

REPORT TO CABINET

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CORPORATE STRATEGY 2008 – 2012

Contact Details:- Sara Moutard
Designation:- Head of Policy
Ext. No:- 2361
E Mail Address:- sara.moutard@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers:- Corporate Action, Improvement and Performance Plan 2006/2007 Report to Cabinet – October 2007 – A Vision for the Braintree District

Financial Implications:- These are being addressed through the development of individual projects in the proposed Corporate Action Plan for 2008/09 a summary of which is attached in draft to this report

Equalities Implications:- None

Legal Implications:- None

Options: To agree or not the proposed Direction and Ambition Statements and the four-year strategic objectives

Risks: Risks in relation to each initiative and project in the draft Action Plan will be addressed in individual project or business plans. An assessment as to whether risk is high, medium or low in relation to each will be included in the Action Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Braintree District Council adopts a new Corporate Strategy every four years. The last one ran from 2003 until 2007.

Work has been ongoing over the past year to agree the strategic priorities for the District which the District Council will focus on between 2008 and 2012. These are set out in the proposed Direction and Ambition Statement and the related four-year objectives which are attached to this report.

Together these will form part of the Corporate Strategy for 2008-2012.

An annual Corporate Action Plan is also prepared which sets out the projects and initiatives which will be carried out in the District each year to ensure that the four-year objectives are achieved. A summary of the contents of the draft Corporate Action Plan for 2008-2009 is attached to this report. It will be reported in its final format to Cabinet in March.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the draft Direction and Ambition Statement and the related four-year objectives be approved

Braintree District Council's Direction and Ambition 2008 - 2012

Every four-years the Council re-assesses its priorities.

The re-assessment is based on public opinion about what is important in the District, issues which our politicians know to be of importance in the District, data and research into key issues which affect quality of life and issues of national importance which need to be implemented at a local level.

When the new four-year priorities have been re-assessed, they are summarised into the Council's Direction and Ambition Statement which reflects the vision for the District and Braintree District Council's associated four-year aspirations.

This re-assessment has been carried out over the past year and the proposed **Direction and Ambition Statement for Braintree District Council for the period 2008 – 2012** is as follows:

Braintree District Council – Direction and Ambition Statement 2008-2012

We will ensure that people enjoy growing up, living and working in the Braintree District because it is a place where:

- * the environment is clean and green***
- * business is encouraged and the local economy prospers***
- * everyone can enjoy a healthy lifestyle***
- * housing and transport meet local needs***
- * people take pride in their local areas***
- * we deliver excellent, cost effective and valued services***

Four-year objectives in relation to each of the Direction and Ambition themes have been developed on the same basis. These are set out in **Appendix 1**.

Each year, new projects and initiatives are developed which ensure that the four-year objectives will be achieved. These are set out in the Corporate Action Plan. A draft summary of the projects and initiatives which will be included in the Corporate Action Plan for 2008-2009 is attached at **Appendix 2**.

The final draft of the Corporate Action Plan will be reported to Cabinet in March.

Measurement

Each of the four-year objectives and the projects and initiatives in the Corporate Action Plan are measurable by a number of different methods including the indicators in the new National Indicator Set and Best Value and Local Performance Indicators. Details of how each one will be measured will be set out in the final document.

The Essex Local Area Agreement

An early assessment of the priorities in the draft Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA), which has only just been published, shows that the proposed four-year objectives set out at Appendix 2 will complement the proposed four-year LAA priorities and that work which will be carried out by Braintree District Council, as set out in the draft Corporate Action Plan, will assist in the achievement of associated LAA targets.

Further details about the LAA and the Braintree District Chapter of it (ie. those actions and targets which will be set at a local level and aggregated into county-wide targets) will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

The Braintree District Council Corporate Strategy

In addition to the Corporate Action Plan, other actions which will contribute to the achievement of the Council's four-year objectives, are set out in the following documents. Together these will form the four-year Corporate Strategy for Braintree District Council:

1. *Corporate Performance Plan*

This will be published in May/June 2008. It records:

- performance against the targets we set ourselves for 2006/07
- our position in relation to each indicator compared with other local authorities nationally
- the trend in relation to our performance against each indicator over the last three years
- targets, where appropriate, for the next three years

2. *Corporate Improvement and Efficiency Plan*

This will be published in March 2008. It comprises a management tool which focuses on improvements to the internal workings of the authority and the associated efficiencies.

3. *Medium Term Financial Strategy*

This document sets out the Council's financial plans for the next three years. It includes projected savings requirements and outturns and summarises our overall projected financial position over that time.

Recommendation

1. That Braintree District Council's Direction and Ambition for 2008 to 2012 be agreed.
2. That the associated four-year objectives be agreed

Sara Moutard
Head of Policy
February 2008

**APPENDIX 1
BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CORPORATE STRATEGY 2008 – 2012
SUMMARY OF FOUR-YEAR OBJECTIVES**

THE ENVIRONMENT IS CLEAN AND GREEN

By 2012:

1. The amount of waste being land-filled in the District will have been reduced
2. The standards of cleanliness and the appearance of the District will have improved
3. The biodiversity of the District will have been protected and enhanced
4. The District will have a clear response to the risks facing it by climate change
5. Improved standards of environmental sustainability will be included in all new developments in the District
6. Braintree District Council's carbon footprint will have been reduced

BUSINESS IS ENCOURAGED AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY PROSPERS

By 2012:

1. Work on the regeneration of Witham, Braintree and Halstead Town Centres will have started
2. Opportunities for long-term, inward business investment in the District will have increased
3. Basic skills levels and vocational training opportunities in the District will have improved
4. We will have lobbied to secure key infrastructure improvements in the District

EVERYONE CAN ENJOY A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

By 2012:

1. Our leisure facilities, parks and open spaces will have improved and more people will be using them
2. Young people will be able to more easily access local activities
3. More play facilities will have been provided for children and young people to enjoy
4. We will work to secure improvements to local health facilities and access to health services
5. More people will feel that the District is a safe place to live

HOUSING AND TRANSPORT MEET LOCAL NEEDS

By 2012:

1. More affordable and environmentally sustainable housing will be provided for local people
2. A balanced range of good quality and environmentally sustainable housing will be available
3. Plans will have been developed to ensure that the District can cope with appropriate long-term housing and business growth
4. People who rent their homes will have more choice about where they live
5. Transport providers will have been encouraged to provide services which better meet local transport needs
6. The community transport scheme will have been improved to further meet the needs of elderly and vulnerable people

PEOPLE TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR LOCAL AREAS

By 2012:

1. People will have a greater understanding about the Council and what it does
2. More people will be involved in decisions which affect the District and their local area
3. More people will be voting and standing for election
4. More people will feel that the District is a good place to live
5. The voluntary and community sector will be better placed to respond to local needs
6. The District will seize the opportunities and meet the challenges of the London 2012 Olympic Games

WE DELIVER EXCELLENT, COST EFFECTIVE AND VALUED SERVICES

By 2012:

1. All of our services will have been robustly reviewed and improvements put in place
2. People will find it easier to contact us and we will provide speedier responses
3. Greater use will be made of our web-site and more transactions will be able to be dealt with electronically
4. People will be able to access a range of public services through a shared 'one stop shop' office and customer service facility
5. Improvements will have been made to the way vulnerable and young people who live in areas with limited facilities and public transport can access services
6. People who come to live in the District will be able to easily find out about the District and the services that are provided here
7. Our citizens will be more satisfied with how they feel about the Council and about whether we provide value for money

APPENDIX 2
DRAFT PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES FOR INCLUSION IN CORPORATE ACTION PLAN 2008/09

4 yr obj:	THE ENVIRONMENT IS CLEAN AND GREEN PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008/09
1	Cardboard Recycling Trial – carry out a trial with local businesses aimed at increasing the amount of cardboard which is recycled by the business community
1	Bulky Waste Collection Trial – carry out a trial whereby large items of bulky household waste (such as furniture) which need to be disposed of can be collected by a social enterprise company and recycled rather than going to land-fill
1	High Diversion Wheeled Bin, waste, compost and recycling collection roll-out - expand the wheelie bin collection scheme to an additional 4,000 properties in the District
1	Refuse collection – Educate the public not to put out excess waste for collection with wheeled bins.
1	Fast-food Litter - secure agreement with five fast food outlets in each town centre to adopt the Voluntary Code of Practice on fast food litter
1	Essex County Waste Strategy – work with Essex County Council and other District Councils in Essex to adopt joint arrangements for sustainable waste management (including waste collection and disposal) in the District and across Essex
2	A120 cleaning - Develop a partnership with neighbouring authorities and the Highways Agency to improve the cleanliness and maintenance of the A120
2	Better litter bins! – replace existing ‘open topped’ litter bins with ones that have an integral lid to avoid wind blown litter
2	Support other people to carry out graffiti removal and to be involved in other environmental initiatives as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the business community in Braintree town centre to reduce the amount of graffiti on private property that is visible from the public highway by trialling the provision of anti-graffiti kits • Pilot a trial amongst town and parish councils and community groups for them to undertake graffiti removal and other environmental work within their parish/town.
2	Enviro-Crime - Work with Essex Police to increase the number of fixed penalty notices issued by Police Community Support Officers in relation to crimes which impact negatively on the environment and how people feel about their local areas such as fly-tipping, graffiti, fly-posting, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling etc.
2	Responsible Citizenship Campaigns - Deliver a series of Responsible Citizenship Campaigns and programmes both in house and in partnership with other organisations aimed at promoting awareness and behavioural change in relation to street scene issues and promoting the role of the council in delivering street scene services <i>(NB national projects - details still to be finalised by ENCAMS)</i>
2	Roundabouts - Improve the appearance of roundabouts on strategic routes across the District.
3	Protect and enhance biodiversity in the District by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carrying out additional tree planting • designating one additional local nature reserve • publishing proposals for the future allocation of open spaces in the District over the next 20 years
4	Nottingham Declaration - Achieve at least Level 1 (out of 5) of the standard for local authorities to work to in responding to the challenges that climate change presents to communities across the UK

4 yr
obj:

**THE ENVIRONMENT IS CLEAN AND GREEN
PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008/09 cont'd...**

6	Carbon Management Plan - Produce a four-year plan to reduce the Council's carbon emissions from our buildings, vehicles and services – and implement those targets which are programmed for 2008/09 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reducing energy use at our leisure centres• installing energy efficient lighting in George Yard Car Park in Braintree and at our leisure centres• reducing energy consumption in our offices by using our computers and other systems more effectively and by making changes to the voltages which are applied to our electronic equipment
6	Green Travel Plan – develop and start implementing a green travel plan for staff and elected Councillors at Braintree District Council

DRAFT

4 yr
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**BUSINESS IS ENCOURAGED AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY PROSPERS
PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008/09**

All	Growth Area Funding - Identify and put in place projects to support housing and employment growth and infrastructure improvements in the District using up to £2.3 million of the recently awarded Growth Area Funding
1	Regeneration of Witham Town Centre – complete a feasibility study for the regeneration of Witham Town Centre focussing on the area bounded by Collingwood Road, Guithaven Street, Newland Street and Newland Drive
1	Regeneration of Braintree Town Centre – complete a feasibility study for the regeneration of Braintree Town Centre focussing on the area behind the library and the Town Hall between Manor Street and Victoria Street
1	Halstead Town Centre – finalise the assembly of the area of land to the east of the High Street and market it for sale and redevelopment
1	Street Markets – carry out a review of the street markets in Witham and Braintree with a view to expanding the range and quality of goods available, improving their appearance and attracting more shoppers to the town centres
2	Business Survey – Conduct a District-wide business survey to identify future challenges and opportunities for the Council, local employers and inward investors
2	Business Improvement Districts – work with the business community to develop bids for Business Improvement Districts in Witham East and West industrial areas
2	Identify locations for a new Business Park and other employment sites in the District
2	Business Innovation Centre – Carry out a feasibility study into the provision of a Business Innovation Centre in the District aimed at supporting people to set up businesses and encouraging them to stay in the District
3	Numeracy, literacy and basic skills – establish and support a local task group to address the District's basic skills shortfall and develop a plan and timetable for action and improvement
4	Infrastructure improvements – Promote and lobby for the construction of the new A120 between Braintree and the A12, the rail passing loop on the Braintree to Witham branch line and the cycle bridge to Freeport
4	Haven Gateway Opportunities – work with the Haven Gateway Partnership (in which the ports of Felixstowe, Harwich, Ipswich and Mistley work together to promote economic opportunities and secure the future prosperity of the region) to lobby for infrastructure improvements and increase inward investment opportunities in the Braintree District

4 yr.
Obj:

**EVERYONE CAN ENJOY A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008/09**

1	In conjunction with Essex County Council, deliver a programme of improvements to recreational and leisure facilities at Great Notley Country Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Install new car parking for 250 vehicles• Install £300k of new play equipment• Refurbish the kitchen and cafeteria• Improve disabled access to the Discovery Centre• Improve and enlarge the all-weather sports pitch and associated changing facilities
1	Improve our leisure facilities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repairing the synthetic pitch at Braintree Leisure Centre and scheduling a replacement pitch for 2009/2010• Replacing the synthetic pitch and improving the flood lighting at Halstead Leisure Centre• Carrying out refurbishment works at Bramston Sports Centre in Witham
1	Complete a review of, and feasibility study in relation to, the future of Bramston Sports Centre in Witham and its associated leisure facilities
1	Provide new sports changing facilities at Silver Street Playing Field, Silver End
1	Maldon Road Park, Witham – secure funding for, and start carrying out improvements to, Maldon Road Park in Witham under the 'Parks for People' scheme
1	John Ray Park – prepare a feasibility study for a footpath and cycleway between Station Approach and Rose Hill / Skitts Hill in Braintree
1	Cycle-ways and Cycle parking – promote cycling by improving and constructing new cycle-ways and by providing additional cycle parking as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of additional cycle parking at Braintree Railway Station• Reconstruction of part of the cycleway between Springwood Drive and Panfield Lane Braintree• Provision of lighting for urban cycleway schemes in Witham• Provision of an improved surface on the Blackwater Rail Trail from Blue Mills Road to Sauls Bridge Witham and a link to Maldon Road• Construction of a cycleway link from Town End Field to Dengie Close Witham• Construction of phase 1 of the cycleway link from Maylon Close to Panfield Lane, Braintree
1	Green Flag Awards – apply for green flag awards and green heritage accreditation for Halstead Public Gardens and Silver End Memorial Gardens
1	Improve our parks and open spaces by resurfacing the path networks at: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bradford Meadows open space, Braintree• River Walk, Witham,• Fisher Field open space, Braintree• King George V Playing Field, Braintree• Kings Road Park, Halstead
1	Produce plans with Halstead Town Council for the development of a new Community Centre in Halstead close to the Town Centre
1	Refurbish and improve the facilities at Forest Road Community Hall in Witham
1	Consult with local communities about the possible provision of changing and community facilities at Rickstones Playing Field in Witham

**EVERYONE CAN ENJOY A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008/09 cont'd... .**

2	<p>Braintree Community Sports Project – Deliver new training courses for young people aged 9 to 19 years old aimed at having a positive impact on self-esteem, self-confidence, health and fitness as well as impacting on anti-social behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Young Leaders Award – for 9 to 13 year olds • The Junior Football Organisers Course – for 14 to 17 year olds • The Day Certificate in Sports leadership – for 16 years and upwards
2	<p>Work with the Braintree District Youth Council to produce a magazine aimed at young people across the District - covering a range of social topics and information including details of activities and what is going on for young people and other educational topics such as teenage pregnancy and drugs/alcohol issues</p>
3	<p>Enable a Children's Centre to be set up at Silver End Village hall by refurbishing the first floor and improving the car parking facilities</p>
3	<p>Create a new play area with new play equipment at Weavers Park in Braintree and at Rickstones Playing Field in Witham</p>
3	<p>Refurbish the playgrounds at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldingham Drive, Braintree • King George V Playing Field, Braintree • Milton Avenue Braintree • Silver Street Sports Ground, Silver End
3	<p>'Braintree at Play' – Provide unstructured indoor and outdoor play facilities for severely disabled children at the PARC Centre at Great Notley</p>
4	<p>Continue to work with partners to secure the construction of the new Braintree Community Hospital and the extension to Halstead Hospital</p>
5	<p>Renew Safer Parking Status for the five Braintree District Council owned car parks that currently hold this award</p>
5	<p>Provide the Reality Roadshow, Crucial Crew and Being Safe Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality Roadshow – aimed at 14-15 year olds deterring and providing education on anti-social behaviour to schools across the District. • Crucial Crew – aimed at educating all 9-10 year olds about community safety issues in 'real life' situations • Being Safe project – aimed at 13-14 year olds covering issues of anti racism, anti-bullying, anti-social behaviour and homophobia

4 yr. obj:		HOUSING AND TRANSPORT MEET LOCAL NEEDS PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008/09
1	Work with housing association partners to maximise the development of affordable housing in the District	
1	Review planning policies to maximise the opportunities for developing affordable housing in rural areas and in urban development sites	
2	Produce new four-year housing and homelessness strategies for the Braintree District and complete those projects in them which are scheduled for 2008/2009	
3	Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development Framework - Public sector agencies, the business community and the voluntary sector will all have liaised with local communities and worked together to produce plans for the development of the District and improvements to its social infrastructure over the next 20 years	
4	Introduce the first phase of the 'choice-based lettings' scheme for homes rented from Registered Social Landlords which allows people to have more choice about where they live	
5	Implement the new National Travel Pass Scheme which provides free countrywide bus travel for senior citizens	
5	Work with transport providers to secure a new bus route from Braintree Town Centre to Great Notley, the Discovery Centre and Great Notley Country Park	
6	Community Transport Scheme – Investigate ways of increasing capacity in the Council's Community Transport Scheme so that it better meets the needs of elderly and vulnerable people	

**PEOPLE TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR LOCAL AREAS
PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008/09**

1	<p>Improve the ways in which local constituents can contact their local Councillors by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the profile of local Councillors in their wards • Carrying out a feasibility study into other more innovative ways of holding councillor surgeries (including telephone and walkabout surgeries)
1	<p>Encourage young people to become more interested in local politics and government by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with local schools in organising events for 'Local Democracy Week' • Producing a Young Person's Guide to the Council and the way it works
2	<p>Encourage people and partner organisations to become involved in the Local Committees in Witham, Braintree and Halstead by promoting what they do, how people can become involved in them and the outcomes from meetings through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a programme of projects in each local area and deliver those which are scheduled for completion in 2008/09 • Development of a regular locality or ward based bulletins so that Councillors and local people are aware of what is going on in their area • Production of an easy to read guide to the Council and the way it works • Development of quarterly reports which provide public sector performance information at a local level
3	<p>Provide a Learning and Development Programme to assist our elected Councillors and enable them to undertake their varied roles</p>
3	<p>Encourage more people to vote and to register to vote by developing innovative web pages on the Council's web site about elections, the voting process and the importance of being involved</p>
4	<p>Develop an initiative aimed at recognising individuals or groups who make a valuable contribution to their local communities / areas</p>
4	<p>Encourage more people to take a pride in their local environment through active involvement in keeping it clean and tidy</p>
4	<p>Actively involve young people in the work of the community wardens through a series of programmed initiatives on responsible citizenship</p>
5	<p>Help local voluntary and community organisations and Town and Parish Councils to learn more about funding and development opportunities by organising an event called the 'Community Money Market Place' at Hylands House in Chelmsford</p>
5	<p>Carry out research to identify how the voluntary sector and social enterprises in the District can contribute towards addressing the District's main priorities including assessment of size, capacity, needs and barriers to development</p>
6	<p>Work with the Ministry of Defence and the Active Braintree Partnership to deliver a family fun-day at MOD Wethersfield to celebrate the 3rd anniversary of the award of the Olympic Games to London</p>
6	<p>The Cultural Olympiad - Develop a four-year programme of events and establish task groups to take them forward – as the District's contribution in the run up to the London Olympic Games in 2012</p>

4 yr.
Obj:

**OUR SERVICES MEET CUSTOMER NEEDS AND PROVIDE VALUE FOR MONEY
PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008/09**

1	Carry out a programme to review all the Council's services and put improvements in place to ensure that they are cost-effective and provide value for money
2 and 3	Review the Council's website with a view to increasing the number of services that customers can access on line 24 hours a day 7 days a week
2	Improve the telephone system to increase access to services and ensure that people have their queries answered by the first person they contact at the Council
4	In partnership with Essex County Council, complete the design phase of the new shared front office facility ('public sector one stop shop') in Braintree
5	Research and make recommendations as to how access to services can be improved for vulnerable people / young people who live in areas with few accessible facilities and/or no public transport
5	Raise awareness of the Benefits which are available to those who are eligible to claim them and increase take-up by those who are most in need by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holding a Benefits Awareness Day with other organisations• Increasing the amount of publicity about benefits in GP surgeries• Holding Benefits Awareness Sessions in schools
6	Make services more accessible to the migrant Polish community in the District by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organising workshops on setting up businesses, employment and housing• Developing a website for Polish speakers
7	Specific projects arising from review of external communications being undertaken by Alexander (to be inserted)