

WITHAM LOCAL COMMITTEE

AGENDA

PUBLIC MEETING

Date: Tuesday 27th January 2009
Time: 7.15pm
Venue: Public Hall, Collingwood Road, Witham (see location map on page iii)

Members of the public and representatives from local organisations are encouraged to come to the meeting, ask questions or raise matters of relevance to Witham and the surrounding area.

Local Chairman: Cllr T J W Foster

Contact Point for further information: Linda Morgan - Locality Co-ordinator. Tel: 01376 551414
Ex: 2602 Linda.morgan@braintree.gov.uk.

Membership:

Councillor J E Abbott	Councillor J E B Gyford
Councillor Miss L Barlow	Councillor Mrs S A Howell
Councillor D L Bebb	Councillor P J Hughes
Councillor G Cohen	Councillor M C M Lager
Councillor J G J Elliott	Councillor S J Lambourne
Councillor R Elliston	Councillor A M Meyer
Councillor Dr R L Evans	Councillor R G S Mitchell
Councillor T J W Foster	Councillor Mrs J M Money
Councillor Mrs M E Galione	Councillor R Ramage

1. Opening Items:

1.1 Apologies for Absence.

1.2 Declarations of Interest.

To declare any 'personal' or 'personal and prejudicial' interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to paragraphs 8 to 12 (inclusive) of the Code of Conduct for Members in Part 5 of the Constitution and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.

1.3 Minutes of Meeting held on 18th November 2008.

Copy previously circulated. Minutes are also available on the Council's web site.

1.4 Question Time.

Immediately after the Minutes of the previous meeting have been approved there will be a period of up to 30 minutes when members of the public can speak about Council business or other matters of local concern. People wishing to speak should contact the Locality Co-ordinator on (01376) 552525 or email Linda.morgan@braintree.gov.uk prior to the meeting. The Council's "Question Time" leaflet explains the procedure and copies of this may be obtained at the Council's offices at Braintree, Witham and Halstead.

2.1 Feedback from a Meeting of the Sub-Group held on 7th January 2009.

At the Committee Meeting on 18th November it was agreed that a further meeting of the sub-group should meet to discuss a way forward for Mr Rao, concerning his trading site in Witham. (See notes of meeting attached at Page 1)

3 Local Committee Funding:

3.1 Budget Update. To receive an update on the Witham Local Committee Funding – report attached at page 5

3.2 Bids for grants from the Witham Local Committee. To consider the following application for funding: Black Notley Community Association Kitchen Refurbishment – (See Page 7).

3.3 Disused Toilet Block at the A12 exit to Hatfield Peverel.
To discuss a proposal from Cllr Meyer to use Committee Funding to re-develop an area by the A12 at Lynfields. (See Page 8)

4. Local Decisions:

4.1 Affordable Housing Strategy. To receive a report from Joanne Albin, Head of Housing (See Page 10, and also Appendices 1 – 4)

4.2 Consultation on 2009/10 Budget Proposals. To consider and comment on the proposals for consideration by Cabinet on February 2nd 2009 by Trevor Wilson, Deputy Finance Director (see Page 11, and also Appendix 5)

5. Witham Local Committee Action Plan and Priorities:

5.1 Progress on Action Plan

5.2 Reference from Planning Committee on 11th November 2008

At the above meeting Members approved planning application 08/01875/FUL relating to Unit 11, 18 The Grove Centre, Witham. The application related to the change of use of first floor ancillary retail storage to serviced office accommodation and shopping centre manager's office, and formation of new stair enclosure.

During Public Question Time, two gentlemen spoke against the application and they expressed concern about the danger and congestion which was caused to traffic and pedestrians using Maldon Road, Witham by vehicles and, in particular lorries, gaining access to and exiting from The Grove Service Yard. In particular, concern was expressed about lorries being reversed out from the Service Yard onto Maldon Road. Whilst the Committee did not consider that these matters were relevant to their consideration of this particular application, they requested that they should be drawn to the attention of Witham Local Committee with a view to some form of action being taken. (See enclosed letter for Committee Members only from Iva Douglas Bird)

5.3 Replacement Swimming Pool, Witham.

To nominate members to join the Three Towns – One Vision Programme Board to oversee work carried out on the Witham Replacement Swimming Pool Programme. (See report from the Head of Enterprise Culture and Leisure) (See Page 14)

Notes of a meeting of a Sub-Group of Witham Local Committee held at Witham Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham on 7th January 2009
Ref: Mr Rao's Trading Arrangements

Present:

Cllr Lager
Cllr Foster
Cllr Evans
Mr Samik Rao
Mr Goodey (Mr Rao's advocate)
Paul Ryland, Witham Town Centre Strategy Group
Olive Cowell, Essex County Council
Mark Bridges, Essex County Council
Robbie Jamieson, Essex County Council
Paul Partridge, Head of Operations, Braintree District Council
Linda Morgan, Locality Co-ordinator, Braintree District Council

The meeting was facilitated by Cllr Lager and the agenda was as follows:

1. Update on the current situation
2. Options for a way forward

Key points arising from the discussion:

1. Points arising from the notes of the meeting held on 5 Nov 08

Mr Goodey was unhappy with the notes of the last meeting for the following reasons:

- Mr Partridge was not recorded as not being present – Cllr Lager pointed out that it was not practical to record everyone who didn't attend.
- The word alleged to be inserted in bullet point 6 so as to read "BDC has enforced the appropriate penalties for *alleged* illegal parking and trading without a permit, which as a local authority it is obliged to do." This point was accepted.
- Bullet point 6 to be further amended to remove reference to trading without a permit, so as to read "BDC has enforced the appropriate penalties for *alleged* illegal parking, which as a local authority it is obliged to do." This point was accepted.
- All the legal references Mr Goodey had verbally referred to in support of his assertion that the penalty notices should not have been issued in the first place had not been included in the notes. Mr Partridge confirmed that he was in receipt of a copy of those legal references which Mr Goodey had sent to him on 16 September 2008.

Mr Goodey asked to see the notes of this meeting before they were published so that he could be satisfied as to their accuracy. Cllr Lager informed Mr Goodey that the notes should be ready to go out with the Agenda for the next meeting of Witham Local Committee and he would be able to address any concerns relating to them in Public Question Time.

Mr Goodey circulated two pieces of correspondence:

1. A letter from Mr Galley, BDC Environmental Health, to Mr Rao dated 24 November 2008
2. A response from Mr Rao to Mr Galley dated 9th December 2008

2. Update on current situation

Cllr Lager noted that:

- There is a great deal of local support for Mr Rao and the service he provides
- Witham Local Committee had responded to that by spending a great deal of time trying to resolve the situation legally and appropriately
- BDC have been holding back enforcement action in relation to this matter, but must now either pursue enforcement or find another option as ECC require BDC to enforce.

Mr Goodey sought an assurance that no further enforcement action be taken against Mr Rao, and asked for a special dispensation similar to that that Mr Rao had enjoyed for some years. The Members and officers present stated that they were not in a position to give such a dispensation as the responsibility for Decriminalised Parking is ECCs and BDC acts as their agent. Mr Goodey replied that they could for the period of one year in certain circumstances. Mr Goodey asked ECC to withdraw their objections to the issue of a street trading licence to Mr Rao.

3. Consideration of Options:

- 3.1. **Trading from Platform 2.** Mr Rao said that he has applied for the concession on 4 occasions and been informed every time that it is under offer. Cllr Lager had also made enquiries of National Express East Anglia and been told that contracts are to be signed very soon.
- 3.2. **Trading from the pavement outside of the Station with the vehicle parked in the Pub Car Park.** This would be on the triangular piece of pavement near the Juice Bar, requiring a small market stall to be erected on a daily basis with the vehicle parked in the Albert car park (subject to the agreement of the Landlord). Members and Officers thought this was a viable solution to the problem, and Mr Goodey agreed it seemed a practical solution. Mr Goodey and Mr Rao agreed to consider this option.

Consideration was also given to the possibility of trading from the layby, which found support around the table. Olive Cowell pointed out some issues arising from the fact that this is a one-way street, and that it would be unlawful to drive down any section of it the wrong way.

- 3.3 **Trading from land adjacent to the Station.** Mr Ryland proposed that an area of land adjacent to the station building could be utilised. This would require significant groundwork and consents. This option was not discussed fully at this meeting.
- 3.4 **The removal of the parking restrictions and reducing the size of the bus stop area.** Mr Goodey asked if buses were going to become longer. Nobody present was able to answer that question. Mr Goodey asked if there was a date by which all buses had to be compliant with disabled access, and Cllr Lager replied that all buses would need to be compliant by 2015 and some were already. Mr Goodey pointed out that if the buses were not going to become longer, then they would not need the area currently marked out on the road, thereby freeing up an area at the front to create an unmarked area of carriageway affording sufficient space for Mr Rao to trade. It was pointed out, and accepted, that any such space created could not be reserved for the exclusive use of Mr Rao, and that any vehicle could park there on a “first come first served” basis. In view of that fact, Members found it difficult to see how this would move the situation forward at all. The ECC Officers agreed and pointed out that a good deal of time and money could be spent freeing up such an area only to have it filled by ad hoc commuter parking – Witham has a much greater unmet commuter parking demand than at any time during the last 6-7 years. Mr Goodey rejected the time and cost issue since it was his contention that ECC Officers had already wasted a good deal of public money and officer time by not having done their job properly. He further stated that most of Witham’s road markings were not legal.

ECC Officers undertook to investigate this option, but would first need to know the size of Mr Rao’s trading unit. Mr Rao undertook to provide this information.

Mr Jamieson was asked if he would be in a position to report back to the meeting of Witham Local Committee on 27th January, and he responded that he will try, though he couldn’t promise.

- 3.5 Mr Goodey said that he had two reserve positions which he was not prepared to discuss at this meeting.

Cllr Lager pointed out that it is likely to take a minimum of 6 months for any road markings to be removed. Mr Goodey replied that Mr Rao has every right to park there because “you can’t enforce it”.

Paul Partridge was asked to undertake not to take any further action against Mr Rao before 27th January 2009. Mr Partridge said that BDC should reinstate the enforcement procedure now, and Mr Jamieson stated that David Howard at ECC was the only officer who is in a position to agree to suspending enforcement action. Chris Smith at ECC has instructed Paul Partridge to take action with immediate effect. Cllr Lager reiterated that he could not hold off enforcement until 27th but he hoped a way forward could be found. It was acknowledged that enforcement proceedings could not in any event be held off after 27th January. It was therefore vital that Mr Rao, ECC and BDC worked together to ensure that the legal arrangements are in place for Mr Rao to trade from the area next to the Juice Bar immediately after 27th January even though this location did not necessarily represent the final solution to the problem. ECC Officers offered to fast-track this option if necessary.

Mr Goodey asked who was ultimately responsible for making a decision on this matter at Essex County Council, and was advised that ultimately Robert Overall will decide.

Linda Morgan
Locality Co-ordinator
12th January 2009

**WITHAM LOCAL COMMITTEE
 EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS**

Agenda Item 3.1

Contact Details: - Linda Morgan
Designation: - Locality Co-ordinator
Ext. No: - 2602
E Mail Address: - linda.morgan@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers: - original of the full application
Financial Implications: - see individual application
Equalities Implications: - see individual application
Legal Implications: - see individual application
Options: (a) To consider the application and approve it in full or in part; (b) to reject the application or (c) to defer the application or to request further information prior to the application being considered at a future meeting of the Committee.
Risks: details contained in each application

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The Committee is asked to consider the application listed below having received a presentation from the organisation and/or the sponsoring Councillor. The application has a supporting evaluation sheet attached setting out essential details of how it meets the criteria. Members will see from the evaluation form that the evaluation panel has indicated where it feels that there are areas that could be strengthened.

Applications to be considered:

Name of Organisation	Name of Project	Funding Requested	Sponsoring Councillor(s)	Evaluation Form attached
Black Notley Community Association	Kitchen Refurbishment	£7,610	Margaret Galione	Page 7

Attached to this report is an evaluation of the application.

Summary of Grants Awarded since July 2007 and those to be considered at this meeting

Project ref. no.	Description	Budget committed	
		Capital	Revenue
		07/08 - £45,000	07/08 £ 63,000
	2007/08		
W0001	Heritage Improvement Scheme Newland St Witham (£15k per year for 3 years)	£15,000	
W0002	British Legion - Witham Memorial	£3,500	
W0003	Hatfield Peverel Speed Detection Equipment	£5,000	
W0004	Little Elms Pre-School	£1,575	
		£25,075	
	Carried Forward	£ 19,925	£63,000
		+ £45,000	+ £27,000
	2008/09	08/09 - £64,925	08/09 - £90,000
W0001a	Heritage Improvement Scheme Newland St Witham (£15k per year for 3 years)	£15,000	
W0005	Kelevdon Spring Watch		£1,180
W0006	Feering Gazebos	£340	
W0007	Witham in Bloom	£1,302	£2,197
W0008	Witham Boys Brigade	£2,500	£ 3,790
W0012	Templars Fun Day		£500
W0009	Kelvedon and Feering Cricket Club	£9,500	
W0010	Witham Town Xmas Lights		£2,040
W0014	Witham Town CCTV	£20,000	
W0015	Silver End Allotments	£20,000	
W0013	Hatfield Peverel Street Lighting	£3,000	
W0016	Terling Swimming Club	£19,500	
	Budget So Far Committed	£91,142	£9,707
	Remaining Budget*	- £26,217	£80,293
	<i>For Consideration at This Meeting</i>		
W0017	Kitchen Refurbishment at Recreation Hall, Black Notley	£7,610.00	
	Remaining Budget if both bids are approved*	- £33,827	£80,293
	Commitments to 2009/2010		
	Heritage Improvement Scheme Newland St Witham (£15k per year for 3 years)	£15,000	

*NB: Overspend on Capital can be met by viring from the Revenue account at year end.

**LOCAL COMMITTEE GRANT APPLICATION
EVALUATION FORM**

Date assessed: 10 December 08	Local Committee: Witham	Reference No. W0017	Meets all criteria. Yes
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DESCRIPTION

Name and type of Organisation: Black Notley Community Association	Ward Member/s supporting application: Cllr M Galione
Name of Project: Kitchen Refurbishment	Place of Project: Recreation Hall, John Ray Gardens

Brief description of Project:
To replace existing kitchen. To hold more social functions and encourage existing and new groups to use the hall.

ASSESSMENT

Impact on Community:
Over a thousand members in addition to many regular visitors use the hall. The hall is a focal point of the village.

Evidence of Need:
The use of a fully equipped kitchen would encourage groups to hold more social functions in the hall. Meetings held there would be able to use the facilities to supply refreshments.

Sustainability:
A local contractor will undertake volunteers from the association will paint the work and the kitchen area. After installation there will be no additional costs. A cleaner is currently employed and paid for from BNCA funds.

Contribution to Corporate Ambition and Direction:

- Everyone can enjoy a healthy lifestyle: Various clubs use the hall. Having a new kitchen would encourage new clubs such as a children's cookery class to use the facilities. Dinner dances and Christmas parties could be held for the community.
- People take pride in their local areas: Strong Community spirit is evident through their fundraising and grant awards for local people and facilities. Volunteers would maintain the building for all to continue enjoying.

FINANCIAL

Total Cost Of Project £ 7,610.00	Total Request from the Grant £ 7,610.00
Total Capital £ 7,610.00	Total Capital £ 7,610.00
Total Revenue Costs £ 0	Total Revenue Costs £ 0
Value for Money: Two quotes were provided.	Match funding secured: No

OTHER INFORMATION

Has this application been accepted for a committee decision? Yes	If YES enter Date of Local Committee: 27 th January 2009
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Report to Witham Local Committee 27th January 2009

A12 Exit at Hatfield Peverel

Agenda Item 3.3

Contact Details:- Councillor A Meyer
Designation:- Black Notley & Terling Ward Member

Background Papers:- None

Financial Implications:- To be assessed

Equalities Implications:- None

Legal Implications:- To be assessed

Options: To accept the proposal or to take no action

Risks: To be assessed

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee accepts the proposal as having merit and agrees that officers should investigate and produce a feasibility study and report on this with options and costings within three months.

Identified Issue:

Witham is one part of the Three Towns Vision for the Braintree District.

The councils ambition is that Witham becomes a vibrant town which is at the centre of the local community, whilst attracting visitors from further afield to use its shopping and social facilities – both of which are vital to the town and surrounding areas sustainability.

Whilst work to the town centre is important, first impressions of the area as a whole are just as important in forming and instilling respect by residents, visitors and potential investors. At present people entering Witham from the A12 at the Lynfield exit are greeted by an area which currently consists of a disused toilet block in a state of disrepair, a wooded area that is littered and a lay-by with broken kerbs and vehicles for sale.

If left, the area is likely to continue in a downward spiral and portray a negative image of the town and Braintree as a whole.

Proposal

The current toilet block has probably been closed due to crime and disorder issues.

It is however in a prime location for both users of the northbound A12 and those exiting to use the nearby petrol station and to enter Witham. As such it has huge potential as a retail or fast-food outlet, which has parking in the immediate vicinity and a readymade passing trade.

An opportunity exists in the current climate for the council to provide accommodation at a subsidised rate to promote local business, provide services (including toilet facilities as a term of any lease which is closed at the end of trading) and to ensure the area is clean and a positive welcome to the town.

Financial Implications

Funding will be required to regenerate the area and consideration as to sources including Local Committee funds would need to be explored. Exact costs are not yet known.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY 2009 - 2014

Agenda Item 4.1

Contact Details: - Joanne Albini Head of Housing or Tim Lucas Housing Strategy and Development Manager
Ext. No: - 2118/2124
E Mail Address: - joanne.albini@braintree.gov.uk or tim.lucas@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers:- None
Financial Implications:- There are financial implications contained in the detail of the Strategy and Action Plan
Equalities Implications:- Yes
Legal Implications:- None
Options: Contained in the Action Plan
Risks: None

Please Note:

The Draft Affordable Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014 can be found in the Housing Section of the Council website using the following link: -
<http://www.braintree.gov.uk/Braintree/housing/HousStrat/Draft+Affordable+Housing+Strategy+2009-2014.htm>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2008 to 2012 identifies affordable housing as a top priority for Braintree District Council. We are consistently told, and our surveys show, that affordable housing is wanted and needed in local areas.

We have therefore developed a comprehensive strategy to address the issues.

At the time of publishing, the documents (attached) are draft for consultation purposes. Closing date for consultation is the 16th March 09.

The Draft Affordable Housing Strategy consists of four sections:

- Context
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Action Plan
- Appendices

Following the end of the consultation period, the document will be updated, as required. As part of the consultation process this draft document will go to each of the three Local Committees. A consultation feedback form is also on the Council's web site. The final version will go to the Cabinet on 30th March 2009.

DECISION

This document is being presented to the Local Committees for comment as part of the consultation process.

**CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR THE BUDGET 2009/10 AND CHANGES TO THE
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

Agenda Item 4.2

Contact Details:- Trevor Wilson
Designation:- Head of Finance
Ext. No:- 2800
E Mail Address:- Trevor.wilson@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers:- Supporting Papers for consultation on proposals for the 2009/10 Budget and changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy
Financial Implications:- None
Equalities Implications:- None
Legal Implications:- None
Options: None
Risks: None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Details of the proposals agreed by the Cabinet at their meeting held on 1st December 2008, as the basis for consultation have been provided to the Committee in a separate pack.

The Committee is invited to make comments to be considered by the Cabinet before they finalise proposals to be recommended to the Council in February.

DECISION

- **To agree any comments that the Committee wish to make to the Cabinet for their consideration when finalising proposals for recommendation to Council on the Budget for 2009/10 and changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.**

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR THE BUDGET 2009/10 AND CHANGES TO THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Appendix 1 contains a separate pack of information providing details of the 2009/10 Budget proposals and Medium Term Financial, Strategy agreed for the purposes of consultation at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 1st December 2008. The pack includes the following:

1. **Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 1st December 2008** for the items dealing with the 2009/10 Budget proposals and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). [Pages 1-4]
2. **Detailed report to Cabinet on the MTFS** (and 2009/10 Budget) [Pages 5–13], including the following appendices:

Appendix A – Letter to ECC regarding changes to the concessionary travel scheme arrangements from April 2009 onwards. [Pages 14-16]

Appendix B – Treasury Management – update on investment balances, investments at risk, and review of the Council’s credit worthiness criteria for recommendation to Council. [Pages 17-20]

Appendix C – *Not included as superseded by Appendix H which is the same except that it reflects the proposal to limit the increase in council tax to 2.5%.*

Appendix D – Charts of Key Sources of Income 2006/07 to 2012/13 [Pages 21-23]

Appendix E – Total Service Expenditure per property in 2008/09 – compares Braintree with average spend for all districts, Essex districts, and “nearest neighbours”. [Page 24]

Appendix F – Programme Delivery – All Reviews 2008/09 – Provides a schedule of reviews to be carried out over 2008/09, with details of financial savings that have been identified or targeted, with an update of progress. The financial outcomes of these reviews have been reflected in the Budget proposals set out in Appendix H (see below). [Page 25-34]

Appendix G – Copy of letter received from John Healey MP in response to a letter addressed by the Leader of the Council on the impact of the economic downturn on the finances of the Council. [Pages 35-36]

Appendix H – General Fund Profile 2008/09 to 2012/13 – Proposed Council Tax Policy. This provides a summary of the changes in the Council’s budgets for 2009/10 and over the medium term, highlighting additional costs, reductions planned, and the savings target to bridge the “budget gap” after taking account of changes in government grant and the Cabinet’s proposals for limiting council tax increases to 2.5% per annum. [Page 37-38]

Appendix I – Capital Programme Summary (*Note this is an updated version from that included in the report to Cabinet on 1st December, which takes account of proposals from the sub-group convened to review the position for capital*). This shows the key elements of estimated capital resources and summary of programme expenditure already planned. [**See separate paper on proposed capital projects for 2009/10 below**]. [Page 39]

Appendix J – Draft Housing Revenue Account profile for 2008/09 to 2011/12, subject to the final Housing Subsidy Determination issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government. [Page 40]

3. **Proposed Capital Programme 2009/10** – Projects that are being proposed for inclusion in the Council's capital programme from 2009/10. Certain projects are subject to further information and/ or funding from other non-Council sources e.g. Community Housing Investment Partnership fund created from the transfer of the Council's housing stock to Greenfields Community Housing. [Page 41-47]
4. **Feedback on Local Priorities** – Notes on feedback from the 3 Local Committees on the consideration of 'Local Priorities for 2009/10 Budget' (includes copy letter from Councillor A F Shelton) [Page 48-51]
5. **Proposed Areas for Budget Increases** – schedule of New Demands, which the Cabinet propose to include in the Budget. [Page 52]
6. **Possible Areas for Review and Future Savings** – Schedule of proposals where services and costs can be reviewed and potentially reduced in order to meet the "budget gap" identified in Appendix H, referred to under item 2 above. [Pages 53-55]

Report to Witham Local Committee
REPLACEMENT SWIMMING POOL – WITHAM **Agenda Item 5.3**

Contact Details:- Russell G Everard
Designation:- Head of Enterprise Culture & Leisure
Ext. No:- 2582
E Mail Address:- rusev@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers:- Braintree District Council Cabinet Report, 1st December 2008
Cabinet Minutes, 1st December 2008

Financial Implications:- Capital programme. Will be the subject of future reports.

Equalities Implications:- None

Legal Implications:- Contractual issues will arise with Essex County Council, the Academies Enterprise Trust and leisure service providers

Options: To secure a replacement swimming pool for Witham

Risks:

- 1) Capital and Revenue Costs (yet to be determined).
- 2) Deteriorating condition of current facilities (Bramston Sport Centre) and associated costs of maintenance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At a Cabinet meeting held at Causeway House on the 1st December 2008, Braintree District Council decided to commit to work with the Academies Enterprise Trust and Essex County Council with a view to securing a replacement swimming pool for Witham, to replace the existing pool at Bramston Sports Centre.

A Programme Board has recently been established by Braintree District Council to oversee the work carried out on the Three Towns – One Vision project. Subject to Cabinet approval, the Programme Board will be including the replacement pool in the work of that Board. Witham Local Committee is being recommended to nominate two Members to join the Programme Board and represent Witham Local Committee to oversee future work carried out on the Witham replacement pool project.

DECISION

That Witham Area Committee nominates 2 Members to join the Three Towns – One Vision Programme Board, to oversee work carried out on the Witham replacement swimming pool project, subject to Cabinet agreeing to include the project in the work of that Board.

BACKGROUND

Witham Swimming Provision:

Essential structural works on the existing Bramston Sports Centre swimming pool, which was opened to the public in 1974, were satisfactorily completed in December 2008 after a six week closure period. Consultant engineers have indicated to the District Council that the main structure of the pool hall should remain secure for at least a further 5 years.

Members will be aware that Maltings Academy (sport specialism) and the New Rickstones Academy (performing arts specialism) are planning to replace their existing educational facilities, located in Spinks Lane and Conrad Road, Witham, by September 2011. We understand this capital investment in new educational facilities in Witham is in the region of £60m.

Braintree District Council Cabinet agreed in December 2008 to hold early discussions with the Academies Enterprise Trust and Essex County Council regarding the re-provision of leisure facilities in Witham.

The new build programme proposed by the Trust did not initially include provision for a swimming pool. Consequently the Council has decided, with the support of Essex County Council and the Academies Enterprise Trust, to actively participate in the project with a view to including a swimming pool at one of the sites as part of the overall project. The District Council has since joined the Design User Group, which has responsibility for delivering the new build project, and is represented on that group by the Council's head of Enterprise, Culture & Leisure.

The Academies Enterprise Trust has appointed design consultants for the project, and formal planning applications for both sites will be presented in July 2009 for determination by the District Council. A decision has yet to be made on the location of the replacement pool or the detailed design of the new provision.

It is proposed to present a number of indicative cost and design options for a replacement pool for Braintree Cabinet consideration and decision as early as possible, to enable the project to progress.

For information purpose, the existing Witham swimming pool at Bramston Sports Centre has 6 lanes, a diving pool and learner pool; the Halstead pool has 5 lanes and a learner pool; and the new Braintree Swimming Centre has 8 lanes and a learner/fun pool.

Three Towns – One Vision Programme Board:

The District Council's Corporate Strategy for 2008-2012 has identified the regeneration of parts of Witham, Braintree and Halstead by 2012 as a key priority. Developing regeneration plans for each of the towns is a high priority action in the Council's Corporate Action Plan for 2008/09.

The aim of the Strategy is to act as a catalyst to stimulate new developments: bringing modern community facilities, commercial premises and new homes into the town centres: improving the attractiveness for shoppers, visitors and residents alike. Proposals like these will produce a beneficial ripple effect into neighboring areas, encouraging new investment for a better future.

The Programme Board has specific responsibilities for.....

- Budget Approval
- Approval of Strategy
- Communication to Members
- Delivery of Benefits & Efficiencies
- Programme Change Approval
- Facilitate widespread visibility and support for the Programme
- Act as resolution point for project/programme critical issues
- Ensures that the rationale behind the project is in line with BDC strategic objectives

The Programme Board also.....

- Owns the business case on behalf of the Programme senior management and is accountable to the Steering Group for delivery;
- Ensures that the project brief is focused on benefits realisation and that the team have clear boundaries and standards in terms of scope, cost, time, resources and quality;
- Is responsible for authorising the project to move from one stage to the next.