

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

**Agenda No: 11d**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Braintree Town Centre Regeneration

The latest proposals from Henry Boot to redevelop the land behind the Town Hall in Braintree will now incorporate health and leisure facilities. The proposals will provide the opportunity to attract footfall into the town centre, benefiting existing stores. The scheme also incorporates some restaurants which will improve the night time economy. The Development Agreement with Henry Boot has now been extended until December 2014 to submit final plans. When the plans are submitted, residents, local businesses and interested parties will have an opportunity to view and comment on the plans prior to the formal planning application submission.

**PLANNING POLICY**

Replacement Minerals Local Plan Examination

Following the examination at the end of last year the Planning Inspector recommended a series of changes to the Plan before the Minerals Local Plan can be considered sound. The main revision is in respect of sites A6 and A7 which are extensions to Bradwell Quarry. These sites become reserve sites. This means they will only come forward within this Plan period if there is not a 7 year supply of sand and gravel extraction sites, based on a 10 year rolling average of sales.

Essex County Council began a further 6 week period of public consultation on 13<sup>th</sup> March with a deadline of 24<sup>th</sup> April for responses. Following consultation with local Members I shall respond on behalf of the Council. Responses to this consultation will be considered by the Planning Inspector before he issues his final report.

Silver End Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

The 4 week consultation period on the Conservation Appraisal ended on the 14<sup>th</sup> March. The Council is currently considering the comments received on the Appraisal before a final Plan will be presented to Planning Committee in April.

**HOUSING**

Homelessness & Temporary Accommodation

Between April 2013 and the end of February 2014 the Council accepted 147 households as being eligible, homeless and in priority need. The total for 2012/13 was 164 households and therefore we are predicting a similar number to last year's total. At the end of February 2014 there were 62 homeless households in temporary accommodation arranged by the Council. This figure has only varied by small amounts throughout 2013/14.

As part of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol arrangements for rough sleepers, the Council worked again this winter with the local charity BENS (Braintree Emergency Night Shelter) to ensure that there was shelter available in the event of very cold weather. Although individuals who were sofa surfing/rough sleeping did approach the Council during the winter months, the team was able to successfully refer to other night-shelters and BENS did not have to open for this purpose. The threshold for very cold temperatures was not met, but the incessant rain and period of high winds would have been sufficient to justify opening the provision had alternatives not been available.

#### Affordable Housing Development

For the year April 2013 to March 2014 there has been a total of 103 new affordable homes completed.

The next completions of new homes are expected between April and June 2014 when it anticipated there will be 32 units completed. The 32 units include:-

- A development in Braintree by Colne Housing of 24 flats at the former garage site In South Street
- Completion of 6 homes by Colne Housing through a programme of open market purchase

#### The Housing Register

In the last quarter 216 housing association homes were let in the Braintree District via the Gateway to Homechoice, Choice Based Lettings scheme.

As of the 31st of March there were 2504 applicants on the Housing Register consisting of:-

108 – Band A  
241 – Band B  
658 – Band C  
107 – Band D  
1378 – Band E

#### **ASSET MANAGEMENT**

##### Eckard House Site, Witham

The Council completed the purchase of Eckard House on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014. A planning application has been submitted for the construction of a 68 space commuter car park on the site.

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