work unfortunately causing yet more delay.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Domestic Abuse. I attended a workshop, organised by the CSP, which was a multi-agency event. Students from Rickstones Academy created and performed short dramas about Domestic Abuse. This was used as a guide to agencies and school staff to gain a greater understanding of dealing correctly with disclosures from a young person.

**Cllr Mrs W Schmitt
Cabinet Member – Place**

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

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| | |
| Contact: | Cllr W Schmitt or Cllr R Mitchell |
| Designation: | Cabinet Member or Deputy |
| E-mail: | |

**COUNCILLOR CHRIS SIDDALL – CABINET MEMBER
FOR PROSPERITY**

Agenda No: 9(i)(f)

**Report to Council on Portfolio Area of Prosperity and
Growth**

TOWN CENTRES Window Dressing Workshops – Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis is a dedicated Independent Retail Consultancy specialising in visual merchandising, brand delivery and retail performance improvement. As part of our plans to support retailers the Council arranged Window Dressing Workshops free of charge, with training being offered to any retailer who wanted to take up our offer.

Over 20 businesses and their staff benefitted from the workshops held in Witham, Halstead and Braintree in October. The classes helped develop skills and encouraged retailers to use their windows more commercially in order to gain a competitive advantage, the aim being to successfully promote their brand and to actively drive sales. The independent feedback I have received from retailers who attended the workshops has been very positive indeed.

Indi Card Update

The Indi card has been developed in association with local traders; it offers the card holder a range of benefits such as money-off and free goods, to encourage shoppers to spend their money in their local towns.

Working in Partnership with the Braintree & Witham Times, the most attractive 3 to 4 Indi card offers are featured in the newspaper each week; this has proved to be a successful method of advertising the scheme and the retailer offers. All other offers are featured on the Council website and e-mailed to Indi card holders (where email addresses are available).

The benefits to the businesses taking part are clear, free advertising in local newspapers, on the Council website and increased footfall. Businesses in Braintree, Witham and Halstead have provided very positive feedback on the effectiveness of the scheme in attracting new customers and they are keen for the scheme to continue. In the coming months we will look to build the schemes offering and distribute more Indi cards to shoppers.

To date over 7,000 cards have been issued to shoppers, with the aim of engaging a further 3,000 shoppers by the end of the financial year. One thousand cards were distributed at the recent Braintree Christmas market on the 1st December and we also plan to use the Witham Dickensian event on the 8th December to distribute more cards.

In the new year we have plans to give the Indi card another push to help traders through the quieter months of January and February.

Christmas Event

The Braintree Christmas Market run by the Market Square Group (on behalf of the Council) was held on the 9th and 10th November when over 30 stalls with crafts, food and entertainment came to Braintree High Street. The Council also provided 10 stalls for new businesses to trade from for the two day period. The event was well received and increased footfall in the High Street was reported by traders including Townrows and Eatons Coffee shop.

The Braintree Christmas Lights switch on was held on the 17th November at the junction of Bank Street and High Street. Two local schools told the story of Christmas and sung carols to celebrate, and entertainment including an Ice Queen, Santa Claus, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. The Christmas tree was sponsored by Macks Barbers & Syoki Jewellery and the electricity is being supplied by George Yard Shopping Centre.

These events were delivered by the Council following the consultation with businesses earlier in the year on how to spend the monies previously allocated to Braintree Town Centre and the Business Improvement District.

Shop Local At Christmas Campaign

The shop local at Christmas Campaign entitled 'All you want for Christmas on your doorstep' launched on the 16th November with bus stop and refuse vehicle adverts. This is supported by a trial Christmas gift guide in Braintree and Halstead.

Unfortunately we received no response from partners or businesses in Witham so could not progress a guide for this town, however the shop local campaign advertising will run across all three towns.

The initiative is designed to help tempt shoppers back to their local high street which in turn will improve footfall, increase customer confidence and boost retail sales.

Loving Your High Street Awards 2013

The current awards scheme 'Loving Your High Street' has reached its third and final year and the momentum has continued to build with 2,500 votes received the first year and over 10,000 votes received last year.

The 2013 awards are due to be launched on the 1st December 2012 and we hope to encourage more businesses and generate a feel good factor for our 3 towns encouraging more people to vote for and visit their favorite places.

To link into our Mary Portas success we have introduced a further category entitled 'Customer Service Excellence Award' designed to recognise and honour the individual who has demonstrated outstanding customer service and gone that extra mile.

Information packs will be distributed to businesses over the next two weeks, the pack includes: Covering letter, poster, window sticker, nomination form, terms and conditions, business cards.

Braintree District Business Group

I attended the meeting on the 5th November, it was well attended and a number of new businesses were present which is very encouraging.

The Business Group has lobbied for transport improvements and this was reported at the group meeting, as you will know this is also one of this Council's priorities.

Presentations were made by Pat Smith, of UK Trade & Industry with the aim of increasing awareness of exporting. Alison Jennings outlined "How to Do Business with John Lewis" following on from her attendance at a conference at Tendring DC. Witham Industrial Watch also provided an update on their Business Event which was sponsored by BDC.

Ignite Launch

Ignite – formally Business Development Services (BDS) and Braintree Enterprise Acorn Units (BEAU) held their launch on Thursday 8th November at the Town Hall. The event was well attended by over 80 invited guests including local businesses, clients, and Councillors, with the Vice Chairman of BDC, Cllr. Wendy Scattergood, giving the welcome speech. An additional event was held in the evening in the Corner House for all BDS and BEAU clients.

East of England Local Government Association

On Friday 23rd November 2012 I attended the meeting of the association in Cambridge as substitute for our leader Cllr Graham Butland.

Items on the agenda included:-

- Releasing Growth in the East of England
- Local Government Pay Negotiations
- Energy Procurement Efficiency
- Skills for the future and the role of Councils

Our priorities match very well with the aspirations of the Association, the meeting was very useful in order to share opinions and direction on the above items with other authorities, an open discussion took place on these topics and on many others. As "Releasing Growth in the East of England" was considered a key priority to all, it was agreed that the association should arrange an event in Parliament to which all the Councils would invite their MPs in order to collectively put forward proposals on key infrastructure projects which will be a catalyst to releasing growth in the East of England, we intend to play our full part in such an event.

Further information on the contents of this report can be obtained by contacting Cllr Chris Siddall.

Councillor Chris Siddall

Cabinet Member – Prosperity and Growth

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| LIST OF PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD SINCE LAST COUNCIL MEETING | | Agenda No: 9(iv) |
| Corporate Priority: Not applicable Report presented by: Not applicable Report prepared by: Alastair Peace – Member Services Manager | | |
| Background Papers: Published Minutes of the meetings listed within the report below. | | Public Report |
| Options: Report for noting | | Key Decision: No |
| Executive Summary: Since the last Council meeting held on 8 th October 2012, the following minutes have been published for the meetings held in public session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Council – 8th October 2012 (2) Planning Committee – 9th October 2012 (3) Planning Committee – 23rd October 2012 (4) Local Development Framework Sub-Committee - 24th October 2012 (5) Cabinet – 29th October 2012 (6) Planning Committee – 6th November 2012 (7) Local Development Framework Sub-Committee – 7th November 2012 (8) Planning Committee – 20th November 2012 (copy to follow) (9) Licensing Committee – 21st November 2012 (10) Braintree District Local Highways Panel – 22nd November 2012 (copy to follow) (11) Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 28th November 2012 (copy to follow) (12) Cabinet – 3rd December 2012 (copy to follow) | | |
| Decision: Members are invited to note the minutes published. | | |
| Purpose of Decision: Not applicable | | |
| Officer Contact: | Alastair Peace | |
| Designation: | Member Services Manager | |
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