

Minutes

Council Meeting

19th October 2015



These Minutes principally record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions. A webcast of the meeting is available for six months at www.braintree.gov.uk.

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
Councillor J Abbott	Yes	Councillor D Mann	Yes
Councillor Mrs J Allen	Yes	Councillor J McKee	Yes
Councillor C Bailey	Yes	Councillor R Mitchell	Yes
Councillor M Banthorpe	Apologies	Councillor Mrs J Money	Yes
Councillor J Baugh	Yes	Councillor Lady Newton	Yes
Councillor Mrs J Beavis	Yes	Councillor J O'Reilly-Cicconi	Yes
Councillor D Bebb	Apologies	Councillor Mrs I Parker	Yes
Councillor R Bolton	Yes	Councillor Mrs S Paul	Apologies
Councillor K Bowers	Yes	Councillor Mrs J Pell	Yes
Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint	Yes	Councillor R Ramage	Yes
Councillor G Butland	Yes	Councillor F Ricci (Vice-Chairman)	Yes
Councillor S Canning	Apologies	Councillor B Rose	Yes
Councillor J Cunningham	Yes	Councillor Ms V Santomauro	Yes
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham	Yes	Councillor Mrs W Scattergood	Yes
Councillor T Cunningham	Yes	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt	Apologies
Councillor M Dunn	Yes	Councillor P Schwier	Yes
Councillor J Elliott	Yes (from 7.45pm)	Councillor C Siddall	Yes
Councillor J Goodman	Yes	Councillor Mrs G Spray	Yes
Councillor A Hensman	Yes	Councillor P Tattersley	Yes
Councillor P Horner	Yes	Councillor Mrs C Thompson	Apologies
Councillor D Hufton-Rees	Apologies	Councillor Miss M Thorogood	Yes
Councillor D Hume	Yes	Councillor R van Dulken	Yes
Councillor H Johnson	Yes	Councillor Mrs L Walters (Chairman)	Yes
Councillor Mrs A Kilmartin	Yes	Councillor Mrs S Wilson	Yes
Councillor S Kirby	Yes		

41 **CHAIRMAN'S AND/OR LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman's announcements covered the following:

- Reception for Braintree District Mencap Society's 60th Anniversary - The Chairman was delighted to announce that she would be hosting a reception at the Town Hall on 23rd October 2015 to celebrate the achievements of people who had supported Braintree District Mencap Society over a period of 60 years. Since its inception, the charity had

done so much to support residents of the District with learning disabilities and it had been assisted by many local businesses and individuals.

- Remembrance Sunday, 8th November 2015 - The Chairman stated that Remembrance services and parades would be taking place locally on 8th November 2015 and she hoped that Councillors would be able to attend one of these. The Chairman would be laying a wreath on behalf of the Council at the service to be at the War Memorial in Braintree Public Gardens. This year, Remembrance Sunday would be particularly poignant as it was the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.
- The Pride Awards, 2nd October 2015 - The Chairman, together with Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt, Deputy Leader of the Council, had been delighted to attend the Braintree District Council Pride Awards event on 2nd October 2015 to celebrate the achievements of staff. The winners of the Awards were Jenny Mayes, Marketing and Communications; Phil Myers, Financial Services; Paul Pooran, ICT Services; Doug Rigby, Waste and Recycling; Alison Webb, Governance and Members Team; and the Waste and Recycling Team. The Chairman congratulated all the winners and nominees.

The Leader did not have any announcements to make.

42 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

43 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There was one statement made. Details of the person who spoke at the meeting are contained in the Appendix to these Minutes.

44 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14th September 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman,

45 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW - ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15 and MID-YEAR REVIEW 2015/16**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to the Treasury Management Review - Annual Report 2014/15 and Mid-Year Review 2015/16. It was reported that the Annual Report and Mid-Year Review had been received and noted by the Council's Governance Committee at its meeting on 16th September 2015 and by Cabinet on 28th September 2015 and had been referred to Full Council for approval. In addition, Cabinet had recommended that certain investment limits contained in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy should be increased.

It was reported that the Council's Treasury Management Strategy approved in February 2015 included a limit of £20 million on the total amount of Non-Specified Investments that could be used for the purposes of treasury management and that the limit on Non-Specified Investments had been divided on the basis of £10 million for long-term investments; and £10 million for investments in organisations or securities without a credit rating, or having a rating of less than A-. In addition to the overall Non-Specified Investment limit, an individual

counterparty limit had been approved of £4 million per Money Market Fund, or Pooled Fund (i.e. a collective investment scheme).

The limits set within the Treasury Management Strategy had been based on a previous assessment of the level of cash balances that the Council was likely to hold over the medium to long-term. However, higher level balances had been achieved and these were forecast to continue over the medium to long-term. In addition, investments in four Pooled Funds during 2014/15 had generated additional revenue income despite a high degree of market price volatility. Based on this situation, it was proposed that the limit on Non-Specified Investments should be increased by £5 million to £25 million and allocated to long-term investments. It was also proposed that the counterparty limit on individual Money Market Funds and Pooled Funds should be increased to £5 million.

DECISION:

- (1) That the Treasury Management Review – Annual Report 2014/15 and Mid-Year Review 2015/16, be received and noted.
- (2) That the Governance Committee's comment regarding the Council's successful and prudent approach to investment and Treasury Management over recent years be noted.
- (3) That the Treasury Management Strategy is amended by increasing the limit on Non-Specified Investments by £5 million to £25 million and that within this increased limit the amount allocated for long-term investments is set at £15 million.
- (4) That the counterparty limit on individual Money Market Funds and Pooled Funds is increased by £1 million to £5 million.

REASON FOR DECISION: The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services which requires that Full Council receives an annual report and mid-year review of its treasury management function in order to exercise its ultimate responsibility for treasury management activities. Under the Council's Constitution the Governance Committee should initially review the report and recommend to Cabinet before Full Council receives the report.

Furthermore, the decision is to provide additional flexibility within the Treasury Management Strategy to increase the Council's exposure to long-term investments should this be deemed the most appropriate use of the Council's cash balances, taking account of any alternative investment strategies.

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REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS AND ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS - PUBLIC SESSION

INFORMATION: The Chairman invited the Leader and the Cabinet Members to introduce their reports. Following this, the Chairman invited Members to ask questions. Questions were not limited to the content of the reports and could be about matters relating to a portfolio, the powers and duties of the Council, or the District.

Consideration was given to the reports of the Leader and Cabinet Members.

Councillor Butland, Leader of the Council, added to his report by referring to the proposed Devolution of Powers to Greater Essex. Councillor Butland stated that The Rt Hon Greg

Clark MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, had written in response to the Greater Essex Partnership's high-level submission. The Secretary of State hoped that the Government and the Partnership would be able to work together in order to maximise economic growth and to provide appropriate accountability through new governance models. The Government was keen to maintain the current momentum and to meet with representatives of the Partnership and Mr George Kieffer, the Interim Chairman of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), to discuss aspects of the proposals and to secure a timely solution.

Councillor Butland referred to the Council's financial position. A Strategy Workshop attended by Cabinet Members and senior officers had taken place on 9th October 2015 to consider the budget and to discuss potential reductions in Government grant funding from 2016/17 to 2018/19 which could amount to £2.24 million. Initial budget proposals would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 25th November 2015 for discussion. The Council would be facing a significant financial challenge which may necessitate an increase in Council-Tax. Councillor Butland referred also to recent announcements by the Government regarding changes to the rate, and subsequent allocation of revenue generated via, business rates and how local government might be able to retain a greater proportion of the sum collected locally. The details of this proposal were awaited. Currently, most of the revenue collected by Braintree District Council via business rates was forwarded to central Government, with the remainder being allocated amongst local precepting authorities. It was anticipated that any changes to the business rates system would involve the phasing out of Government grants to local authorities.

Councillor Mitchell, Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Place, presented the report of Councillor Mrs Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Environment and Place. Councillor Mitchell added to the report by referring to the Essex Playing-fields Association's best kept playing-fields awards ceremony which had taken place recently. A total of 32 awards had been accepted on behalf of Braintree District Council and many others had been awarded in respect of playing-fields maintained by Parish Councils across the District. Councillor Mitchell thanked all those who had helped to achieve this recognition.

Members asked several questions arising from the reports. A webcast of the questions to and responses of Cabinet Members is available on the Council's website at: <http://www.braintree.public-i.tv/core/>

The main topics covered were as follows:

- Potential changes to the business rates system; the need to retain current allocations as a minimum; and the possibility that local authorities may be required to take on unspecified additional responsibilities.
- The proposed creation of an Enterprise Zone for the A120 Corridor in Essex and at the Haven Gateway and its effect on the Local Plan process.
- Whether the Council would have sufficient resources to take on additional responsibilities following a recent announcement that Essex Police may not, in future, be able to respond to incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- How plans for the provision of primary care to meet projected housing growth, particularly in Witham, are to be developed in association with the Local Plan process.

- A Tourism Strategy for the District to promote local museums and the District's rich artistic, cultural and manufacturing heritage.
- Take-up of the Braintree District Business Growth Loan Fund.
- The regeneration of Braintree town centre.
- Works to improve safety at Marks Farm roundabout, Braintree; how further work might be funded if the works currently taking place are not successful; and arrangements to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Affordable housing completions.
- Noise issues associated with an Anglian Water pump at Blackwater Lane, Witham.
- Matter to be raised with Essex County Highways - Uneven cobbles located in High Street, Braintree causing a tripping hazard.
- Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) for Guithavon Valley, Witham – Amendment to improve traffic flow and provide unrestricted access to/from residential properties; a possible further amendment to enable dropped kerbs to be provided; and arrangements for a site meeting.
- Recent announcements regarding changes to the Police service and the closure/sale of some Police Stations.
- The introduction in England of a 5p charge for plastic bags issued by supermarkets/retailers employing 250 or more staff and whether this scheme could be extended to packaging issued by fast food outlets.
- A six month trial scheme to provide '24/7' car parking on the ground floor of George Yard multi-storey car park, Braintree with effect from 1st November 2015; the charges to be imposed; and the need to ensure adequate security.

The following action was agreed in response to questions raised by Members:

- Councillor Lady Newton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing, agreed to obtain and to circulate to all Councillors details of the proposed arrangements to be provided for pedestrians and cyclists as part of works to improve safety at Marks Farm roundabout, Braintree.
- Councillor Mitchell, Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Place, agreed to raise the problem of uneven cobbles located in High Street, Braintree with Essex County Highways.

47 **LIST OF PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD SINCE THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 14TH SEPTEMBER 2015**

INFORMATION: No matters were raised.

48 **CHAIRMEN'S STATEMENTS – PUBLIC SESSION**

INFORMATION: No statements were made.

49 **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS - PUBLIC SESSION**

INFORMATION: No statements were made.

50 **BUSINESS OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

INFORMATION: There were no reports received from Council representatives on external organisations, or issues raised.

There were no matters raised in Private Session.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.27pm.

Councillor Mrs L Walters
(Chairman)

Council 19th October 2015 - Questions Asked/Statements Made

Speaker	Subject
<p>Mr Lee Harding Chairman Braintree Town Football Club</p>	<p>The Local Plan and the relocation of Braintree Town Football Club's ground</p> <p>Mr Harding stated that Braintree Town Football Club had made good progress over recent years and that it was now one step away from being a member of the football league. However, the Club had been advised that its current ground did not meet the standards required by the higher league.</p> <p>Consideration had been given to the feasibility of relocating and a site for a football ground had been included within the proposed Local Plan growth location North-West of Panfield Lane, Braintree. However, Mr Harding expressed concern that this proposal had subsequently been deleted from the plans. Mr Harding was grateful for the help which the Council had given to the Club over the years, but he questioned whether the Council wished to continue to co-operate, or if the Club should look for alternative options. Attempts had been made to contact the Council to discuss the way forward, but no response had been received.</p> <p>*****</p>
<p>Response by Councillor Lady Newton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing</p>	<p>*****</p> <p>Councillor Lady Newton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing, thanked Mr Harding for his statement and she reiterated that the Council had worked in partnership with the Football Club over many years. Councillor Lady Newton explained that the proposed football stadium at the growth location North-West of</p>

	<p>Panfield Lane, Braintree had not been deleted, but the planning application had been amended to describe it as a 'community sports facility'. This would provide maximum flexibility regarding the use of the facility including possible use by the Football Club. It was anticipated that the planning application would be presented to the Planning Committee for determination shortly.</p> <p>Councillor Lady Newton emphasised that the Council wished to help the Football Club to deliver its plans for the future, but that the Council must also ensure that public funds are spent properly. Councillor Lady Newton indicated that she was not aware of the Football Club's recent attempts to contact the Council, but she apologised if these had not received a response.</p>
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