

CABINET MEETING
Monday 8th April 2013

PUBLIC APPENDICES

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Braintree
District Council

Final Draft V0.12

Annual Plan 2013/14

Welcome to Braintree District Council's Plan for 2013/14

We all face growing financial pressures year on year and over the next four years we anticipate that our government funding will reduce by over 30%. Therefore our challenge lies in delivering the best services for our customers whilst at the same time providing value for money for all of our council taxpayers, making cost savings where possible.

We are confident that we can achieve this. We have delivered £5 million of savings over the last three years and during this year alone we will deliver £1.695 million worth of savings. We will continue to deliver over 100 local services every day for just £3.10 per household per week without increasing taxes in our district. In fact, this year, we have reduced our council tax by 1 per cent and propose to freeze it at this level for the next two years.

We recognise that local residents and businesses are also feeling the financial pressure. During these challenging times, we must support our communities and boost our local economy. Over the next year we will continue to invest in our three town centres with a package of measures to increase trade and footfall. We will work with the current business sector across the district, deliver new start-up units and encourage new businesses into the area. We are supporting young people with apprenticeships and new training opportunities. We will also be making a £1.25 million investment in new affordable homes. At same time we will continue to keep our district clean and green, whilst investing in health improvements, leisure and play areas.

Our Corporate Strategy was developed following an in depth consultation with our residents and agreed in 2012. It sets out the key priorities and direction for the Council and the district over the next four years. As we now move into the second year of this four year strategy, this 2013/14 annual plan details our achievements so far and sets out our key projects to deliver these priorities and how we will measure success in the forthcoming year.

These priorities are under five areas which ensure that we remain focused on achieving our goals; Place, People, Prosperity, Performance and Partnership.

Councillor Graham Butland
Leader of Braintree District Council

Nicola Beach
Chief Executive

PLACE

Our Priorities are to:

Keep our District clean and tidy
Protect our environment
Provide green space for everyone to enjoy

In 2012/13 we have:

Rolled out our weekly food waste collection to another 16,400 properties, giving most people in the district the ability to recycle their food waste.

Reduced car associated litter by up to 55% in targeted areas, through anti-litter campaigns and reduced dog mess by up to 98% in targeted areas, through our anti-dog fouling campaign

Recycled over 56% of household waste in the district.

Tackled fuel poverty by:

- Encouraging 270 properties to sign up to the 'Heat Seekers' scheme;
- Awarding 42 grant insulation schemes;
- Promoting oil clubs.

Generated over £10,000 income to the Council by installing solar panels on the roof of Causeway House.

Invested £94k in improving the Halstead River walk pathway, providing 900 metres of new paths connecting the pathway to schools and the town centre.

In 2013/14 we will:

- Maintain cleanliness standards across the District, especially in the town centres by
 - Continuing a 7 day cleaning programme in the town centres, including the use of barrow beats to litter pick, street washing and mechanical sweeping;
 - Enforcing non-compliant premises who fail to keep their frontage clean;
 - Continue to encourage the 'See it, Report it' initiative to take action against litter bugs.
- Work with Essex Energy Partnership and contractors to develop a Green Deal Scheme, supporting homeowners to reduce the energy they use.
- Support our customers to increase recycling levels in the District to 60%, getting the best value out of our services.
- Double the number of Trade Waste customers who receive a plastic, cardboard and paper recycling service.
- Plant more mature trees in our parks and open spaces to improve their appearance and attractiveness, provide shading around play areas and help to conserve and protect the environment within our District.
- Complete works and establish Hoppit Mead as a local nature reserve.

PEOPLE

Our Priorities are to:

Support vulnerable people in our community
Promote safe and healthy living
Encourage flourishing communities

In 2012/13 we have:

Invested an additional £200k in the disabled facilities grants programme to increase our support to vulnerable people to enable them to stay in their own homes. Over 60 grants have been awarded and the waiting list has been reduced by over 30%.

Supported 58,000 passenger journeys on our community transport scheme benefitting the vulnerable and isolated people in our District.

Working with partners, delivered a reduction in 1.8% in crime across the district and 13.6% in anti-social behaviour.

Improved play facilities for young people through £409k investment including; a new skate park in Silver End, installing play equipment in Witham Town Park and refurbishing three other play areas in the District at Bramble Road in Witham, Fisher Field in Braintree and Riverside in Braintree.

Completed the planning stage of the Witham Leisure centre, securing the permission and partners to build a new centre, meeting the needs of Witham.

Supported and monitored the 9 projects with a total value of £131,000 selected for Mi Community funding to ensure successful implementation and community benefits.

Supported the 'Sparks will fly' cultural celebration events across the district for the Olympic and Paralympic games within Essex.

In 2013/14 we will:

Start on site to build the new £9.5 million Witham Leisure Centre, providing up to date leisure facilities for residents in and around the Witham area.

Working in partnership with our leisure provider (Fusion Lifestyle) we will invest nearly £1million to improve our existing facilities at Halstead Leisure Centre, Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree Swimming Centre.

Establish a Health and Wellbeing Panel, working with others to identify priorities and take action to improve the health outcomes for all residents of the District.

Progress the Witham Neighbourhood Budget Pilot by working with partner agencies and the Witham community to raise young people's level of attainment and aspiration through new initiatives and improved ways of working.

Work with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Essex County Council and other partners to pilot new ways to tackle domestic abuse across the District.

Build stronger communities through engaging with community groups, the voluntary sector and parish and town councils, advocating community use and management of community assets, and providing support through the Rural Community Council for Essex for community and neighbourhood plans.

Refurbish the play areas at Templars in Witham and Panners Bridge in Gt Notley to ensure our young people continue to have access to fun and safe places to play.

Create a sustainable partnership with Braintree District Museum Trust Ltd. to preserve, interpret and promote the unique Archive and Museum collections and the District's heritage for the public benefit.

PROSPERITY

Our Priorities are to:

Increase job prospects and support business
 Promote and improve our town centres
 Secure appropriate infrastructure and housing growth

In 2012/13 we:

Secured £86,500 from the Portas Pilot funding which is being used to support and encourage retailers in the Braintree Town Centre.

Started to share learning from the Portas Pilot with Witham and Halstead Town Teams and have commissioned work to develop improvement plans for each of the town centres, seeking to increase footfall and improve commercial vitality.

Launched the indi card scheme, which provides offers and discounts to shoppers across the District.

Let Mayland House in Witham creating inward investment of up to 600 jobs in the district.

Appointed 12 modern apprenticeships to work in the District Council.

Spring cleaned all of our town centres, and refreshed street furniture.

Provided 70 new affordable homes in the District.

Launched the empty home rescue scheme to bring 10 empty homes back into use in the District as affordable housing.

The '10p after 3pm' car parking promotion brought an additional 44,423 cars into the Council owned car parks in Braintree & Witham town centres, increasing footfall in our towns.

In 2013/14 we will:

Reduce congestion and improve access to Braintree town centre through improvements to the South Street, Fairfield Road junction.

Support the Town teams to improve our town centres in Braintree, Halstead and Witham.

Start on the expansion of the IGNITE Enterprise Centre at Springwood Drive Braintree to provide 12 new start-up units delivering new training facilities and new jobs in the District.

Encourage new businesses into the district and support our local businesses by reviewing our business rate discounts scheme.

Work with IGNITE to create 50 new businesses and deliver new jobs into the district.

Generate opportunities for young people in the district not in education, employment or training, through the creation and development of apprentice and pre-apprenticeship schemes.

Work in partnership with Housing Associations to begin construction on 58 new homes and work with homeowners to bring empty homes back into use across the district.

Develop a long term strategy to support economic growth and prosperity across the district.

Adopt District Site Allocations to enable future development which will meet district needs (for housing, employment, retail etc.) and support growth.

PERFORMANCE

Our Priorities are to:

Provide value for money
Deliver excellent customer service
Improve access to our services for all

In 2012/13 we:

Delivered a 1% Council Tax reduction for 2013/14 by focusing our resource on our customers' priorities and ensuring that we get the best value for money from our services.

Improved resilience and performance and reduced costs by reviewing how we deliver services.

Prepared for government changes to Benefits, Council Tax & Business Rates in the Local Government Finance Act 2012 to ensure that systems are in place to support people affected by the changes.

Awarded contracts for Leisure Services and ICT to deliver customer-focused and accessible services and saving over £1.1 million per year on the cost of these services.

Improve the regulatory service provided to businesses by working together with Trading Standards and other partners to reduce red tape, avoid duplication of inspections and ensure that compliant business is encouraged and supported.

Demonstrated our commitment to customer service by achieving the Customer Service Excellence Standard for three of our services.

In 2013/14 we will:

Aim to maintain a 0% Council Tax increase in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Deliver a balanced budget over the next four years by continuing to review how we deliver and commission services and focussing our resources on what is important to our customers.

Use a range of new technology to improve the way we deliver services and to make our services easier to access for our customers.

Achieve the Customer excellence service standard for all front line services, demonstrating our commitment to our customers.

Maintain high levels of customer satisfaction, seeking feedback from our customers to identify where we can improve services.

PARTNERSHIP

The majority of our services and improvements are provided in partnership with others, whether it is with community groups, voluntary organisations, public sector or private sector organisations.

Over the next twelve months, some of our key priorities will be delivered in partnership, including:

Continue to lobby for A120 improvements and a Braintree rail loop, working with Essex County Council, other Essex local authorities and the Haven Gateway Partnership and the Essex, Kent and Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership.

Through the Joint Locality Board, work in partnership with Essex County Council (and other partners) to progress the following key issues:

- Highways improvements through the Highways Panel;
- Economic growth and major infrastructure – A120, rail loop and faster broadband;
- Health – establish a Health and Wellbeing Panel;
- Education – improve educational attainment and aspiration in the district.

Support parish and town councils to deliver better outcomes for their residents through close working with the Rural Community Council for Essex.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Description	Actual	Target	
	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014
Place			
The percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	10%	9%	8%
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	56%	58%	60%
The percentage of accessible non-hazardous fly tips on public land cleared within 24 hours of being reported	100%	100%	100%
Public satisfaction with parks and open spaces	84%*	85%	86%
People			
<i>In addition to the projects and actions described in this annual plan we also measure these indicators which focus on some of our broader priorities</i>			
Number of visitors to our leisure facilities from under-represented groups	n/a	n/a	Establish Baseline
Number of passenger journeys on the Community Transport Scheme	57,000	58,000	59,740
Number of Mi Communities projects successfully completed	n/a	100%^	100%
Number of prosecutions against “rogue trading”	n/a	10^	10
Prosperity			
Number of empty homes in the district returned to use	n/a	55^	55
Number of affordable homes delivered	67	50	58
Number of young people assisted into education, employment or training through council and partnership schemes	n/a	75^	75
Percentage of empty shops in the district	9%	8%	8%

Number of new business start ups in the district	n/a	120 [^]	120
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Description	Actual	Target	
	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014
Performance			
Percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact within the Customer Service Centre	85%	85%	85%
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	17.8days	18days	18 days
Time taken to process housing benefit claim changes	5 days	6 days	6 days
Processing of minor planning applications within 8 weeks	77%	77%	72%
Percentage of complaints responded to within target	88%	90%	90%
Overall customer satisfaction with the way Braintree District Council runs things	88%*	89%	89%
Percentage of residents who agree that Braintree District Council provides value for money	66%*	67%	67%
Collection rate for			
• council tax	98.45%	98.5%	98%
• business rates	98.69%	98.5%	98.5%

*Actual totals from last customer survey

**The way this target is measured was changed in 2011-12

[^] These are new key indicators for 2012-13 to reflect our Corporate Priorities. There is not comparable information for previous years.

^{^^}Including Halstead Town Council Car Parks

COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

We always welcome comments, suggestions and feedback (critical or otherwise) on our plans and improvements and in the way that we write our documents and communicate them.

- You can e-mail our Customer Service Centre at csc@braintree.gov.uk.
- You can drop written comments off at one of our main offices:
Braintree – Causeway House, Halstead Library, Witham Library
- You can telephone our Customer Service Centre on 01376 552525.
- You can speak to your local Councillor who will be able to pass your comments back if you wish. Details of how to contact your local Councillor can be found on our website. www.braintree.gov.uk

Appendix A

Review of Payments to Parish & Town Councils

Executive Summary

Braintree District Council commissioned the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to carry out a review of payments made to Parish and Town Councils. The purpose of the review was to make recommendations for changes to the system of funding to ensure the payments are sustainable, equitable and support the delivery of the priorities for the area / district.

The five principles in the Guidance Note on Financial Arrangements for Parish and Town (DCLG) which should govern all financial arrangements between principal authorities (such as Braintree District Council) and Parish and Town Councils have been used to inform the assessment of the current position and options for the future:

- **Fairness in the provision of services (and access to them)** - by the principal authority between different parts of their area;
- **Simplicity** - to keep administrative costs of operation to a minimum;
- **Transparency** - to help understanding;
- **Democratic control and accountability** - to let local councils support additional services with additional expenditure while ensuring accountability to all those responsible for funding. This means distinguishing between funding by principal authorities (for a service carried out by a local council) and funding raised by local councils themselves (e.g. using their precepting powers); and
- **Finance following function** - where provision of a service is devolved or transferred from a principal authority to a local council, funding is also transferred, with the amount involved being agreed by the principal authority and the Parish or Town Council.

This assignment has been carried out against the background of unprecedented changes to the funding of local government. The quantum of funding available to local authorities has been substantially cut over the period of the last spending review. SR10 shows DCLG Local Government funding falling from £29bn in 2010/11 to £23.3bn in 2014/14 or almost 20% in cash terms. The reductions in government funding have seen Braintree reduce its budget from £17.97m in 2010/11 to £15.634m in 2012/13, with the current Parish Support Grant (PSG) staying static at £215k. In addition, there is a new era in the way local government is funded from 2013/14 which will continue to have a marked impact on the level and nature of the funding available to local authorities i.e. Business Rates Retention and Localised Council Tax Support. In terms of Localised Council Tax Support we understand that Braintree is intending to pass on funding to compensate Parishes for reductions in the council tax base which would otherwise require an increase in the council tax for a parish to raise the same required funding. It may well be that this funding could be rolled up into a package of funding for Parishes going forward which might include funding for concurrent services.

The impact of the Localism Act 2011 and the New Home Bonus (NHB) has also been considered in the context of the review.

The Current Arrangements

The current Parish Support Grant (PSG) has operated since 1994. This scheme aimed to reimburse (subject to percentage limits and overall caps) Parish and Town Councils for expenditure on a range of 15 concurrent functions. In 2004, the link with actual expenditure was dropped and a new baseline was drawn based on the grant for the previous year, subject to some minor adjustments. These figures have then been uplifted for increased costs as funds were available and for 2012/13 the grants total approximately £215k.

Our review concluded that the current PSG does not meet the present needs of the District Council as:

- It does not fully deal with the issues of double taxation or finance following function as only a third of concurrent functions costs in Parishes are met;
- There is no effective accountability to the District for the funds they provide; and
- The activities funded are not clearly linked to the District's priorities.

As a result we believe that there need to be revised arrangements for funding concurrent functions carried out by Town and Parish Councils.

The current Agency arrangements (operating since 1999) cover a range of services that are the responsibility of the District but are carried out by Parishes under what is in effect a simple Service Level Agreement (SLA). Agency payments amounted to approximately £69k for 2012/13.

Our review concluded that the current Agency agreement process appears to meet the present needs of the both the Parishes and District Council as:

- Parishes can opt into or out of the scheme as they wish;
- It involves Parishes in keeping their own areas clean; and
- Recognises that certain activities are better dealt with by the District as they have the equipment to deal with hazardous waste, as may be found in fly tipping.

Our review concluded that the arrangement for Agency work is well established; all parties understand it and the arrangement appears to work well. We can see no reason to change it.

For Braintree, the NHB represents a significant amount i.e. approximately £981k (for 2012/13) and slightly more than half of this (for the additional NHB for 2013/14, the only period for which records were readily available) is "earned" in the Parished areas.

One of the key benefits of NHB is that local authorities are able to decide how to use the funding in line with local community wishes.

Our review concluded that it may be appropriate to include an element of NHB in Parish funding because:

- Parishes may be able to bring some influence to bear on the growth in new home and the letting of existing ones; and
- Additional homes will have an impact on the services that Parishes provide.

However, any inclusion of NHB funding will need to take account of the time limited nature of the grant and of the impact the grant is having on the District's allocation of formula grant, especially in the light of information now available from the recent grant settlement.

Our review was informed by the experience of a range of other authorities, (directly through emails and telephone calls and indirectly through guidance such as the NALC Guide to Managing Double Taxation). It is clear from this research that there is a wide range of differing schemes used by authorities.

Options for Future Parish Funding Arrangements

Special Expenses - In order for expenses incurred in performing any function of Braintree District Council to be special expenses, the function must be carried out by the District in only part of its area, and the same function must be carried out in another part of the District by one or more Parish Councils. Therefore the detailed identification of concurrent functions is essential for using the special expenses provision. Special expenses aim to ensure finance following function and address double taxation.

Special expenses would present a significant challenge to Braintree in view of the 54 Parish and Town Councils and a variety of different patterns of service provision together with the unparished area of Braintree and Bocking. This complicated process would likely involve estimates and assumptions which would begin to cast doubt on the accuracy of the figures produced. Using an illustrative example of a single special expenses area for Braintree and Bocking and a rough estimate of District Council expenditure there of £563k, the effect on the 2012/13 District Council tax of £162.81 (across the whole District) would be an increase in the unparished area to £186.07 and a decrease in the parished areas to £153.89 (to which the Parish's own precept would need to be added).

Our assessment of the impact of special expenses on the District Council and Parish and Town Councils is shown in the table below:

	Impact on the District Council	Impact on the Parish and Town Councils
Special expenses for each area (parished and unparished)	<p>Most closely matches finance with function.</p> <p>Requires extensive record keeping to ensure that the costs needed to underpin special expenses can be captured.</p> <p>Hard to convince taxpayers that the approach is fair and accurate because of the assumptions and apportionments involved.</p> <p>More expensive to manage as a result of varying tax levels for each area with special expenses.</p> <p>Little control by District of services provided by the Parishes or opportunity to encourage consistency with District priorities.</p> <p>Elimination of the PSG</p>	<p>Reduces but does not eliminate double taxation.</p> <p>Hard to convince taxpayers that the approach is fair and accurate because of the assumptions and apportionments involved.</p> <p>More freedom for the Parishes to determine service levels as they raise the funds for them.</p> <p>Parish precept bears more of the cost of locally provided concurrent functions.</p> <p>In the transition period, will require a big increase in the Parish precept which may trigger referendums.</p> <p>However, the increase is counterbalanced in overall</p>

	<p>reduces District spend overall and provides additional headroom by comparison with spending cap.</p> <p>Enhances democratic control and accountability.</p>	<p>terms for the taxpayer by a reduction in the District's Council Tax.</p>
Special expenses only for the unparished area	<p>Because all the Parishes are grouped, this cannot match finance with functions so well.</p> <p>Less onerous record keeping to ensure that the costs needed to underpin special expenses can be captured.</p> <p>Hard to convince taxpayers that the approach is fair and accurate because of the assumptions and apportionments involved.</p> <p>Not as expensive to manage as there are special expenses in only one area.</p> <p>Little control by District of services provided by the Parishes or opportunity to encourage consistency with district priorities.</p> <p>Elimination of the PSG reduces District spend overall and provides additional headroom by comparison with spending cap</p> <p>Enhances democratic control and accountability</p>	<p>As all Parishes are treated in the same way this does not minimise double taxation as well as the method above.</p> <p>Grouping all the Parishes makes it even harder to convince taxpayers that the approach is fair and accurate because of the assumptions and apportionments involved.</p> <p>More freedom for the parishes to determine service levels as they raise the funds through their precept.</p> <p>Parish precept bears more of the cost of locally provided concurrent functions.</p> <p>In the transition period, will require a big increase in the Parish precept which may trigger referendums.</p> <p>However, the increase is counterbalanced in overall terms for the taxpayer by a reduction in the District's Council Tax.</p>

Grant Payments – a fully funded grant payment scheme has the ability to ensure finance follows function and avoid double taxation. However, affordability would be a significant issue. As a result in the options considered we have assumed that grants remain within the envelope of the current PSG, but the approaches will be capable of being scaled up or down to match funding available.

To re-establish the purpose of the grant we recommend that any future grant is referred to as the '**Concurrent Functions Grant**' and has stronger accountability arrangements than at present.

We have put forward two options both based on the number of dwellings (which could be seen to break the link with spend completely). Both options have been modelled within the current budget envelope of £215,497.

- **Grant Option 1** - Base Grant of £1,000 per Parish and then a variable element of £3.71 per dwelling; and
- **Grant Option 2** - Bandings with each level having a factor to favour smaller Parishes.

Grant Option 1 the fixed and variable option favours both the very smallest parishes

and the larger Towns and Parishes. This is because the very smallest Parishes received grants below £1,000 under the PSG arrangement. Also the reducing percentage grants for the largest meant that they received less under the PSG arrangement. A key factor will be impact of any changes on the precept; thirty seven out of the fifty four Parishes the difference is within plus or minus 5%. The biggest increase in precept required is 8% while the decreases are bigger for the smaller Parishes.

Grant Option 2 uses a single value of grant per dwelling but then applies a factor according to the number of properties in the Parish or Town Council area. To remove anomalies where moving to a higher band with a lower factor can lead to a lower aggregate grant, we have used bandings in a similar way to HMRC with income tax, so that a Parish with 600 properties would have 500 at the 100% factor and 100 at the 90% factor. The grant per dwelling can be manipulated to give a total that fits within available funding. Overall, Grant Option 2 does not protect the smallest Parishes in quite the same way as having the fixed and variable amounts in Grant Option 1, but it has a more even distribution of winners and losers (23 gain and 33 lose), within a tighter spread. The highest increase required in the Parish precept is 6.4% but only eight of the changes are more than plus or minus 5%.

Grant Options 1 and 2 are capable of being modelled for different fixed grant elements or bandings and factors, all within the current financial envelope if variations on these options are required.

Our assessment of the impact of Grant Options 1 and 2 on the District Council and Parish and Town Councils is shown in the table below:

	Impact on the District Council	Impact on the Parish and Town Councils
Grant Option 1 - Base Grant of £1,000 per parish and then a variable element of £3.69 per dwelling	Matches contribution from the District to the perceived capacity of the Parish rather than actual need. But does not fully fund concurrent services so does not deal with the issue effectively. Provided funding is within the existing envelope this is neutral in terms of the District's expenditure and capping limits etc. Very simple in terms of administration.	Reduces double taxation but does not eliminate it, and does not achieve this consistently between Parishes. Does not meet the full cost of concurrent functions but does not limit the freedom of Parishes to determine service levels provided they raise additional funds for them. Provides clarity in what is received and how it is calculated.
Grant Option 2 - Bandings with each level having a factor to favour smaller parishes	All as above.	All as above.

The second set of grant options seek to relate grant payments to what functions are carried out and what these cost. An option is to maintain the status quo and retain grant payments on the basis of the 2004/5 assessment of spend (**Grant Option 3**). This could be modelled within the current financial envelope. We undertook a limited sample analysis of Parish Council current expenditure to assess whether this option

was a worthwhile basis or not. Our analysis indicates that the outdated figures may not be appropriate going forward.

Another option would be to return to the approach of the Parish Support Grant with annual returns of expenditure and calculations of grant based on that (**Grant Option 4**). This would provide a fairly precise answer, though the bandings and caps use previously tend to negate that accuracy or the effectiveness in dealing with the issue of double taxation. The approach is also an administrative burden for both the District as well as the Parishes.

An alternative may be to recalibrate the Concurrent Functions Grant on a periodic basis, say every five or six years (**Grant Option 5**). Again this data could be modelled to allocate grants within the current financial envelope. The recalibration would be based on the average spend over two or three years (to balance out the “lumpiness” of spend at the smaller Parishes). Having re-established the base spend position, Grants could then be allocated on the basis of variable element, bandings or fixed/ variable elements as shown below:

Grant Option 5a - The first option would be the simplest, with the Grant based entirely on a prorating of actual spend to match the grant available. In essence this would mean that each Parish or Town Council’s share of the grant would be the same as its share of overall expenditure on concurrent functions.

Grant Option 5b - The second would enable expenditure to be reimbursed on the basis of a series of bands depending upon the level of expenditure. This would have higher levels of reimbursements for smaller levels of spend. It would use the bands in the same way at Grant Option 2 above, but this time based on the levels of spend. However, this would also then need to be scaled back so that the grant matched the funding available.

Grant Option 5c – The third option would enable Grant to be calculated on the basis of a fixed sum, e.g. £1,000, and then a variable amount prorated in the same way as Grant Option 5a above.

It is clear that Grant Option 5a most closely matched grant to spend, albeit within the limits of the grant funding available. However, it could also be argued that it rewards high spending Parishes, perhaps providing higher levels of service than others. Grant Option 5b mitigates the impact of high spending by applying bandings that reduce the amount of grant that can be earned for higher levels of spending. As such it goes some way to protecting smaller Parishes to the disadvantage of ones with higher levels of spending. Grant Option 5c goes furthest in protecting smaller parishes and reflects the diseconomies of small scale to a much greater extent. The fixed element of the grant reduces the variable element that is available so again it works to the disadvantage of parishes with higher levels of spending.

Grant Options 5b and 5c do not have such direct linkage with actual spend, but would have the advantage of minimising administrative effort and provide clarity over future funding

Grant Options 5b and 5c are capable of refinement, and this may be necessary following discussions with Parishes. The fixed element, the bandings and the factors could easily be flexed. Indeed it would be possible to combine all of those if that was considered to offer better balance. If the level of spend, and consequently grant, by some Parishes is still considered to give them an unfair proportion of the available grant a cap could also be introduced, perhaps based on a limit per Band D property. However, a cap may only be necessary where the variable element of the Grant is considered material.

Our assessment of the impact of Grant Options 3, 4, 5a, 5b and 5c on the District Council and Parish and Town Councils is shown in the table below:

	Impact on the District Council	Impact on the Parish and Town Councils
Grant Option 3 - Retain the status quo on grant payments	Simple approach in terms of administrative work for both District and Parishes. But does not fully fund concurrent services so does not deal with the issues of fairness or double taxation effectively.	Reduces double taxation but does not eliminate it, and does not achieve this consistently between Parishes. Does not meet the full cost of concurrent functions but does not limit the freedom of Parishes to determine service levels provided they raise additional funds for them. Provides clarity in what is received and how it is calculated.
Grant Option 4 - Re-establish a clear link between grant spend every year	Requires much more administrative work for both District and Parishes. But does not fully fund concurrent services so does not deal with the issues of fairness or double taxation effectively.	All as above.
Grant Options 5a, 5b and 5c - Recalibrate grant to spend every five or six years. Grant on spend but subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Variable elements only b. Bandings c. Fixed and variable elements 	Requires moderate level of administrative work for both District and Parishes. Administrative work only required on a periodic basis But does not fully fund concurrent services so does not deal with the issues of fairness or double taxation effectively.	All as above.

Changes in Grant Payments - We considered how changes in grant can reflect the District's own financial position and also encourage consistency with the District's priorities. We considered two options:

- Linking the quantum of Concurrent Services Grant to the District's Budget Requirement; and
- Supplementing this with a contribution from the New Homes Bonus.

The District Council's ability to contribute towards the cost of concurrent services carried out by Parishes maybe severely hampered by the reductions in Government

funding. There is no logic for the contribution towards concurrent services to be immune from the funding pressures that the District Council is facing. Equally it would be helpful if there was a formula that enabled Parishes also to benefit from improvements in the District's Budget Requirement. It would also assist the District and the Parishes if there was an established formula for calculating the contribution to Parishes, that was fair and sustainable and avoided unnecessary annual debate on the issue.

To achieve this we suggest that the envelope for any new Concurrent Services Grant is linked to the "Braintree Budget", i.e. Braintree's Cost of Services plus financing costs and transfer to and from balances and reserves. However, we would be happy to discuss an alternative figure that may better reflect the changing resources available to Braintree District Council. To give Parishes certainty over their forthcoming grant when setting their precept we would suggest that the impact of any change in funding is delayed a year, i.e. the change for the 2014/5 Concurrent Services Grant would be based on the change in the 'Braintree Budget' between 2011/12 and 2012/13.

We suggest that a pot of 5% of the NHB earned is made available to those Parishes where there has been growth in housing during the year. Based on the additional NHB earned for payment from 2013/14 34 Parishes had growth. Rather than penalise those Parishes where there has been a decrease in housing, we suggest that the 5% is allocated pro-rata to the increases but ignoring the decreases. This works out at £56.03 per additional or occupied dwelling and it is suggested that this is paid to the Parish for the remainder of the period of NHB. However, there are concerns about the net additional funding available from the NHB and the District may need to give further consideration to the availability of funding from this source following the recent grant settlement before providing additional support to Parishes.

Accountability for Grant Payments – to ensure accountability of the funds spent we consider it important to re-establish the elements that are required for the grant funding of Parishes for the provision of concurrent functions:

- Clearly setting out what the funds are provided for and what they may be spent on, not administration costs – unlike the current notification form which says little more than the amount of money concerned.
- Reporting at the end of the year to explain what has been achieved with the funding – but in more detail than the current arrangements for Agency services.
- Establishing the right to monitor/ inspect what is provided with the grant funds to ensure it is consistent with such services elsewhere.

Some of these arrangements could be set out in a Town/ Parish and District Concurrent Functions Grant Agreement or Parish Charter. We see an annual report as a key element of this process in giving the District assurance that its resources have been used effectively.

Transfer of additional functions - It may be a helpful use for NHB funding to be used to set up a separate pot to finance the capital costs and dowry. The transfer of additional functions must be supported by a business case which covers the financial and non-financial benefits, risks and other issues to consider before a decision is made to transfer the functions(s).

Agency Agreements - Agency agreements are already in place for a number of functions and we have suggested previously that they should continue. However, such an approach could also be adopted for concurrent functions and we are aware of at least one authority considering this approach. However, based on the

information received we have concluded that there are more effective, and more cost effective, ways of dealing with concurrent services at Braintree.

Withdrawal of Support to Parishes - An option for Braintree would be to cease to support concurrent functions in Parishes. The support could be phased out over a number of years. This option however, would result in double taxation based on the premise that although the current support does not fully eliminate double taxation it does reduce its effect.

Conclusion and Recommendation – The guidance provides lots of options for the District in terms of future funding arrangements and the fact that this is not prescriptive means that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Within the current Grant system, funding meets only a small proportion of the Parish expenditure on concurrent functions. This mirrors other districts and, in the current economic climate with the pressure on the District’s resources, is unlikely to change significantly. Factoring in the current lack of accountability, it could be argued that the link between the grant and the concurrent functions has been broken.

In theory, the most effective way to achieve the principles would be to introduce a scheme for special expenses. This would be administratively complex (with, in theory, up to 55 separate sets of special expenses) and make substantial changes to council tax arrangements in unparished areas. As such this may not be an acceptable practical option. Nor is likely to be an option that can clearly demonstrate accuracy and fairness in the allocation of costs.

In terms of Agency Agreements, we have concluded that this works well for the sub-contracted District functions, though subsequent discussions indicate that this may benefit from some tidying up as to who does what on, say, litter picking within individual parishes. However, we concluded that Agency Agreements would be too complicated as a basis for funding up to 15 concurrent functions for each of the 54 Parish and Town Councils.

This leaves us with the familiar framework of a Grants system. There are various sub-options but none deal effectively with the DCLG principles, so it is a case of choosing the one that strikes the best balance between finance following function, the avoidance of double taxation, administrative efficiency and not least acceptability to Parishes. **In our view, the best balance is achieved by the Concurrent Functions Grant Option 5c where the allocation of grant is recalibrated every five years or so. Changes between years could be based on movement in the “Braintree Budget” to aid sustainability.**

Taken together, this package of measures provides the outcomes required of this assignment, i.e. that funding paid to Parish and Town Councils should be:

- Sustainable – by working within the current financial envelope for Parish support but then linking changes to increases or decreases in the Braintree Budget;
- Equitable – by being based on an updated assessment of what Parishes actually now spend on concurrent functions; and
- Support the delivery of the priorities for the area/ district – by providing rewards from the New Homes Bonus to encourage growth in homes.

Appendix B



Our Ref: GB/JPDB
Your Ref:
From: Councillor Graham Butland
Tel. No.: (01376) 551414
Ext.: 2002
E-Mail: cllr.gbutland@braintree.gov.uk
Date: 4th February 2013

Causeway House
Braintree
Essex
CM7 9HB

Tel: 01376 552525
Minicom: 01376 557766
Fax: 01376 552626
www.braintree.gov.uk

To: All Parish and Town Councils, Braintree District

Dear Chairman

Proposals for the future payments to Parish and Town Councils

Thank you to those who attended the Town and Parish Summit on the 31st January 2013, I hope you found it informative. At the Summit, I presented details of the proposal for a new payments scheme to Town and Parish Councils which will, subject to agreement by local councils, replace the current parish support scheme. We have called this new scheme the Localism Fund and in order for your council to consider this proposal fully, I set out below the key aspects of the new scheme.

As I outlined at the Summit, the review of payments to town and parish councils that I commissioned CIPFA to carry out, has shown the possible complexity of making changes and I do not want us to go down the route of an overly complex scheme that is highly costly to administer for both the District Council and parishes. A copy of the CIPFA report has been shared with all town and parish councils. Therefore, in developing the new scheme we have tried to keep it as simple and as fair as we can to local councils and all the taxpayers of the District.

The key features of the new Localism Fund are set out below and the figures are given in the enclosed table (*attached as Appendix C to the report*):

- Each town and parish council in 2013/14 is receiving a Council Tax Support Grant (fourth column in the table enclosed) which seeks to ensure that no local council is worse off as a result of changes to their council tax base. It is important to note that this grant is paid entirely at the discretion of the District Council; there is no obligation on Braintree District Council to pass this money onto local councils and I understand many Districts are not doing so. The amount paid to each parish and town council is based on the number of benefit claimants in each area on 3rd December 2012, changes to discounts given by the District Council on second and empty homes and a possible reduction in council tax collection rates.
- The current parish support grant for each council will be increased by 3% in 2013/14; To create the new Localism Fund, the Council Tax Support Grant and the increased parish support grant (columns 3 and 4 in the table) are then added together to give a total payment to each town and parish council - the table enclosed shows these figures for 2013/14.

Continued/2...

APPENDIX B

- 2 -

- For 2014/15, the total payment to town and parish councils of £396,260 is the starting point for the Localism Fund, but in 2014/15 and future years, this figure will either go up or down depending on the amount of funding Braintree District Council receives from Government each year. However, I hope this will help with local councils planning their future budgets and we will endeavour to let you know how we think future payments will vary as soon as we can each year when we are forecasting the District Council's budget.
- There are 'no strings attached' to this new Localism Fund; each town and parish council is free to use this money as it wishes.
- To clarify, the current Agency Arrangements with the District Council are unaffected by this proposed change and are not linked to the Localism Fund payments. However, I have asked for these arrangements to be reviewed over the next couple of months to check they still provide good value to all parties and taxpayers.

I am keen to seek the views of town and parish councils on the proposed Localism Fund. I have agreed with John Clark, Chairman of Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC) that BALC will collate the views from local councils on this proposal and we have agreed a response deadline of Friday 22nd March 2013. Therefore, please forward your comments to Angela Balcombe of BALC by this date. In the meantime if you have any questions on this proposal, please also let Angela know and we will answer these through BALC as soon as we can so further information can be shared with all local councils. Subject to agreement, the new Localism Fund payment will be made in April 2013.

Contact Information for BALC for comments and questions on the Localism Fund:

6 Shires Close, Great Notley
Braintree
Essex
CM77 7FT

e-mail: angiebalc@aol.com
telephone: 01376 528081

Once again, thank you for attending the Town and Parish Summit and I look forward to receiving your views in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Butland
Leader of the Council

c.c. Braintree District Council Members
 Braintree District ECC Members
 Councillor John Clark (BALC)
 Councillor Tony Hayward (BALC)
 Angela Balcombe (BALC)

Enclosure.

**Proposed Localism Fund Payments to Parish and Town
Councils in 2013/14**

APPENDIX C

<u>Parish Area</u>	<u>PSG 2013/14 Notified</u>	<u>3% Uplift</u>	<u>Local Council Tax Support Grant</u>	<u>Localism Fund Payment</u>
Alphamstone & Lamarsh	£452	£14	£148	£614
Ashen	£1,300	£39	£429	£1,768
Belchamp St Paul & Otten	£1,984	£60	£307	£2,351
Belchamp Walter	£895	£27	£115	£1,037
Birdbrook	£1,308	£39	£802	£2,149
Black Notley	£6,548	£196	£3,063	£9,807
Borley	£314	£9	£51	£374
Bradwell	£1,931	£58	£528	£2,517
Bulmer	£2,083	£62	£242	£2,387
Bures Hamlet	£2,735	£82	£1,705	£4,522
Castle Hedingham	£3,973	£119	£2,738	£6,830
Coggeshall	£12,097	£363	£13,856	£26,316
Colne Engaine	£3,289	£99	£703	£4,091
Cressing	£4,589	£138	£2,807	£7,534
Earls Colne	£9,018	£271	£6,050	£15,339
Feering	£5,799	£174	£1,626	£7,599
Finchingfield	£4,914	£147	£2,330	£7,391
Foxearth & Liston	£1,317	£40	£446	£1,803
Gestingthorpe	£1,519	£46	£308	£1,873
Gosfield	£4,477	£134	£2,619	£7,230
Great Bardfield	£4,413	£132	£2,415	£6,960
Great Maplestead	£1,383	£41	£154	£1,578
Great Notley	£13,424	£403	£2,213	£16,040
Great Saling	£1,080	£32	£150	£1,262
Great Yeldham	£3,294	£99	£4,976	£8,369
Greenstead Green	£2,195	£66	£155	£2,416
Halstead	£16,147	£484	£17,657	£34,288
Hatfield Peverel	£12,097	£363	£4,858	£17,318
Helions Bumpstead	£1,597	£48	£572	£2,217
Hennys, Middleton & Twinstead	£442	£13	£112	£567
Kelvedon	£8,297	£249	£7,645	£16,191
Little Maplestead	£1,062	£32	£228	£1,322
Little Yeldham, Tibury Juxta Clare, & Ovington	£2,010	£60	£323	£2,393
Panfield	£2,883	£86	£991	£3,960
Pebmarsh	£1,772	£53	£569	£2,394
Pentlow	£538	£16	£68	£622
Rayne	£3,975	£119	£2,181	£6,275
Ridgewell	£1,825	£55	£953	£2,833
Rivenhall	£1,737	£52	£1,169	£2,958
Shalford	£2,637	£79	£682	£3,398
Sible Hedingham	£10,369	£311	£8,032	£18,712
Silver End	£8,028	£241	£7,270	£15,539
Stambourne	£1,501	£45	£234	£1,780
Steeple Bumpstead	£4,479	£134	£2,097	£6,710
Stisted	£2,353	£71	£597	£3,021
Sturmer	£1,662	£50	£126	£1,838
Terling & Fairstead	£3,485	£105	£845	£4,435
Toppesfield	£1,877	£56	£1,026	£2,959
Wethersfield	£4,188	£126	£1,461	£5,775
White Colne	£1,711	£51	£287	£2,049
White Notley & Faulkbourne	£2,265	£68	£1,264	£3,597
Wickham St Paul	£1,220	£37	£571	£1,828
Witham	£19,009	£570	£61,545	£81,124
Unallocated balance in budget	£930			£930
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£216,427</u>	<u>£6,464</u>	<u>£174,299</u>	<u>£397,190</u>

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1. Introduction

The Council has a wide range of land and property assets used in the delivery of its services and which it uses in support of its Corporate Priorities for 2012-16. Therefore our Asset Management Plan is particularly important to us, especially at the present extremely challenging time in public finances, when we must ensure that every pound we spend works as hard as possible for the community.

The Council is constantly working to improve service delivery, use diminishing resources efficiently and reduce costs across the authority. The way we manage our assets helps us to achieve these goals.

Our portfolio of land and properties provides the authority with significant income. More recently the Council has shown its readiness to take a leading role in promoting and improving our town centres in order to support business and increase job prospects. Where appropriate we will identify and invest in further assets.

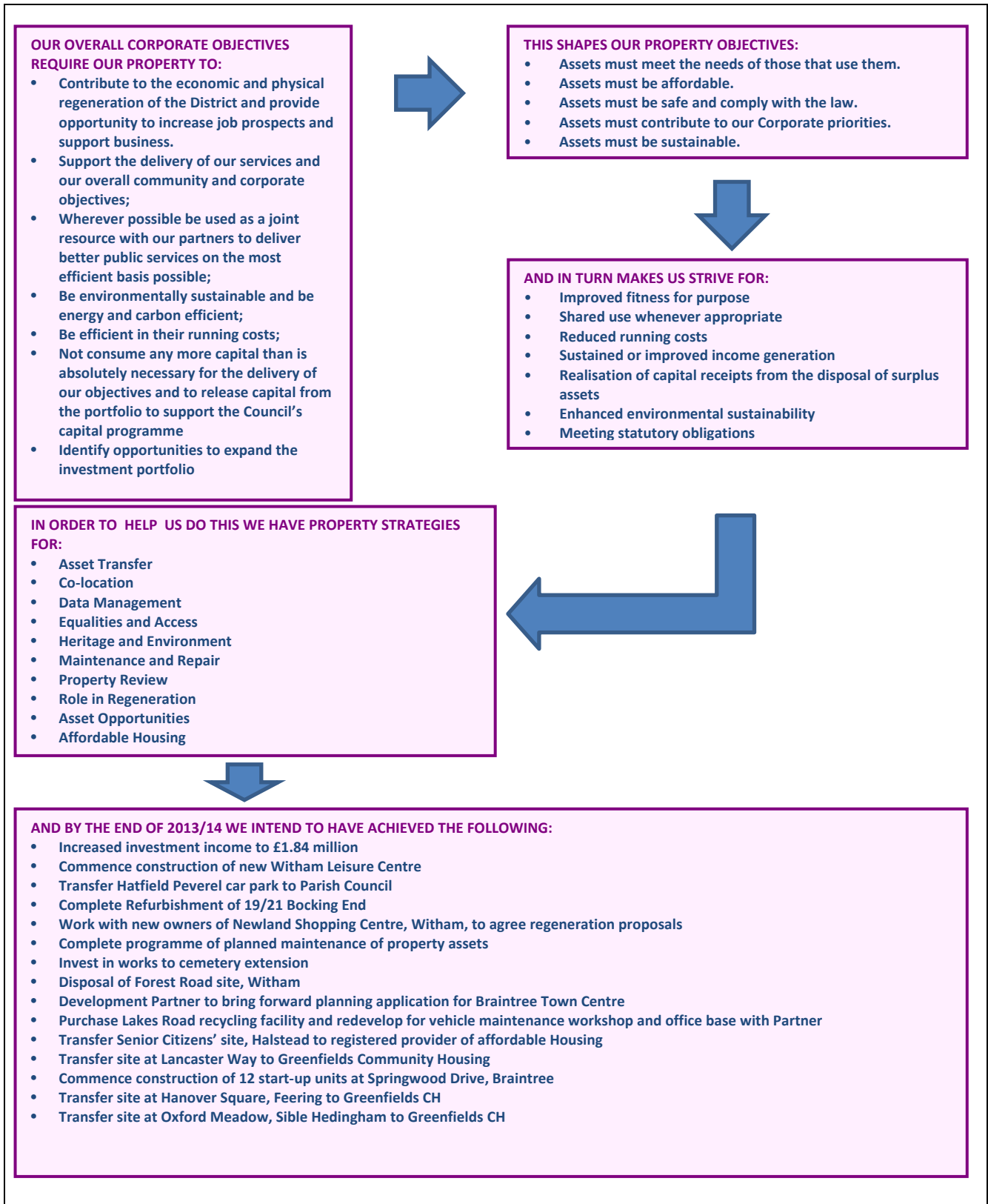
For all these reasons we must manage our property assets with ambition but also with prudence so that we achieve our aspiration that our property will:

1. Support our services and corporate priorities;
2. Continue to contribute to our revenue income;
3. Be as efficient as possible in both financial and environmental terms;
4. Support, promote and improve town centres



Cllr Lady Newton
Cabinet Member for Planning and Property
cllr.ladynewton@braintree.gov.uk

2. The Strategy On-A-Page



3. The Council's Core Aims and Objectives

The key to ensuring that our property assets deliver what is required for Braintree District Council and, where appropriate our communities and partners, is ensuring that our use and management of assets is linked to our strategic objectives. These strategic objectives are outlined in the following three documents

The Community Vision for Braintree District

The plans and priorities for the Braintree District are set out in 'One District – One Vision: A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2025', produced by the Local Strategic Partnership. It brings together community priorities into one overall vision and framework for the future of the District as follows:

To improve the well being of people and communities in the Braintree District now and for future generations – ensuring that local needs are met, that development is sustainable and accessible and that our historic towns, villages and attractive countryside are maintained, improved and protected.

The Aims are:

- To promote accessibility for all
- To create a clean and green environment and address climate change
- To achieve a prosperous local economy
- To enable everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle

See

<http://www.braintree.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4DF96999-5B2F-4B93-B4C0-9E8BA60807AE/0/OneDistrictOneVisionJune2009.pdf>

Braintree District Council's Strategy

In March 2012 the Council adopted its new Corporate Priorities for 2012-2016. These Priorities set out the direction and ambition for the next four years and will be the focus for the Council's resources as we work to improve the well-being of residents, communities and businesses in the district.

The Strategy for the District Council is reflected in the following priorities:-



Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identifies the main sources of capital resources available to finance the capital programme for the rolling four-year period.

An estimate of the amount of resources to be received in each year is provided in the MTFS. The planned and anticipated resources include:

- Receipts from Greenfields Community Housing (GCH). The Council has an agreement with GCH to share the VAT that GCH is entitled to recover relating to specific improvement works to the housing stock. The estimated amount to be shared is £20 million over the first ten years of GCH's operation.
- Income received from the sales of former council houses, purchased by tenants having preserved 'Right to Buy' entitlement is shared with GCH.
- Capital receipts from the sale of council assets which are surplus to requirements and/or an opportunity is developed with other landowners to assemble a larger plot for development, for example, the ransom strip of land made available to the development site assembled to the east of the High Street, Halstead.
- Annual capital grant from the Government to provide funding toward the cost of disabled facilities grants awarded by the Council.
- Growth Area Fund. The Council's proportion of capital funding awarded from the Growth Area Fund by Central Government, under the joint submission by Chelmsford BC and this Council, was £4.038 million. The funds are to be spent on projects delivering employment growth, town centre regeneration and infrastructure supporting housing and employment growth.
- Section 106 contributions. Monies received from developers under planning agreements. The majority of the agreements prescribe the purpose to which the monies are to be put. The main purposes include the provision of play equipment, public open space, cycleways and affordable housing. Some Section 106 agreements are to be replaced by a Community Infrastructure Levy: the Council is to establish the necessary charging schedule during 2013/14.
- Reserves. Monies set-aside from revenue to finance specific projects or purchases such as computer system replacement or upgrade and new or replacement items of plant.
- New Homes Bonus – This allocation from the Government is an unrestricted resource and can be used for both revenue and capital purposes. It is calculated by reference to additional homes and homes brought back into use, with a premium for affordable homes, in the district in the proceeding year. The Council has adopted a strategy for the first two years allocations, to be received between 2011/12 and 2017/18 and total £5.686million, to be invested in major infrastructure projects and the provision of new affordable housing. The allocation for year 3, of £605,958 payable in 2013/14, will be held in an earmarked reserve until a decision is taken on how it is to be used.
- Grants and contributions from third parties payable for specific projects.

In addition to the current anticipated capital resources, the Council does have recourse to:

- Borrow monies to finance a capital project. If borrowing is to be considered then the Council will need to ensure that it has sufficient revenue funding to repay the loan. The source of funding is therefore appropriate for projects which provide a revenue stream or realise revenue savings in order to cover the repayments.
- Use unallocated balances, subject to maintaining a minimum level of £1.5 million, in accordance with current Council policy.

Social Value

The Social Value Act (2012) brings a statutory requirement for public authorities to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public service contracts and for connected purposes. Social value is a concept which seeks to maximise the additional benefit that can be created by procuring or commissioning goods and services above and beyond the benefit of the goods and services themselves.

Social Value will be taken into consideration in respect of any property related matters. Social value looks at aspects of citizens' well being such as their ability to participate in making decisions that affect them e.g. consulting the public and stakeholders in respect of the proposed town centre regeneration scheme.

We will ensure that we engage fully with communities to develop opportunities and use our assets when appropriate to improve the well-being of the community through consultation and partnership working.

Localism

The Council has established a localism framework which includes the following project streams:

- Neighbourhood Planning and the Community Right to Build
- Community Right to Challenge
- Community Right to Bid
- Community Engagement (including parish and town councils, neighbourhood forums and statutory partners)
- The Third Sector and volunteering
- Commissioning
- Community Asset Transfer
- Community Councillors
- Witham Neighbourhood Budget

These are subject to the guidance, challenge and scrutiny of Members through the Localism Board.

Of specific relevance to Asset Management and this Asset Management Strategy are:

Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value) – the Council has established a process to consider nominations from the community to a List of Assets of Community Value. If an asset on this list is subsequently offered for sale the local community may then have a short period of time in which to make an offer to the owner to purchase the asset. Council owned assets meeting the definition of a community asset could be nominated to the list by community organisations.

Community Right to Challenge – this gives community and voluntary organisations and parish councils the opportunity to express an interest in running council services. The council has set 1st April to 31st May each year as the period when expressions of interest can be made. If key criteria set by Government are met then the Council must begin a procurement exercise which will follow the principles set out in our Procurement Policy, the financial regulations and contract procedure rules set out in the Council's Constitution, the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 and the general duty of best value in the Local Government Act 1999.

Community Asset Transfer – the Council has transferred management of community halls and other assets to community organisations and is collating knowledge and good practice into a corporate management resource.

Best Practice Approach to Asset Management

The Council is a member of the CIPFA Asset Management Planning Network which meets regularly to receive information on Government and wider asset management activities. This also enables networking opportunities with other public and private sector organisations.

In addition, the Council is a member of a regional Asset Management Planning forum which is facilitated by Improvement East and comprises Essex wide public sector bodies i.e., local authorities, County Council, fire and rescue service and police authority etc.

Improvement East and its consultant, PWC, worked with Councils and other public bodies in the county of Essex to help these organisations make efficiency savings and improve services in the area of asset management.

The principle objectives of this project were:-

- to identify new ways of managing and exploiting our estates to reduce costs (or increase income)
- to improve the effectiveness of assets in supporting service delivery

Some of the cross-cutting opportunities identified included:-

- a) model shared office e.g., ECC occupying accommodation in Causeway House

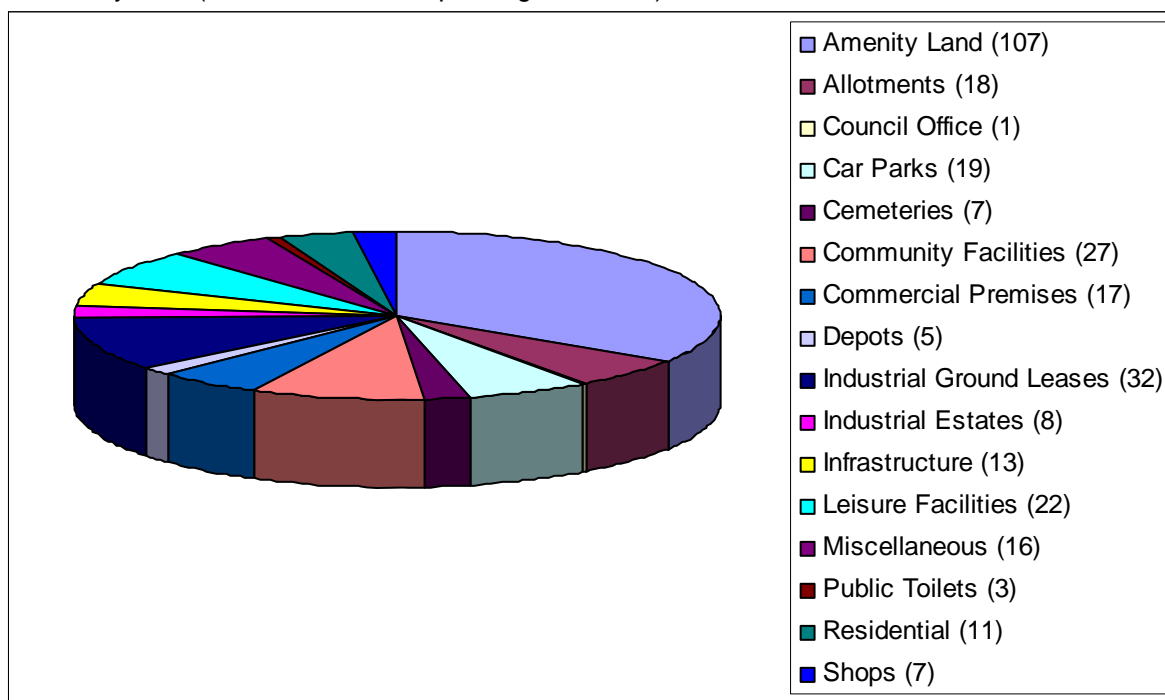
- b) sharing skills and capacity across authorities e.g., BDC providing Asset Management support to Uttlesford District Council
- c) Facilities Management collaborative procurement – ECC has recently undertaken a competitive tendering exercise and appointed a single contractor to facilities manage all of its property assets. BDC and other local authorities have the ability to join into this contract. BDC is currently assessing the viability of this option.
- d) Essex Property Asset Map (EPAM) Project. Working with Improvement East, local authorities and other public sector bodies are seeking to create a web based map of property information in order to make informed decisions about possible rationalisation and opportunities of Government estate in Essex.

BDC, along with many other authorities, including Essex Fire and Rescue will be submitting data for this project shortly and it is intended to have a functioning system available by March 2013.

The Council is guided by its Corporate Strategy and maintains an awareness of new initiatives and ongoing changes occurring in the Public Sector.

4. The Council's Property Portfolio

Braintree owns and operates around 313 assets of various sizes and types ranging from shops, offices and industrial units to leisure centres, car parks, cemeteries, playing fields, amenity land, public conveniences and community halls (this is shown in the pie diagram below).



(Brackets in the diagram above show the number of properties)

The total capital value of the entire property portfolio for accounting purposes is approx. £60 million.

Category:	Asset Value: (as at 31 st March 2012)
Amenity Land	107
Allotments	18
Council Office	4,701,545
Car Parks	8,228,743
Cemeteries	2,143,299
Community Facilities	3,416,219
Commercial Premises	7,295,880
Depots	493,360
Industrial Ground Leases	7,626,961
Industrial Estates	3,685,615
Infrastructure	13
Leisure Facilities	17,139,443
Miscellaneous	1,007,245
Public Toilets	353,776
Residential	2,511,269
Shops	1,988,480
TOTAL:	£60,591,973

A full list of the Council's assets is available on the Council's website
http://www.braintree.gov.uk/downloads/file/1901/asset_list

Past Performance of Portfolio

The property investment portfolio generated c.£1.54 million in 2012/13, however, as a result of the letting of Mayland House, and ongoing rent reviews we anticipate an increase in our annual investment income to c.£1.84 million.

The recent letting of Mayland House has significantly enhanced the capital value of this asset, estimated to be in excess of £11 million.

Forest Road Community Hall is now surplus to requirements and has been demolished. This land is intended to be used for affordable housing.

Planned maintenance investment has been made in the following assets:-

- Bocking Cemetery Chapel
- Dead House Chapel, Halstead
- The Lodge, Halstead
- George Yard car park
- Marks Farm community centre
- Cathcart House
- Rickstones Pavillion
- Witham Cemetery Chapel
- Corner House
- Braintree Town Hall
- Victoria Street public toilets
- Goldingham Hall
- Empire Theatre, Halstead

Overall, the Council will seek to improve the performance of the property portfolio, in the short and medium term, in the following ways:

1. **Planned Maintenance Programme** - The Council completed its Condition Surveys and will continue to implement an ongoing planned maintenance programme for its assets.
2. **Efficient Management of the Council's Property Investment Portfolio** – which comprises industrial units, industrial ground leases, offices, shops and various miscellaneous properties, and realised an annual income of c.£1.54 million for 2012/13 but it is anticipated to increase to c.£1.84 million in 2013/14. Voids across the portfolio remain at low levels which is a positive outcome in relation to the current market and the secondary nature of the portfolio. This income makes a major contribution to the Council's finances. The Council will seek to improve the income derived from its investment portfolio through effective and efficient management
3. **Regeneration** - Over recent years the Council has adopted a policy of property acquisition where this will benefit the economic, social or environmental well being to the District, in areas such as urban regeneration, promoting development, improving service delivery or securing local facilities or services. The Council is being proactive in identifying town centre regeneration, economic development and affordable housing opportunities and supporting this through property acquisition and in partnership with property developers e.g.:
 - a) Land and buildings acquired in Braintree for regeneration and affordable housing projects.
 - b) Properties in South Street acquired for road widening/improved traffic flow purposes
 - c) Refurbishment of 19/21 Bocking End, Braintree
 - d) Submitted planning application for 12 business start up units in Springwood Drive, Braintree.

Achievements 2012/2013

The Council has achieved the following during 2012/2013, to support its key corporate priorities

- Acquisition of 75 South Street;
- Planning application submitted on Land East of High Street, Halstead;
- Lease completed on whole of Mayland House, Witham;
- Planned maintenance investment of £250,000 in the Council's assets
- Completed construction of Witham Park Public Toilet
- Replacement of 1st floor windows in Rippers Court
- Completed development agreement with Henry Boot Developments Ltd
- Transfer of Tabor Avenue site to Family Mosaic for affordable Housing
- Generated £1.54 million from the property investment portfolio
- Solar PV panels on Causeway house met 12 month target of 20,000 kw hours in just 9 months

Health and Safety

The Council carries out a Risk Assessment of all vacant land and buildings, and inspects them on a regular basis to ensure that no issues relating to health and safety arise.

Asbestos surveys have been undertaken on all properties and ongoing inspections are carried out where necessary.

Annual fire risk and health and safety inspections are carried out on BDC occupied buildings and any issues identified and actioned.

Regular legionella testing is carried out on all occupied buildings.

5. Property Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Property Objectives

Within our overall aim of seeking to improve service delivery and at the same time reduce our costs, we have adopted five headline objectives to ensure that the Council's assets are fit for purpose:

1. **Assets must meet the needs of the users.** This includes staff, members, visitors, customers and general public, people with disabilities or special needs and other minority groups. It means asking people what they think about our property assets and responding to their needs. Prime examples include customer-led improvements to community halls and sports and leisure facilities.
2. **Assets must be cost effective.** In the current economic climate it is important to keep running costs to a minimum and prioritise capital spending. It also means making sure that any borrowing for capital works follows a robust business case, can be afforded and that any capital tied up in property, which is not required to meet the Council's objectives is released as soon as possible.
3. **Assets must be safe and comply with the law.** This means ensuring regular surveys and inspections for asbestos, legionella, fire, health & safety etc., as well as physical condition surveys and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) audits are undertaken.
4. **Assets must contribute to our Corporate Priorities.** Ensuring that our property decisions are linked to decisions on other Council resources (staff, IT, finance) and that asset management contributes to our corporate goals and vision. The Council will work in collaboration with partner organisations, including other public bodies and voluntary and community groups, to achieve a strategic approach to asset management across the Braintree district, and consider the Social Value aspect of any property related issues.
5. **Assets must be sustainable.** Monitoring and reducing energy consumption and CO₂ emissions, ensuring that asset decisions take into account both the local and global environment and make a positive contribution to a sustainable community.

Asset Performance Requirements

The key performance requirements of the portfolio in the future are: -

- **Improved fitness for purpose** - Property facilities are appropriate to delivery of the Council's Services. For example, the refurbishment of Causeway House has enabled the Council to Occupy the building and deliver services more efficiently.
- **Efficient use of assets** – Working with Partners to deliver Services more effectively and efficiently. For example, by sharing accommodation with ECC including a single front office customer access facility in Braintree.
- **Value for Money** – To manage property assets in a cost effective and efficient manner. The refurbishment of Causeway House and leasing surplus space has enabled the Council to significantly reduce its annual running costs.
- **Sustained or improved income generation** – To maximise the income from Council assets to support the Council's finances. Our income for 2012/13 was £1.54 million and our target income for 2013/14 is £1.84 million.
- **Disposal of surplus assets** – Dispose of assets that are a liability, not fit for purpose or surplus to requirements, taking into account the social and community value aspect of any surplus property, and added value to the district e.g., transfer of community halls to community groups

- **Enhanced environmental sustainability** – To support the Council's goal to reduce CO2 emissions, the following projects have been identified:
 - Looking at opportunities for installing solar PV panels on Council property assets
 - Looking at using external funding to put in electric car charging points in the Council's car parks
 - Working with Fusion and E-ON to install biomass heating boilers in Braintree Swimming Centre and Halstead Leisure Centre
- **Meeting statutory obligations** – To continue to comply with statutory obligations in asbestos, electrical testing, access/DDA, legionella, emissions, energy performance, etc.

6. Corporate Property Management and Governance

The Council's lead responsibility at officer level for strategic recommendations on asset management planning rests with the Management Board which takes responsibility for all strategic resource issues for the Council.

The Corporate Property Officer (CPO) is the Head of Asset Management. The post holder has overall responsibility for developing asset management across the authority, including the structure, content and delivery timescales; monitoring outputs; preparing and submitting the corporate Asset Management Plan; formulating corporate property strategy and policy; and ensuring appropriate liaison with external agencies on shared use of property assets.

The CPO chairs the Asset Strategy Group, which comprises Corporate Directors, Head of Finance and representation from service departments. This group considers strategic asset and property management issues, ensuring proper linkages between corporate planning, service planning and asset planning.

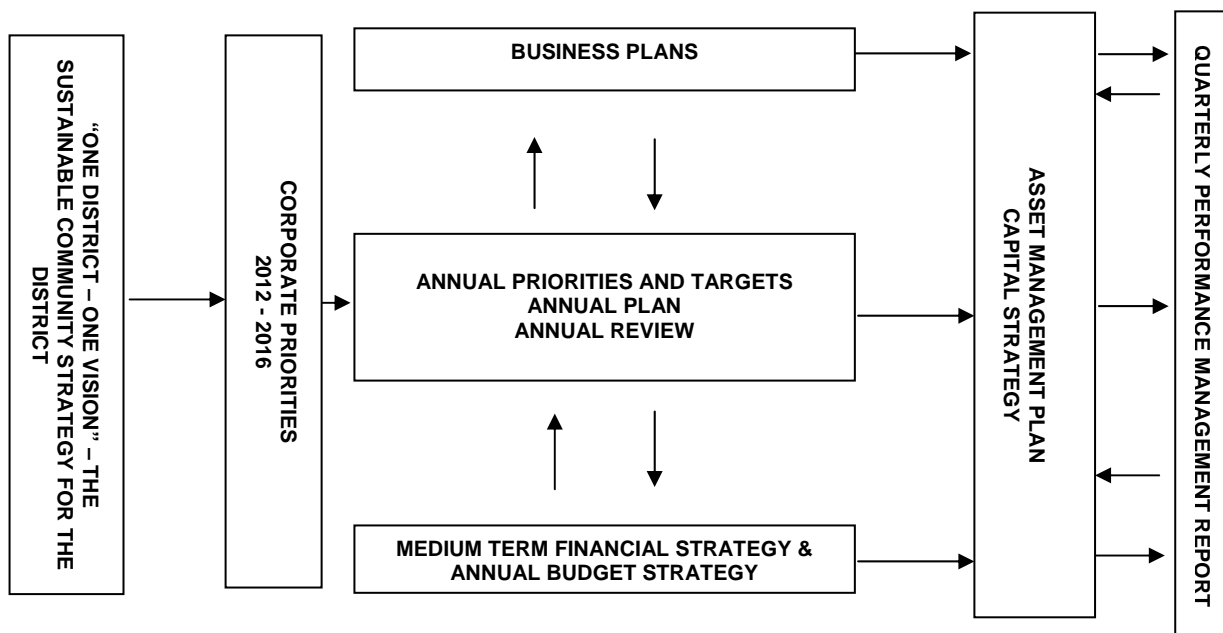
The CPO, through the Director of Sustainable Development, is involved directly in the process leading to the preparation of the Council's Capital Strategy. The CPO is also a key link in delivering the capital strategy, particularly through the generation of capital receipts from property disposals and through support in the delivery of the capital spend programme.

Engagement of Elected Members

The Council operates a 'Leader and Cabinet' model. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Property has direct responsibility for the strategic objectives of Asset Management.

The diagram below shows how the Council's priorities work through the Council's delivery mechanisms and business/service planning, directing action on property issues that are aligned to our aims and objectives.

All property matters requiring a Member decision will go to Cabinet for key decisions and on to Full Council.



7. Corporate Asset Strategy – Overview of Property Policies and Projects

The Council's Corporate Asset Strategy comprises two parts:

- a) overall asset strategy, and
- b) the approach to each property category in the portfolio.

a) Overall Asset Strategies

The following policies will guide decision making on the Council's portfolio in the future.

Asset Transfer	The Council will continue to support the Localism Initiative through the transfer of community assets to Parish/Town Councils or Community Groups in appropriate cases, (see Community Facilities below)
Co-location	The Council will co-locate with other Public Sector bodies in appropriate cases where it results in improved service delivery and/or reduced costs.
Data Management	The Asset Management Service will maximise the use of electronic document storage i.e., Idox and Estate Management System to improve efficiency and to reduce space requirements.
Employment	The Council will continue to facilitate employment opportunities across the district through the use of its land and property assets.
Equalities and Access	The Council will continue to ensure that its buildings are DDA compliant and are accessible to the public in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and Audit Commission performance indicator BVPI 156.
Heritage and Environment	The Council will ensure that any new buildings or refurbished properties are delivered to a minimum of 'very good' BREAM standard, if financially viable.
Maintenance and Repair	The Council will continue ongoing regular investment in its assets via a planned maintenance programme, which seeks to eradicate our maintenance backlog and sustains the portfolio in good condition.
Property Review	The Council will undertake annual reviews of its property assets, and develop asset management strategies in conjunction with other public sector and voluntary agencies.
Role in Regeneration	<p>The Council will use its property holdings and/or capital investments to facilitate appropriate regeneration projects in the district to promote and improve our town centres increasing job prospects and supporting business.</p> <p>The Council is working in partnership with Henry Boot Developments Limited to deliver a mixed use redevelopment scheme on the site behind the Town Hall in Braintree.</p> <p>The Council has acquired properties in South Street, Braintree to facilitate a road improvement scheme in partnership with Essex County Council.</p>
Asset Opportunities	The Council will identify and investigate any property opportunities that may present themselves and operate proactively in relation to publicly owned property assets.
Affordable Housing Provision	The Council will continue to support and facilitate affordable housing in the District through land transfers, utilising CHIP funding and working in partnership with affordable housing providers.

b) Approach to Each Property Category

The Council undertakes an annual review of its retained assets. The current position and proposals relating to the Council's various assets for 2013/14 is set out as follows: -

1. <u>Amenity Land:</u>	Braintree District Council will continue to maintain amenity land.
2. <u>Allotments:</u>	<p>The Council will devolve management to a local level through Local Allotment Associations, or Parish/Town Councils, in support of our policy to provide services at a local level. This will be implemented over the next year.</p> <p>The Council will look to increase opportunities to create additional allotments to be managed at a local level, e.g. new sites in Church Lane, Braintree and Cut Throat Lane, Witham</p>
3. <u>Council Office:</u>	<p>We will continue to manage and occupy Causeway House in a cost effective and efficient manner by seeking to reduce costs and generate income where possible.</p> <p>The Council has let the 2nd floor of Causeway House to Essex County Council which has resulted in a shared front reception, reduce costs and the generation of additional income.</p>
4. <u>Car Parks:</u>	The Council is in discussions with the Parish Councils to transfer the remaining rural car parks in Hatfield Peverel, Coggeshall and Earls Colne
5. <u>Cemeteries:</u>	The Council will continue to manage these facilities with investment in the Bocking Cemetery extension land to provide additional burial space, allotments and open space.
6. <u>Community Facilities:</u>	All Community Halls are now under third party management and the Council, as Landlord, will continue a monitoring role to ensure these buildings are properly maintained and managed.
7. <u>Commercial Property:</u>	<p>These properties are part of the Council's retained investment portfolio providing income which is important to supporting the Council's finances. Identify opportunities to expand investment portfolio, and increase rental income by 19.5% to £1.84 million.</p> <p>With regard to Mayland House in Witham, the Council, as Landlord, will continue a monitoring role to ensure this property is properly maintained and managed.</p> <p>The Council is working with Ignite Business to provide pop-up shops in the Corner House in Braintree and will look at alternative uses going forward.</p>
8. <u>Depots:</u>	The Council intends to purchase the Lakes Road recycling facility and redevelop for a vehicle maintenance facility and office base for operations staff in partnership with Riverside Truck Rental. It is proposed to vacate 4 Lakes Road by December 2013. The purpose of this project is to improve service delivery and reduce costs.
9. <u>Industrial Ground Leases:</u>	These properties are part of the Council's retained investment portfolio providing income which is important to supporting the Council's finances. Consequently all these properties will be retained and all opportunities to increase total net income generation will be taken.
10. <u>Industrial Units:</u>	These properties are part of the Council's retained investment portfolio providing income which is important to supporting the Council's finances. Consequently all these properties will be retained and all opportunities to increase total net income generation will be taken.

	These properties provide units for start-up and expanding businesses which supports job creation in the district.
11. <u>Infrastructure:</u>	The Council owns and maintains 13 unadopted roads and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.
12. <u>Leisure Facilities:</u>	<p>A new leisure management contract commenced in September 2012. A maintenance and improvement programme is planned across the leisure facilities with only essential works being carried out at Bramston. The new leisure operator, Fusion, is looking to invest £1 million in improvements to the existing leisure facilities.</p> <p>The Council is also constructing a new leisure centre in Witham.</p>
13. <u>Public Toilets</u>	BDC will continue to manage the remaining public toilets in Witham and Braintree.
14. <u>Residential Properties:</u>	<p>To deal with the residential properties as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Barr House – To continue the provision of the service from this property. • 129-135 Bradford Street – Retain for temporary accommodation. • Trinity House – Actively market and dispose of by March 2014. • Forest Road site, Witham – transfer this site to an affordable housing provider. • New Street site, Halstead – transfer this site to an affordable housing provider.
15. <u>Shops</u>	These properties are part of the Council's retained investment portfolio providing valuable income which is important to supporting the Council's finances. Consequently all these properties will be retained and all opportunities to increase total net income generation will be taken.

Asset Acquisitions

The Council's approach to investing in assets for both community gain and financial return would involve the following process and actions:-

- A detailed Business Case to Cabinet (covering factors such as market conditions and likely demand for vacant accommodation)
- Full risk assessment
- Due diligence (covering everything from the financial soundness of a tenant, building condition and contamination issues etc). This would also include a full understanding of all running costs.
- Timeline for delivery
- Independent specialist advice e.g., legal, rental, valuation, VAT advice etc.
- Final report to Council for approval

Vacant Property

Whenever any of the Council's major property assets become vacant, the following actions will be undertaken:-

- Holding costs to be independently scrutinised to ensure value for money either internally (via Audit, Finance, Members or appointed Officers) or through the commissioning of external specialist advice.
- Mothballing the property quickly whilst tenants are being sought to keep holding costs to an absolute minimum.

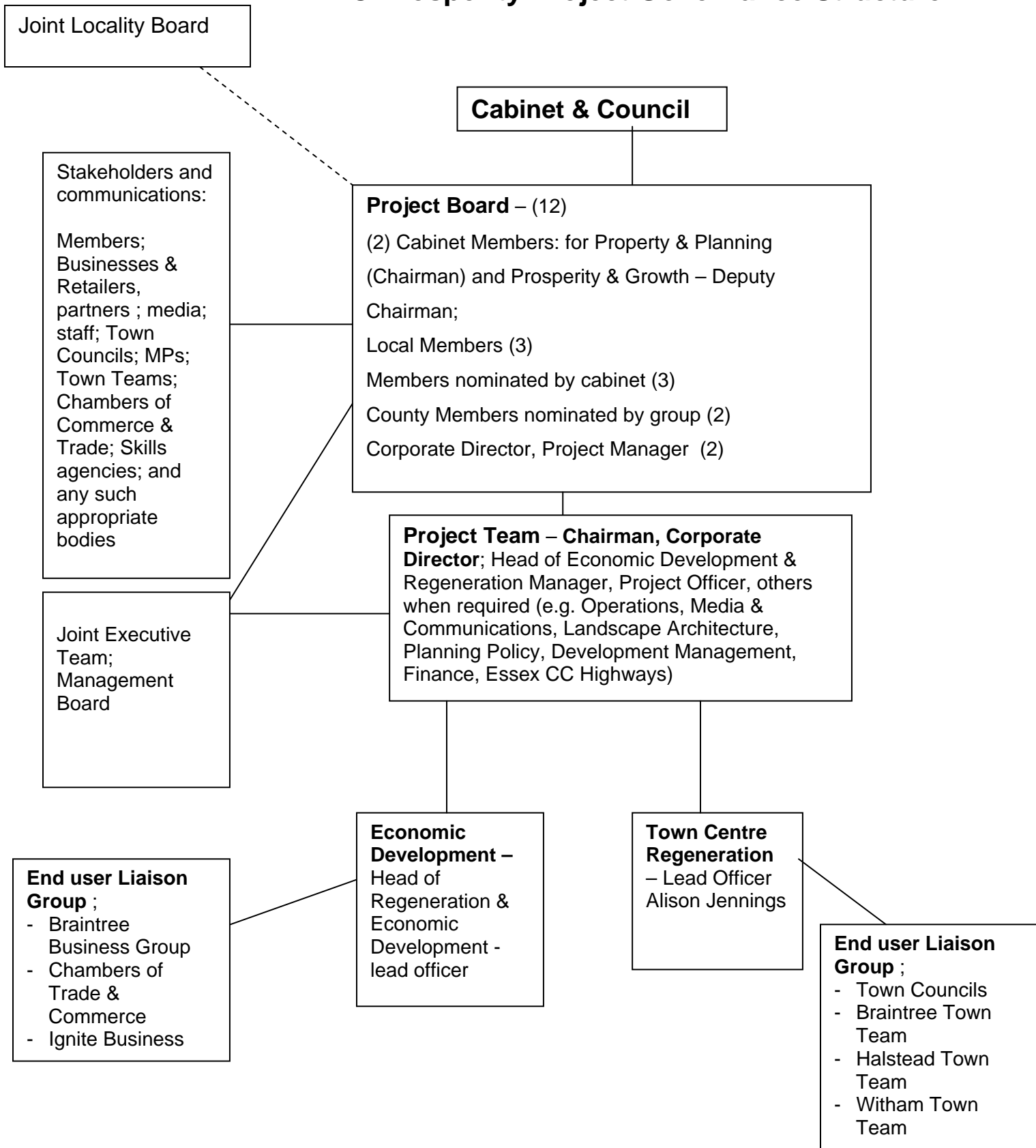
8. Corporate Asset Strategy – Summary Action Plan and Milestones

Key Asset Management targets and significant milestones for 2013/2016 are:

	Action Points	Milestones	Expected Benefits	By Who
1.	Braintree Town Centre Regeneration Project	Development Partner to bring forward planning application for regeneration scheme by March 2014.	Improved business and employment opportunities Improved town centre facilities including modern bus terminal	Head of Asset Management
2.	Witham Town Centre Regeneration Project	Work with owners of Newland Shopping Centre to agree regeneration proposals by March 2014.	Improve local facilities	Head of Asset Management
3.	Land East of High Street, Halstead	Secure purchaser by March 2014	Regenerate unused town centre site	Head of Asset Management
4.	Witham Leisure Centre	Completion summer 2014.	Improve local leisure facilities. Improved health and well being. Reduce running costs through the closure of Bramston Sports Centre.	Corporate Director
5.	Lakes Road Recycling Facility	Purchase land and redevelop for a vehicle maintenance facility and office base in Partnership with Riverside Truck Rental by March 2014.	Reduced running costs and improved service delivery	Head of Operations
6.	Car Park, Hatfield Peverel	Transfer Hatfield Peverel car park to Parish Council by March 2014	Reduced running costs and devolved local management	Head of Operations
7.	Bocking Cemetery	Invest in works to cemetery extension by March 2014	Future burial capacity, additional land for allotments and open space.	Head of Operations
8.	19/21 Bocking End, Braintree	Complete refurbishment works by June 2013.	Relocation of community group to replacement accommodation.	Head of Asset Management
9.	Property Assets	Complete programme of planned maintenance by March 2014.	Creating fit for purpose accommodation, reduce recurring reactive maintenance, increase income generation.	Head of Asset Management
10.	Disposal of Forest Road site, Witham	Transfer to Greenfields CH by March 2014	Capital receipt. Affordable Housing opportunities.	Head of Asset Management
11.	Lancaster Way, Braintree	Transfer site to Greenfields CH by March 2014	Affordable Housing opportunities.	Head of Housing Services
12.	Senior Citizen Site, Halstead	Transfer site to Registered Provider of Affordable Housing by March 2014.	Affordable Housing opportunities.	Head of Housing Services

Braintree District Council Asset Management Plan 2013/16

	Action Points	Milestones	Expected Benefits	By Who
13.	Starter Units, Springwood Drive	Commence construction of 12 start up units by December 2013.	Increased business support services. Employment space to support SMEs and stimulate growth to increase jobs.	Corporate Director
14.	Hanover Square, Feering	Transfer site to Greenfields CH by June 2013	Affordable Housing opportunities	Head of Housing Services
15.	Oxford Meadow, Sible Hedingham	Transfer site to Greenfields CH by June 2013	Affordable Housing opportunities	Head of Housing Services
16.	Car Park, Coggeshall	Transfer car park to Parish Council by July 2013	Reduce running costs and devolved local management	Head of Operations
17.	Car Park, Earls Colne	Transfer car park and public toilets to Parish Council by July 2013	Reduce running costs and devolved local management	Head of Operations
18.	Allotments	Explore opportunities to transfer sites to parish and Allotment Associations by March 2014	Reduce running costs and devolved local management	Head of Operations
19.	Corner House, Braintree	Explore letting strategy by March 2014	Improve town centre facilities and contribute to town centre regeneration	Corporate Director

BDC Prosperity Project Governance Structure

Third Quarter Performance Management Report

1st October to 31st December 2012



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Section 1: Introduction and Summary






Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the third quarter in relation to the publication of 'Our plans for the District 2012/2013'. This sets out the key activities and measures used to check our performance for the year and along with the new Corporate Strategy 2012-2016 sets out the priorities we are working towards. Further detail is given in relation to an evolving set of business performance indicators covering finances, customer focus, our people and health and safety.






This report does not contain details of the numerous activities ongoing in each service area that also contribute to delivering what is important and will make a difference to all in the district. Full details of all projects and local and national indicators used to measure the outcomes are available upon request.

Summary of the Corporate Projects current position for the third quarter

The following table provides updates for the third quarter in relation to the key activities in 'Our plans for the District 2012/2013'




Corporate Priorities	Status of projects and actions				
					
Place	1	4	1	0	1
People	2	5	2	0	0
Prosperity	5	5	0	0	0
Performance	3	2	1	0	0
Partnership	0	8	0	0	0
TOTAL	11	24	4	0	1

KEY:




-  Project completed
-  Project on target
-  Project scope/target date requires attention
-  Project requires amendment
-  Project aborted/closed

Summary of the Performance Indicators position for the end of the third quarter

The following table shows the performance for the end of the third quarter in relation to the quarterly reported Performance Indicators that have targets set as defined in 'Our plans for the District 2012/2013'.

Corporate Priorities	Status of indicators			
				Data Only
Place	2	0	1	0
People	2	0	1	0
Prosperity	3	0	0	0
Performance	2	1	2	1
TOTAL	9	1	4	1

KEY:

-  Performance Indicator has achieved target
-  Performance Indicator is up to 5% off target
-  Performance Indicator is 5% or more off target

Summary Position

The third quarter of the year continues to be challenging which has impacted on some areas of performance. All underperforming indicators are being monitored and action plans are being developed to mitigate any down turn in performance.

Nine projects are now complete and all the remaining key corporate projects remain on track with other key activities within the council being managed effectively.

We continue to promote and invest in our Town Centres with the help of the Portas funding which has been used to invest in Braintree. The Indi card launch has been a success with over 7000 indi cards distributed to shoppers to encourage residents to shop local. The Christmas Market saw a rise in footfall in the Town Centre and the official launch of Ignite will provide support to local businesses and help create more start up units ensuring new and growing businesses get the support they need to prosper.

The final quarter of the year will be challenging as we strive to deliver our corporate objectives whilst focusing our resources to maximise benefit to the community and businesses in the months ahead.



Our Priorities

- Keep our district clean and tidy
- Protecting our environment
- Provide green space for everyone to enjoy

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Improve the appearance and visual impact of the key gateways leading into our towns and villages	March 2013	
Quotations have now been received and are currently being evaluated. The order will then be placed and the work will start early April.		
Reduce the number of households in fuel poverty by working with national organisations to reduce energy costs and installing energy saving measures in domestic properties	March 2013	
Essex Energy Partnership continues to develop a Green Deal/ECO programme to enable many households to make energy efficient improvements.		
Encourage households to produce less waste and recycle more	March 2013	
A further 16,400 households are now included in the food waste recycling service providing almost everyone who lives in the district with the opportunity to recycle their food waste.		
Expand the anti-litter campaign with a focus on litter thrown from cars	March 2013	
The campaign has been presented to the Essex Cleaner Group to consider a county wide campaign. Since April, there have been 184 cases of car litter reported resulting in 73 fixed penalty notices		
Work with schools and local communities to encourage more people to take pride in their neighbourhoods and to actively get involved in keeping their local areas clean	March 2013	
A community litter pick is planned for January around the Fisher Field playground involving Great Bradfords infant and Junior school, and Alec Hunter. Tabor school are looking into carrying out a litter competition.		
Work with Southview school and the local community to provide a community orchard and allotments	April 2013	
The project will not be delivered this year. The school will again be looking at fundraising and we will continue to provide support where required.		
Complete the Halstead River Walk pathway	March 2013	
Works have started on site and are due to be completed by mid-January.		



Our Priorities

- Support vulnerable people in our community
- Promote safe and healthy living
- Encourage flourishing communities

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Increase our support to vulnerable people to enable them to stay in their own homes	March 2013	
In total, 59 grants have been issued since April totalling over £289,000. The additional support for this project has seen the waiting list approving grants reduced by 30%.		
Develop the Community Transport Service further by increasing passenger numbers and journeys, with a focus on vulnerable people living in the most isolated areas	March 2013	
Profiling helped identify groups of vulnerable and isolated people who could potentially benefit from the Community Transport scheme and details have been sent out. Since April the scheme has seen a 7% rise in the number of passenger journeys compared with last year.		
Work in partnership with other agencies to tackle 'rogue traders' who prey on vulnerable people	March 2013	
Environmental Protection officers have successfully prosecuted 12 locally based rogue traders within the district.		
Improve three play areas across the district providing new equipment and fencing to Bramble Road Witham, Fisher Field Braintree and Riverside Braintree	March 2013	
The Bramble Road and Fisher Field play areas are now completed and in use. Work is due to start on site in January at Riverside.		
Create a skate park in Silver End	March 2013	
The skate bowl at Silver End has been formally opened in October.		
Install play equipment at Witham Town park	April 2012	
New play equipment has now been installed for a wide range of ages and abilities as well as for those with disabilities which has much improved this important town centre park.		
Continue to build Witham Leisure Centre	December 2013	
Schedule 1 secretary of state consent has been granted however section 77 consent is also required in respect of playing field use. We are currently working to achieve this. Work is underway to finalise the contract with Barr construction		
Complete John Ray Park cycleway	October 2013	
The project has been delayed due to Essex County Council needing to carry out further design work on the footbridge to link the cycleways.		
Support and Monitor the projects selected for Mi Community funding	March 2013	
Monitoring continues and all the projects are progressing satisfactorily.		



Our Priorities

- Boost employment skills and support business
- Promote and improving our town centres
- Securing appropriate infrastructure and housing growth

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Organise events to provide local support to NEETs	March 2013	▶
A contractor is being procured to deliver the pre- apprenticeship scheme. Funding is now in place to roll out the landscape training initiative.		
Provide further places on the modern apprentice scheme	March 2013	▶
Nine modern apprentices were employed in November across many services within the Authority. Three apprentices from last year will commence their level 3 NVQ, two in business administration and one in customer services.		
Establish Town Centre improvement Design for Braintree and Witham	March 2013	▶
The Council has been working in partnership with the town teams to deliver town centre projects. A company has been appointed to write the town centre strategies for Witham and Halstead.		
Complete improvements to Sandpit Lane and start work on St Michaels Fountain	March 2013	▶
Meetings held with Councillors and stakeholders to discuss the Sandpit Lane proposals. Specialist surveys of the paving and the fountain statue to be undertaken		
Introduce initiatives to assist businesses in the Town Centres	March 2013	▶
Further promotions have been added to the Indi card launched in September. Christmas events held to increase footfall with a gift guide issued to promote the shops and businesses.		
Work in partnership with the developer on the land behind the Town Hall	March 2013	✓
A development agreement has been exchanged with Henry Boot Developments Ltd in June 2012 who are working on securing pre-lets for the scheme before submitting a planning application to move the scheme forward.		
Work in partnership with owners of the Newlands Centre	March 2013	✓
The new owners, New River Retail have carried out a light refurbishment including improvement works to the roof and 2 empty units. The new owners are keen to regenerate the centre and are trying to identify a tenant to anchor a redevelopment scheme.		
Spring clean the Town centres	March 2013	✓
A deep clean of all pavements in Halstead, Witham and Braintree Town Centres took place in April. The street furniture has been reviewed and a maintenance programme set up to replace furniture and bins.		
Provide 50 affordable homes across the District	March 2013	✓
55 affordable homes have been provided since April this year.		
Bring 55 empty homes back in to use	March 2013	✓
To date, 55 empty homes have been brought back into use. The Empty Home Rescue scheme has been successfully launched with Colne Housing in September and 11 properties are being considered.		



Our Priorities

- Provide value for money
- Deliver excellent customer service
- Improving our services through innovation

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Achieve the Customer Service Excellence Standard for our key services The Housing Services team successfully achieved the standard in December achieving 5 areas of compliance plus. Environmental Services completed their pre-assessment with 16 partially compliant areas which they are now working on. Operations to be assessed in quarter four. We aim for 3 services to be completed by the end of quarter four with Environmental Services being completed, early in the new financial year.	September 2013	
Ensure our services continue to be fit for purpose and offer value for money by undertaking a programme of Efficiency Reviews Reviews are in progress for Building Control, Operations and Procurement. Reviews have been completed for Development Management, Town Hall and Facilities Management. The review board will meet in February to review progress.	March 2013	
Assess and understand the implications of the Governments proposed Business Rates Retention scheme A report on the principles of the proposed scheme was presented to Cabinet in December. This will now be incorporated into the budget and Council Tax setting for 2013/14	December 2012	
Localisation of the Council Tax Benefit scheme Full Council agreed the proposed scheme on the 10 th December 2012. A guide to the scheme will be published to highlight the changes.	December 2012	
Implement the new leisure contract to deliver a customer focused, accessible and cost effective leisure service The management of the leisure centres across the district has been successfully transferred to the new contractor Fusion Lifestyle. Fusion will be investing in new fitness equipment and aims to create more opportunities to get more people active and enjoying sport and exercise.	September 2012	
Increase customer satisfaction with business and citizens using regulatory services Customer satisfaction surveys sent to all transacting businesses with Environmental Services. The responses are currently being collated and the results will be available in the next quarter	March 2013	



The majority of our services and improvements are provided in partnership with others, whether it is with community groups, voluntary organisations, public sector or private sector organisations.

Project description and comments	Target Date	Status
Lobby for A120 improvements and a Braintree rail loop through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership	March 2013	
Continue to lobby for A120 improvements. The proposed rail loop has been published in GEML capacity study in December by Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk county councils.		
Work with local doctors and other health partners to develop and improve local health services	March 2013	
Deep dives by public health research are to be carried out by the end of the financial year into Educational attainment in Braintree schools, fuel poverty and hip fractures.		
Work with our partners to deliver better outcomes for residents through the county wide Community Budget programme and a neighbourhood budget pilot in Witham	March 2013	
The Localism Board approved the documentation for the Witham neighbourhood budget project. Discussions were initiated to pilot Skills for Growth and Strengthening Communities initiatives within Witham. Mapping of activities for young people and employment support has also commenced		
Work with our community safety partners and the new Police and Crime Commissioner to make our district safer	March 2013	
The new Essex police and crime commissioner met with the Council to discuss local issues and concerns. Braintree has achieved a reduction in crime by 1.8% and 13.6% on anti-social behaviour.		
Work with water companies and the Environment Agency to increase resilience to drought by promoting efficient use of water across the district	March 2013	
Currently waiting for the commencement of the Environmental Agency's project to reduce water consumption with local businesses which is due to start early in the new financial year.		
Work in partnership with businesses across the district to create economic growth and new jobs	March 2013	
Through the Portas Pilot, a retail business start-up event was launched to provide opportunities for new retail businesses.		
Work in partnership with retailers and town centre stakeholders to attract new businesses to our towns and increase footfall	March 2013	
Christmas events held to increase footfall into the towns. Progressing a project to open a pop up shop in Braintree to assist new business start-ups and reduce the number of empty shops.		
Response to Localism Act and Localism Framework	March 2013	
Established a Localism board which met in November to approve project documentation for a programme of works on localism		









Section 3: Managing the Business







Performance Indicator Overview

The information in the table below details the performance for the end of the third quarter based on the basket of performance indicators detailed in 'Our plans for the District 2012/13'. Not all performance indicators have targets set and the outturn figures are for information purposes only.

A sample of performance indicators have been checked to ensure data quality.

Our Performance Indicators in Detail

Performance Indicator	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Performance at the end of the Quarter	Comments
Percentage of land that falls below cleanliness standards for litter	n/a	3%	3%		9%		Reported 3 times a year
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	60.57%	60.40%	54%		58%		The prolonged period of very wet weather in the Autumn resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of garden waste put out for collection. We are still very close to achieving our target.
Percentage of fly tips cleared within 24 hours of being reported	98.8%	98.45%	100%		100%		Cumulative outturn is 99.1%
Public Satisfaction with parks and open spaces	n/a	81%	n/a		85%	n/a	Reported every six months
The number of households supported by installing energy saving measures	Annually reported indicator						
The number of households and business assisted to install water efficiency measures	Annually reported indicator						
Number of customers using our leisure centres	264,864	192,172	183,827		242,500		Following the start of the Fusion leisure contract, there is a more robust measuring tool in place providing a more accurate picture of customer using our leisure centres. Participation is increasing in 2013 as Fusion continues to promote the centres
Number of passenger journeys on the Community Transport Scheme	15,624	14,658	15,680		14,500		
Percentage of Mi Community projects successfully completed	Annually reported indicator						
Number of prosecutions against 'rogue trading'	5	4	3		3		
Number of empty homes in the district returned to use	20	20	15		14		To date, 55 empty homes have been returned to use against an annual target of 55
Number of affordable homes delivered	16	20	19		18		To date 55 affordable homes have been delivered against an annual target of 50
Number of young people assisted into education,	Annually reported indicator						

Performance Indicator	Q1 Outturn	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Outturn	Target for the Quarter	Performance at the end of the Quarter	Comments
employment or training through council and partnership schemes							
Percentage of empty shops in the district	Annually reported indicator						
Number of new business start ups in the district	Annually reported Indicator						
Number of people using Council owned car parks in Braintree, Witham and Halstead town centres	172,682	171,971	174,089		157,500		Q3 outturn does not currently include the figures from Halstead car parks
Percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact within the Customer Service Centre	87.67%	81.33%	78.67%		85%		There were problems with recording this figure in quarter three which have been resolved in quarter four. Cumulative outturn is 81.67%
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims	17.46 days	17.88 days	18.37 days		18 days		The performance in the third quarter has been affected by sickness and the bank holidays which count as normal days for the purpose of this performance indicator. Cumulative outturn is 17.9 days
Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit change of circumstances	5.54 days	6.31 days	5.91 days		6 days		Cumulative outturn is 5.92 days
Percentage of minor planning applications processed within 8 weeks	70.45%	76.06%	68.24%		77%		58 out of 85 applications determined within 8 weeks. There had been a higher than usual level of staff turnover. Action taken by Officers ensured resources were brought in to prevent this performance reducing further.
Number of stage 2 complaints received	11	6	2		Data Only	Data Only	
Percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to within 7 working days	95.4%	94%	95.8%		90%		Represents 207 out of 216 stage 1 complaints responded to within 7 working days
Overall customer satisfaction with the way Braintree District Council runs things	n/a	91%	n/a		89%	n/a	Reported every six months
Percentage of residents who agree that Braintree District Council provides value for money	n/a	62%	n/a		67%	n/a	Reported every six months

Customer Services & Views

The following is a selection of our customer service performance measures:

Customer Service: Indicators of Performance					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Target
Average telephone response time in the Customer Service Centre	16 seconds	13 seconds	8 seconds		15 seconds
Number of transactions carried out via the Council website	23,845	23,834	21,111		21,250
Number of unique visitors to the Council website	104,678	91,852	96,012		100,000
Percentage of avoidable contacts	n/a	14.7%	n/a		Data only

Customer satisfaction surveys

We continually seek to keep track of how our residents feel about us and the services we provide. In the past, the Governments national surveys such as the 'Place Survey' and the 'BVPI Survey' were used to monitor residents' satisfaction with Councils. Although these surveys are no longer compulsory, for us this information is still a high priority. Therefore we have introduced our own on-going satisfaction survey to gather feedback and comments from our customers. This consultation is continuous and the results are reviewed and published every six months.

Our next set of results will be published in our end of year report.

Complaints

The quarterly complaints analysis for 2012/13 is detailed below. This is compared with 2011/12 figures shown in brackets.

Complaint Category	Q1 2012/13	Q2 2012/13	Q3 2012/13	Q4 2012/13	TOTAL
Justified	85 (85)	82 (117)	114 (60)	(52)	(314)
Not Justified	101 (64)	100 (108)	99 (69)	(119)	(360)
Partially Justified	13 (16)	27 (16)	10 (14)	(16)	(62)
Not known	9 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0)	(0)	(0)
Total	208 (165)	209 (241)	225 (143)	(187)	(736)

Comments

The number of complaints received in the third quarter of the year has increased. The identified trend in the number of complaints for the third quarter is due to the high number of complaints received relating to missed waste collections due to the roll out of the food waste collection service to the remainder of the district at the end of September whilst crews familiarised themselves with the new routes and collection points.

A summary of the local ombudsman cases for the first quarter period is: 3

There were three complaints received by the Local Government Ombudsman during the third quarter of 2012/13. For one complaint, the LGO decided to discontinue the investigation. The remaining two complaints are still being investigated.

Our Organisation

The following is a selection of our people performance measures:

People: Indicators of Performance	Q1 12/13	Q2 12/13	Q3 12/13	Q4 12/13	Change on previous period	Yearly Target
Total headcount	466	468	472		+ 4	-
Total number of posts	480	476	482		+ 6	
Number of temporary staff	29	32	38		+ 6	-
Total staff FTE	448.58	433.39	430.22		- 3.17	-
Permanent staff FTE	378.51	375.83	394.05		+ 18.22	-
Temporary staff FTE	29.29	28.92	36.17		+ 7.25	-
Level of employee turnover	1.68%	3%	3.18%		+ 0.18	-
Number of vacant posts	6	5	15		- 1	-
Number of vacancies (FTE)	6	4.5	14.45		- 1.5	-
Number of temporary leavers	1	6	6		0	-
Number of permanent leavers	9	16	9		-7	-
Number of starters	8	13	14		+1	-
Working days lost to sickness per employee	1.27 days	1.69 days	1.65 days		-0.04 days	8.0 days
Number of learning days	765.50	784	812		+18.50	-
Average learning days per employee	1.64	1.67	1.72		+ 0.03	≥3.5 days
Number of apprentices	8	6	12		+ 6	-

Year on Year Headcount Analysis	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	772	586	567	541	503	485

Health & Safety

The following is a selection of our Health and Safety performance measures. There are no targets; the data is for information purposes only.

Health & Safety: Indicators of Performance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	(2011/12 figure in brackets)				
Total number of reported accidents/ incidents, calculated from:	21 (7)	17 (11)	8 (13)	(22)	
<i>a. Accidents/ incidents to employees</i>	17 (7)	13 (9)	7 (12)	(19)	The top category for Q3 was slips.
<i>b. Accidents/ incidents to contractors</i>	2 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	(2)	
<i>c. Accidents/ incidents to non-employees</i>	2 (0)	3 (1)	1 (1)	(1)	
Time lost in days due to employee accidents/ incidents	39 (3)	7 (8)	4 (12)	(50)	
Number of reported verbal/ physical incidents to employees	1 (1)	3 (0)	0 (1)	(0)	
Number of near miss incidents	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (1)	(2)	
Number of Accidents/ incidents registered resulting in insurance/ compensation claim	3 (0)	2 (1)	2 (1)	(3)	
Number of claims settled	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	(0)	

Managing our Business Key Performance Indicators

Financial Performance

The current projected outturn is a net spend of £15.275 million, compared with a budget of £16.159 million, giving a projected under spend of £884,000.

Summary:

The vast majority of this is due to the re-letting of contracts which have resulted in reduced costs (Leisure £526,000 and ICT £75,000) or increased income (Recycling £175,000). This was previously identified in the budget report to Cabinet on 4th February 2013 and was taken into account when agreeing the four year profile and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The projected under spend is higher than that estimated at the second quarter of £635,000 by a net £249,000, mainly as a result of an overall improvement in income and expenditure relating to commercial properties (£123,000); additional under spend against staff budgets (£46,000); and resources held over for use in 2013/14 (£86,000).

The projected year-end General Fund balance is now £7.535 million.

Key Service Issues:

Key service issues that are contained within the projected outturn are:

Expenditure variances

- **Salaries** – across all services there is a projected salary under spend of £315,000. An overall corporate efficiency target was set at £416,350 for the year which includes £337,960 that would normally be met through staff turnover and a further £78,390 targeted at savings generated from service reviews. At this stage there is a projected shortfall against meeting the target from salaries for the year of £101,000, although this is an improvement over the position at the last quarter where the shortfall was estimated to be £147,000.

Business Plan – Salary Budgets	Original Controllable Budget £'000	Updated Controllable Budget £'000	Projected Full Year Spend £'000	Variance Adverse/ (Favourable) £'000	Variance %
Business Solutions	746	763	759	(4)	-1%
Community Services	830	859	818	(41)	-5%
Corporate Management Plan	1,079	1,066	1,021	(45)	-4%
Environment	1,594	1,559	1,537	(22)	-1%
Financial Services	2,259	2,253	2,179	(74)	-3%
Housing Services	591	591	597	6	1%
Operations	4,334	4,367	4,279	(88)	-2%
People & Democracy	905	858	823	(35)	-4%
Sustainable Development	1,691	1,690	1,678	(12)	-1%
Service Total	14,029	14,006	13,691	(315)	-2%
Efficiency target and profiled savings	(416)	(416)	(416)	416	-
Net Total	13,613	13,590	13,275	101	1%

- **Leisure Management** – The award of a new leisure management contract commencing from 1 September 2012 has led to a significant reduction in the cost of operating the Council's leisure facilities. This includes achieving a guaranteed return from investment to be made by the Council on new and improved health and fitness facilities. It is anticipated

that savings against the current year budget will be around £526,000, after taking into account some one-off costs.

This underspend is being used to part finance the proposed investment of £785,000 in new and improved leisure facilities which will lead to an improved revenue return of £129,000 per annum.

- **ICT Contract** – The Medium Term Financial Strategy provided for savings following the joint procurement for ICT services which resulted in the appointment of CAPITA. The amount of the savings to be achieved was subject to “due diligence” the completion of which has resulted in a further £75,000 of on-going savings.
- **Corporate overheads** – projected savings of £74,000 are expected across a number of corporate budget heads including external audit fees, bank charges, telephony costs, postages, and insurance premia which are in excess of the reductions that had already been allowed in the original budget.
- **Housing services** - the cost of dealing with homelessness and other temporary accommodation needs is projected to be less than budget by £33,000. These services are demand-led and it is therefore difficult to be precise about future requirements.
- **Planning policy** – the original budget allowed for £40,000 to resource setting-up of a community infrastructure levy scheme. However, this work will now be undertaken in 2013/14 where a charging schedule is to be developed with supporting evidence for examination by a Planning inspector. Therefore, the under spend this year will be transferred to the carry forward reserve.
- **Concessionary Fares** – a one-off reduction of £24,000 against the cost of taxi-tokens following the final financial reconciliation of the scheme which ceased during 2011/12.

Income positive variances

Additional income above budget was received in the following areas:

- **Refuse & recycling** – An over achievement of income is predicted from the sale of recycling materials of £175,000. At the time of setting the budget the Council was negotiating the contract for sale of recycling materials and allowed a minimum £35 per tonne, however, currently around £50 per tonne is being achieved. Under the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) on Waste with Essex County Council the Council is rewarded financially for achieving improved recycling performance. The original recycling target under the IAA was 45% against which the Council has been improving performance – due in part to the food waste service - and is now predicting a rate of around 58% in the current year resulting in additional reward grant of £26,000. Additional income totalling £46,000 is predicted under this service from compost recycling credits, trade waste charges, and other income.
- **Development Control** – An over-achievement of £58,000 of fee income from a combination of an increase in statutory fees by 15% from November and increased number of major retail applications. The current projected fee income is £570,000, compared to the budget of £512,000 (reduced from a base budget of £632,000). In 2011/12 the outturn fee income was £479,000. However, this higher application fee income is offset by a small reduction in other income (£12,000) and a projected over

spend of £37,000, mainly due to higher than provided planning appeal/ inquiry costs.

- **Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS)** – the Department for Communities and Local Government has paid grant of £84,000 towards the cost of implementing the new LCTS of which £38,000 is being used in the current year to fund changes to IT systems, leaving £46,000 balance to be carried over into 2013/14 as partial funding towards additional staff costs and support the Citizens Advice Bureau to deal with the anticipated enquiries and support that will need to be given council taxpayers.
- **Community Transport** – the expanded community transport service providing shopper buses and hospital hopper services has resulted in a predicted over achievement of income of £30,000. The service has also continued to administer the concessionary fare scheme on behalf of Essex County Council for an additional six-months resulting in extra unbudgeted income of £14,000.
- **Commercial Property Portfolio** – projected income from the Council's commercial property (industrial land, commercial units, and shops) is higher than budgeted, with a lower level of void periods resulting in additional income of £40,000, coupled with a one-off back dated rent review adjustment of £52,000.
- **Other services** – a net over achievement of £17,000 is expected across the rest of the Council's services.

Income negative variances

Although some service areas are experiencing increased income there are still a number of services where a shortfall is projected:

- **Building control** – Demand for this service continues to be depressed with the projection at the third quarter deteriorating from that at the previous quarter. The original budget was reduced by £50,000 to £380,000; however, the current projection is for income to be around £280,000, a shortfall of £100,000, and £20,000 worse than that achieved in 2011/12. Where possible expenditure is being controlled to mitigate the position, including diverting staff resources to processing disabled facility grant applications where demand remains high. A business efficiency review of the service is in progress for this service.
- **Causeway House** – A net shortfall of £32,000 is expected due to the occupation of Causeway House by ECC being later than anticipated at the time of setting the budget. The reduced rental and service charge income (£56,000) is partially offset by a reduction in business rates and general maintenance (£24,000).
- **Town Hall Centre** – letting income is projected to be down against budget by £29,000, assuming a similar level being achieved as last year (£74,000 against a budget of £103,000).

Offsetting the above expenditure and income variances the following matters are addressed:

- **Mayland House** – additional net operating costs, estimated to be £14,000. Holding costs in the year are projected at £114,000, however, these have been offset by £100,000 of rental income accrued in the year following the earlier than anticipated completion of the lease for a single-let of the building.

- **Revenue contribution to capital** – a contribution of up to £124,000 for financing the additional capital spend on vehicles and containers required for the expansion of the food waste service to a further 16,400 properties. This cost will be recovered from the annual contributions from Essex County Council under the Inter-Authority Waste Agreement.
- **Provisions for contingent liabilities** - information has been received in the year suggesting that an increase of £40,000 in the provision required for potential refunds of local land charge fees is necessary increasing the total amount set aside to £130,000 pending resolution of outstanding claims. In addition the Council has been advised that a Scheme of Arrangement set-up following cessation of trading by Municipal Mutual Insurance Limited in 1992 – the Council's insurers at the time – has been triggered and will result in a claw back against settlement of past claims. The maximum claw back is up to £122,500, although based on the latest information available, it is estimated that a provision of £59,000 is required to be set aside.

Breakdown of Spend by Service Area

The following table provides a breakdown of the projected outturn by business plan service area.

Business Plan	Original Controllable Budget £'000	Updated Controllable Budget £'000	Full year Net Spend £'000	Variance Exp. £'000	Variance Income £'000	Variance Adverse/ (Favourable) £'000	RAG Status
Business Solutions	1,844	1,843	1,742	(93)	(8)	(101)	-5%
Community Services	2,258	2,268	1,615	(642)	(11)	(653)	-29%
Corporate Management Plan	1,280	1,298	1,227	(71)	-	(71)	-5%
Environment	960	965	965	(117)	117	-	-
Financial Services	1,194	1,193	1,067	(102)	(24)	(126)	-11%
Housing Services	634	634	581	(47)	(6)	(53)	-8%
Operations	4,097	4,085	3,841	(19)	(225)	(244)	-6%
People & Democracy	1,652	1,634	1,562	(41)	(31)	(72)	-4%
Sustainable Development	606	526	468	46	(104)	(58)	-11%
Service Total	14,525	14,446	13,068	(1,086)	(292)	(1,378)	-9%
Corporate Efficiency/ Vacancy Factor	(416)	(416)	-	416	-	416	-
Corporate Financing	2,050	2,129	2,207	83	(5)	78	4%
Total	16,159	16,159	15,275	(587)	(297)	(884)	-5%

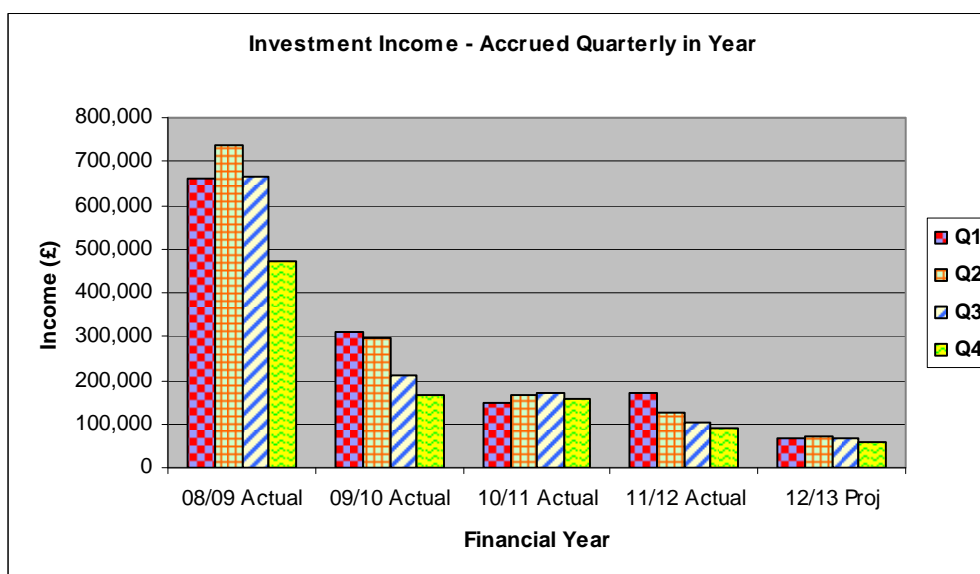
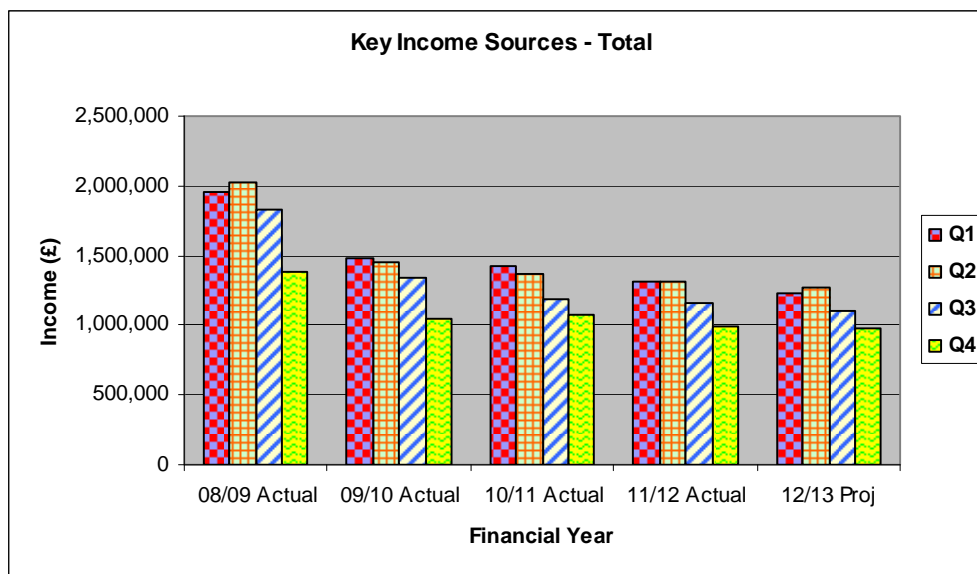
RAG Status: G = favourable or nil variance, A = up to 5% adverse variance, R = > 5% or £50k adverse variance

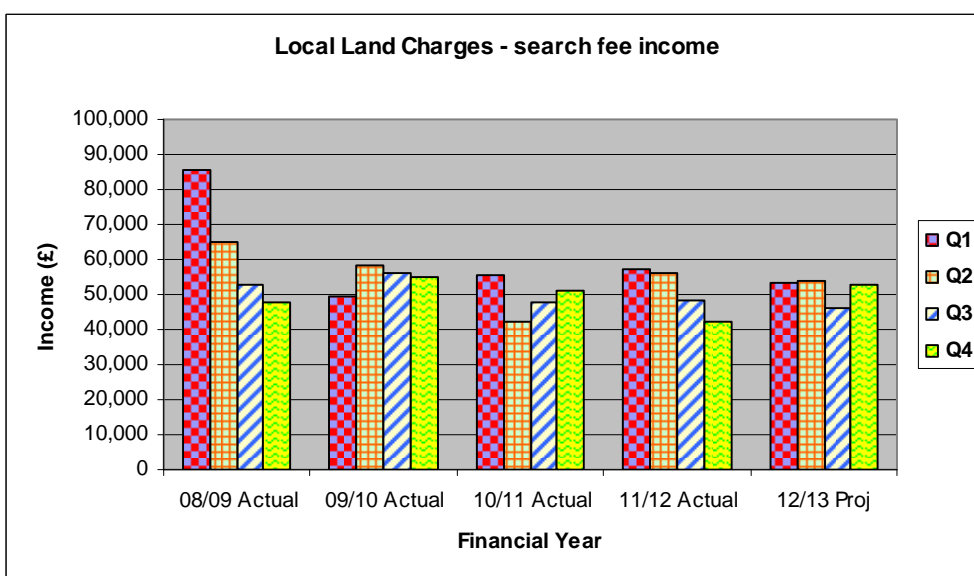
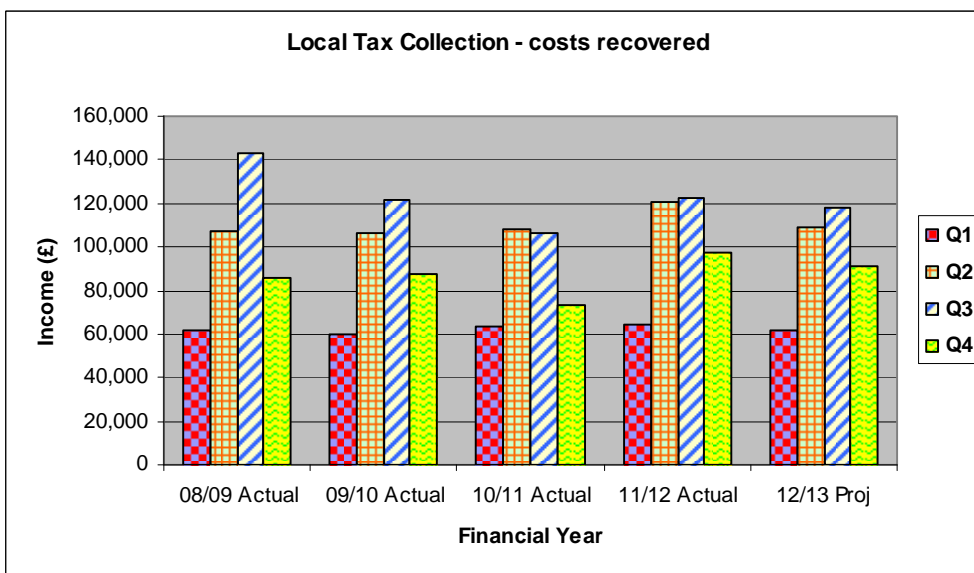
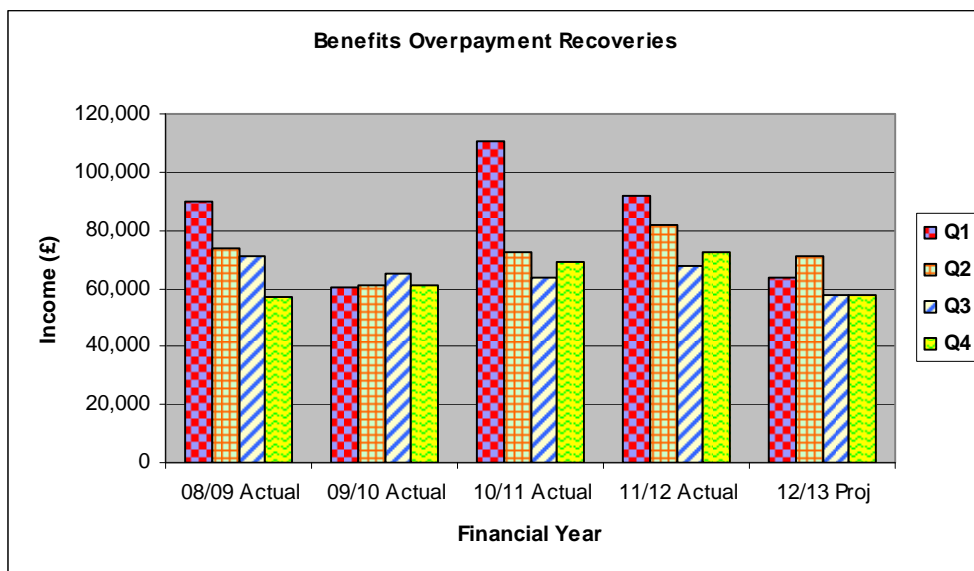
Budget carry forwards

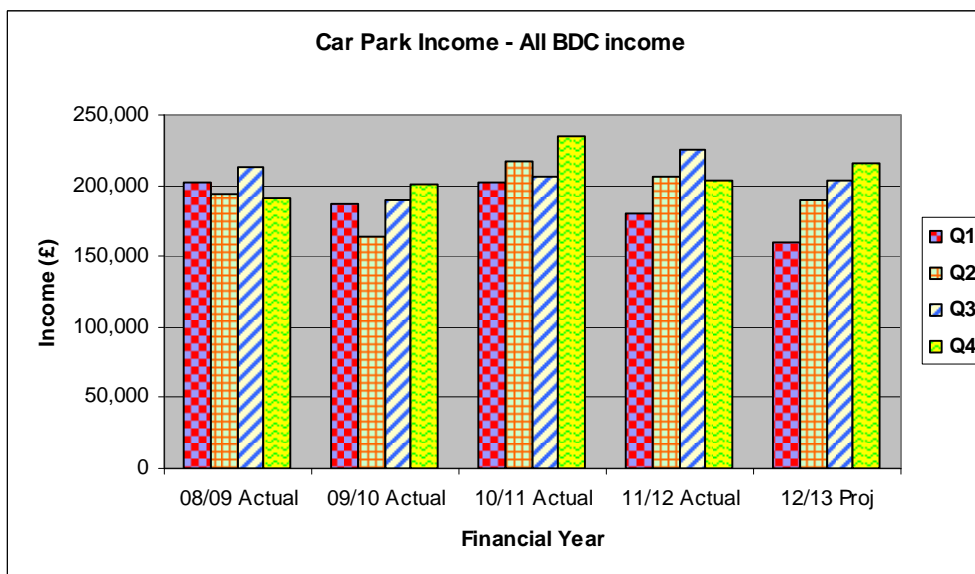
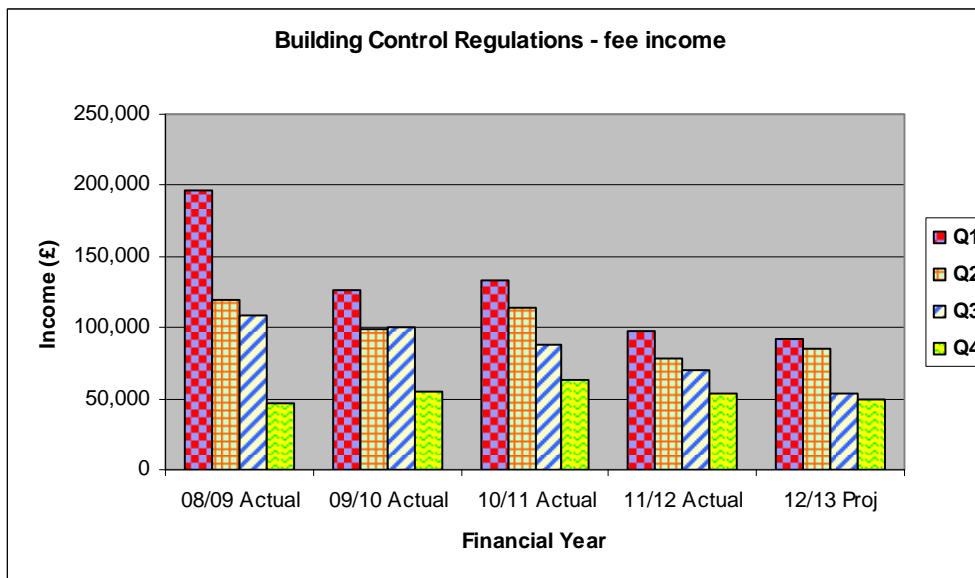
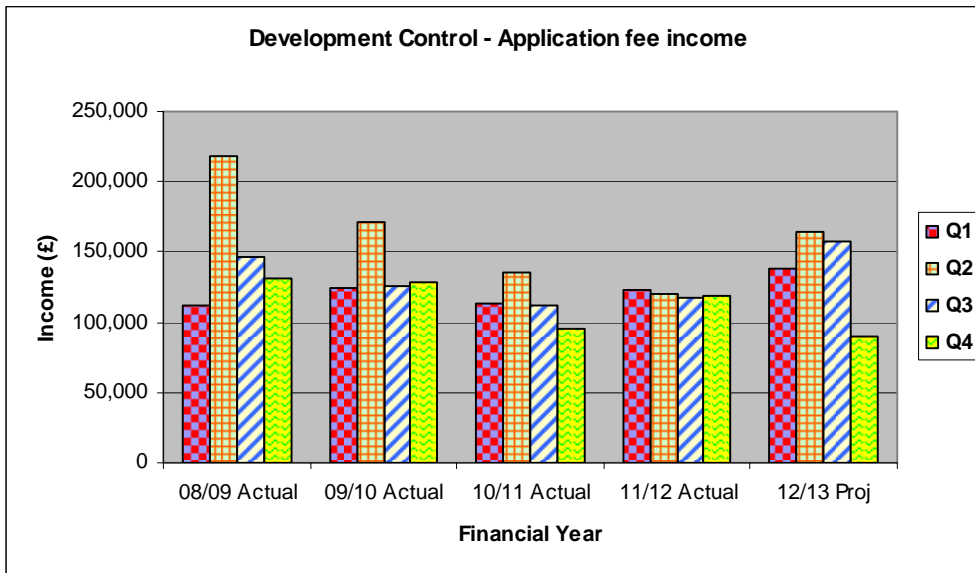
Carry forward of budgets to 2013/14 are anticipated of £120,000, comprising: £40,000 budget for setting up a community infrastructure levy, £46,000 being the balance of government funding towards implementing the local council tax support scheme, and £34,000 from the additional development control income which has been ring fenced to part fund an additional staff post for two years to increase capacity within the service for dealing with major retail applications.

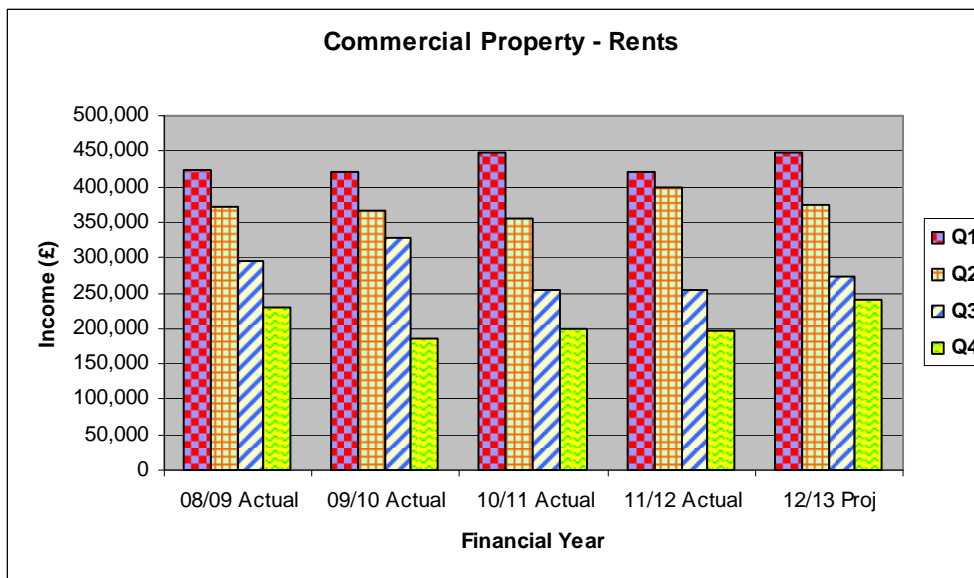
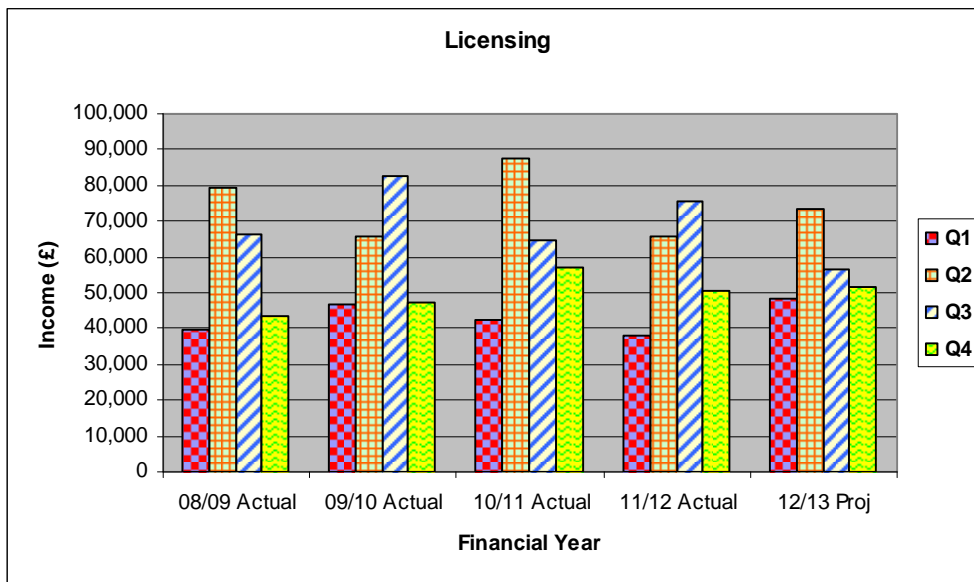
Income Streams

A significant proportion of the Council's budget is reliant on income. The following charts show the trend on the key income streams:









General Fund Balances

Based on the projected outturn set out above, the movement on the General Fund balance is as follows:

	£'000
Balance b/fwd at 1 April 2012 (including £4.515m previously accounted for as Housing Revenue Account)	7,390
Add:	
Projected under spend	884
Interest accrual on deposits at risk	106
Less:	
Budgeted withdrawal	(525)
Transfer to carry forward reserve	(120)
Transfer to Town Centre reserve	(200)
Est. Balance at the year-end	7,535

Movements shown on the General Fund balance are in respect of:

- Projected full-year variance as per this quarter's review.
- Interest is accrued on deposits at risk with Icelandic banks whilst amount remains collectable; however, this credit offsets a previous year accounting impairment charge.
- The budgeted transfer from balances agreed when setting the 2012/13 Budget.
- Carry forwards proposed from the third quarter review
- Transfer to Town Centre reserve – in 2011/12 £100,000 per annum was provided in the base budget for four years to provide funding for town centre and economic growth initiatives. The budget proposals for 2013/14 provide for the remaining two years' allocations to be met from General Fund balances and held in an earmarked reserve for spending in future years.

Risks and Assumptions to the Projected Outturn

The quarterly projections reflect the service managers' "best estimate" of the predicted outturn for the year. Previous year outturn and early trends in-year have been considered, however, as always, these are subject to changing circumstances and unforeseen events. Directors and service managers continue to scrutinise all expenditure commitments in light of the planned savings set out in the medium term financial strategy.

Service income levels are inherently difficult to predict as substantially they are demand led and impacted by external factors.

Provisions against contingent liabilities are based on the estimated impact on the Council on the basis of the information currently available.

A number of items within this quarter's report are subject to approval of the Budget strategy for 2013/14 by Council at their meeting in February.

Capital spend for the year

The programme for reporting purposes is determined as follows:

Approved New Programme for 2012/13	£'000s 3,280
Add:	
Projects approved in previous years where spending is profiled into the current year	3,227
Projects approved and profiled in-year	820
Less:	
Approved New Programme items where spending is profiled into future years	(898)
Programme for 2012/13	6,429

Approved in-year projects refers to the new vehicles and containers required for expansion of the food waste service to a further 16,400 properties (£124,000), contribution towards construction of a footbridge at Freeport (£514,000), feasibility study for site access improvements on the A120, Braintree (£50,000); and Improvements to Halstead River Walk (£91,000). These projects are funded from Growth Area Funds, Essex County Council and/ or developer contributions.

The capital programme is reported over two themes:

- General Fund Services – Spending on Council owned assets and services.
- Housing investment – mainly spent on partnership schemes with social landlords, and providing disabled facilities grants and home improvements grants.

Progress with the delivery of the major capital projects is monitored regularly by Programme Boards, with the Local Development Framework Panel responsible for recommending priorities for use of Growth Area Funding.

The current spend against the programme for the year is as shown in the table below:-

	Programme 2012/13	Actual spend	Grants approved but not yet claimed	Budget Remaining	Spend/ Grants approved at end of Quarter %
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
General Fund Services	4,737	2,438	-	2,299	51.5%
Housing Investment	1,270	546	50	674	46.9%
Capital Salaries	422	317	-	105	75%
Total	6,429	3,301	50	3,078	52.1%

General Fund Services includes spending on the following projects: final phase of the Causeway House refurbishment, acquisition of the Warner Archive Centre, the Freeport footbridge,

development of the Silver End skateboard and BMX Park, vehicles and containers for the extension of the food waste service, and investment across a range of community facilities.

Housing investment includes £439,000 paid or approved for private sector disabled facility and other home improvement grants, and £157,000 on supporting social housing schemes.

Capital resources

Sources of new capital resources currently anticipated for the year is from preserved “Right to Buy” receipts, and the Council’s share of the VAT shelter established with Greenfields Community Housing (Greenfields). Greenfields have reported that there were 11 Right to Buy sales completed to the end of the quarter generating £476,000 for the Council and VAT shelter monies totalled £747,000, of which £229,000 relates to a one-off retrospective claim to HMRC.

Minutes

Local Development Framework Sub- Committee

13th February 2013



Agenda No. 10a

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
D L Bebb	Yes	Lady Newton	Yes (until 7.05pm)
G Butland	Yes	W D Scattergood	Yes
A V E Everard	Yes	C Siddall	Yes
M C M Lager	Yes	M Thorogood	Yes
J M Money	Yes	R G Walters	Yes (until 6.30pm)

Councillors J E Abbott and P R Barlow were also in attendance.

58 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:

Councillor J E Abbott declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – Essex County Council Minerals Local Plan Submission Document – Response and Item 6 - Draft Revised Local Development Scheme as District Council Ward Councillor for Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall and Chairman of Rivenhall Parish Council.

Councillor G Butland declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – Essex County Council Minerals Local Plan Submission Document – Response as a Member of Essex County Council.

Councillor M C M Lager declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 - Essex County Council Minerals Local Plan Submission Document – Response as a Member of both Essex County Council and Witham Town Council.

Councillor J M Money declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 - Essex County Council Minerals Local Plan Submission Document – Response as a Member of Witham Town Council.

Councillor Lady Newton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – Essex County Council Minerals Local Plan Submission Document – Response as District Council Ward Councillor for Coggeshall and North Feering.

Councillor R G Walters declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – Essex County Council Minerals Local Plan Submission Document – Response as a Member of Essex County Council and having expressed a view to both Essex County Council and

Braintree District Council, in particular, against site A9 Broadfield Farm, Rayne. Having taken advice in advance, Councillor Walters left the meeting for the consideration of and vote on this Item.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillors remained in the meeting, unless stated otherwise, and took part in the discussion when the respective items were considered.

59 **MINUTES**

DECISION: The Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 13th December 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

60 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked, or statements made.

Principally, these Minutes record decisions taken only and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions.

61 **ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL MINERALS LOCAL PLAN SUBMISSION DOCUMENT – RESPONSE**

Councillor W D Scattergood, Vice-Chairman of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee, took the Chair for the consideration of this item.

(Councillor J E Abbott (District Council Ward Councillor for Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall and Chairman of Rivenhall Parish Council) attended the meeting and spoke on this item).

(Councillor P R Barlow (District Council Ward Councillor for Witham North) attended the meeting and spoke on this item).

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on Essex County Council's Minerals Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft which had been published on 17th January 2013 for a six week period of public consultation ending on 28th February 2013.

Responses to the document had to be based on whether the Plan met the tests of soundness set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. An independent Planning Inspector would be appointed to examine the Plan and it was anticipated that a public Hearing would take place in October/November 2013.

The Plan covered an 18 year period between 1st January 2012 and 31st December 2029. Taking into account existing planning permissions, the Plan set a target to identify sites for the extraction of 40.67 million tonnes of sand and gravel over the Plan period. The actual provision identified in the Plan amounted to 40.824 million tonnes.

A total of 16 sites in Essex had been selected. Seven of these were located in the Braintree District and included five separate extensions to Bradwell Quarry/Rivenhall Airfield and two new sites at Broadfield Farm, Rayne and Colemans Farm, Rivenhall. Together, these sites would provide 22.78 million tonnes of sand and gravel which equated to approximately 56% of the total for the whole of Essex.

The report proposed that the District Council should object to the Plan, in particular on the ground that the proposed sites failed to meet the strategy for a geographic dispersal of sites and therefore failed to minimise mineral miles. It was also considered that the Plan inadequately assessed the cumulative impact of sand and gravel extraction within a small area. Specific objections to sites A5, A6 and A7 Bradwell Quarry/Rivenhall Airfield, site A9 Broadfield Farm, Rayne and site A46 Colemans Farm, Rivenhall were also set out in the report.

In discussing this matter, Councillors agreed that paragraphs 4.19 and 4.35 of the report should be deleted. It was also agreed that the decision should refer to the impact of sites A5, A6, A7, A9 and A46 on public rights of way; that the references to 'Little Braxted Road' and 'Braxted Park Road' in paragraph (iv) of the decision should be amended to 'Little Braxted Lane' and 'Braxted Road' respectively; that paragraph (iv) of the decision should be amended to refer to the impact of the proposal on residents of Rivenhall End; that paragraph (v) of the decision should be amended to refer to the impact of the proposal on residents of Coggeshall Hamlet and Silver End, and amended to refer to the cumulative impact of all development proposals for the area, in particular, those relating to waste disposal; and that paragraph (vi) of the decision should be amended to refer to the impact of the proposal on the local population of Coggeshall Hamlet. In addition, the Sub-Committee agreed that the District Council should draw the Highway Agency's attention to the impact of additional HGV traffic on junctions with the A12 around Witham, particularly the southbound on-slip, and the wider road network.

It was reported that the Cabinet Member - Planning and Property would be recommended to take account of the Sub-Committee's decision in responding to Essex County Council.

The Sub-Committee thanked Emma Goodings and Eleanor Dash for their excellent report.

DECISION: That it be Recommended that the Cabinet Member - Planning and Property takes account of the following in her response to Essex County Council's consultation:-

A. That the objections set out in the report considered by the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee and amended as agreed at that meeting be submitted to Essex County Council in response to its Replacement Minerals Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft Document, which are summarised as follows, subject to Braintree District Council drawing the Highway Agency's attention to the impact of additional HGV traffic on junctions with the A12 around Witham, particularly the southbound on-slip, and the wider road network; to the deletion of paragraphs 4.19 and 4.35, and changes to refer to impacts on public rights of way and cumulative impacts including impacts of waste proposals.

- i) That the allocation of sites for sand and gravel extraction fails to meet the Plan's strategy for a geographic dispersal of sites across the County and therefore fails in its target to minimise mineral miles.
- ii) That the Plan is not justified as it has failed to adequately assess the cumulative impact of such a high proportion of extraction sites within a small area of Essex.

- iii) That the Council strongly objects to the inclusion of site A9 Broadfield Farm, Rayne due to the impacts on: -
 - The local population
 - The local landscape
 - The Protected Lane at Pods Lane and two Local Wildlife Sites
 - The B1256 and other roads in the vicinity
 - Historic Environment
 - Agricultural Land
 - Public rights of way
- iv) That the Council strongly objects to the inclusion of site A46 Colemans Farm, Rivenhall due to the impacts on:-
 - Little Braxted Lane and A12 from the access
 - Residents in Braxted Road and Rivenhall End
 - The local landscape and including on the river valley and the reservoir
 - Impact on the local environment
 - Public rights of way
- v) That the Council strongly objects to the inclusion of sites A5 and A6 Bradwell Quarry, Rivenhall Airfield due to the impacts on:-
 - The local population including residents of Coggeshall Hamlet and Silver End garden village.
 - The local landscape including Storeys Wood Local Wildlife Site
 - The historic environment
 - The businesses at the Former Polish Camp Site
 - Agriculture
 - Public rights of way
 - The cumulative impact of all development proposals for the area, in particular, the existing planning permission for a waste site
- vi) That the Council strongly objects to the inclusion of site A7 at Bradwell Quarry, Rivenhall Airfield due to the impacts on:-
 - The local population including residents of Coggeshall Hamlet
 - The landscape including the Protected Lane and bridleway
 - The size of the site
 - Agriculture
 - The historic environment
 - Public rights of way

B. That the Council should not object to sites A3 and A4 at Bradwell Quarry, Rivenhall Airfield.

62 **DRAFT REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

(Councillor J E Abbott (District Council Ward Councillor for Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall and Chairman of Rivenhall Parish Council) attended the meeting and spoke on this item).

INFORMATION: Members were reminded, that in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council was required to prepare a Local Development Scheme. This set out a rolling programme for the preparation of planning documents for Braintree District's Local Development Framework.

The Local Development Scheme included a timetable for the production and adoption for all Development Plan Documents; identified background studies and documents which would form an evidence base; a list of current, adopted Supplementary Planning Documents, Material Planning Guidance and Development Briefs; and set out arrangements for monitoring and review.

In discussing the new Supplementary Planning Documents and, in particular, the proposed Master Plan for the strategic growth location to the North-East of Witham off Forest Road in Rivenhall Parish, it was noted that the report contained an error and that the document would be produced by both Braintree District Council and the developer of the site.

DECISION: That the Local Development Scheme 2013 be approved, subject to the words 'and developer' being added to paragraph 4.6 Supplementary Planning Documents - Forest Road Master Plan.

63 **RECORD OF DELEGATED DECISION RELATING TO THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND THE SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

INFORMATION: Members were advised that the following decision had been made by the Chairman of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee under delegated powers:-

Councillor R G Walters – Chairman of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee
10th January 2013

To approve the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Introductory Section and Appendices of the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, for the purpose of public consultation.

DECISION: That the delegated decision set out in the report be noted.

Site Visit

It was reported that arrangements were being made for Members of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee to attend an accompanied site visit to particular sites referred to in the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. It was agreed that the site visit should take place on Thursday, 7th March 2013 starting at 9.30am from Causeway House, Braintree.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.09pm.

Councillor R G Walters
(Chairman)