

**DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2008/09 TO 2011/12  
UPDATE**

**Agenda Item 5(a)**

**Contact Details:-** Trevor Wilson  
**Designation:-** Deputy Finance Director  
**Ext. No:-** 2801  
**E Mail Address:-** [Trevor.wilson@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:Trevor.wilson@braintree.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:-** Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy – report to Cabinet 29/10/07  
**Financial Implications:-** Addressed in report  
**Equalities Implications:-** Addressed as appropriate in individual spending recommendations  
**Legal Implications:-** Addressed as appropriate in individual spending recommendations  
**Options:**  
**Risks:**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, which was considered by the Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007. Whilst the document is being updated as outstanding issues are resolved and to incorporate the comments and amendments requested at that meeting, it is not included as part of this report as a number of key financial issues are still to be determined, the main issues being the finance settlement from Government and pension fund contribution.

The report provides details of information presented at the Strategy Workshop, to assist in assessing the district priorities.

A schedule of revenue and capital bids presented at the Strategy Workshop is currently being considered and prioritised and will be tabled at this meeting.

Updates on a number of financial assumptions are provided, including Pension Fund, Housing Transfer capital receipt and Service Level Agreements with Greenfields Community Housing.

Finally, an additional spending demand. A detailed cost projection for the introduction of the new national concessionary fare scheme from April 2008 has been received recently. The cost of the scheme is estimated to be £1.253million for 2008/09. The existing budget and additional grant from the Government total between £1.108million and £1.191million, providing a shortfall ranging from £62,000 to £145,000 which will need to be added to base budget for 2008/09 onwards.

### **DECISION**

**Members are asked to:**

- 1. Note the updates contained in the report;**
- 2. Agree the prioritised schedule of revenue and capital bids for 2008/09;**
- 3. Consider whether to adopt the minimum statutory Concessionary Fare scheme from April 2008**

**DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2008/09 TO 2011/12  
UPDATE**

## **1. Background**

The Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2008/09 to 2011/12 (MTFS) seeks to:

- Provide a financial expression of the framework set out by the Corporate Plan.
- Set out the links between financial plans and other key corporate plans, strategies and business plans.
- Bring together the key planning assumptions around financial resources and spending pressures.
- Provide a summary view of financial modelling.
- Formalise assumptions around the desired level of council tax.
- Inform the setting of service financial targets.
- Provide a basis for budget consultations with key stakeholders and the public.
- Set out the arrangements for managing financial risks in the short and medium term.

Although a few of the issues, having financial consequences, have been determined during the period since the document was received by Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007, two of the major issues remain outstanding, namely: the financial settlement from Government and determination of the pension contributions for this Council and Greenfields Community Housing.

Whilst the strategy document will be updated and presented to the next meeting of Cabinet, this report provides an update on the issues, events and processes in progress since 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

## **2. Strategy Workshop**

At the Strategy Workshop, held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2007, members of the Cabinet received a series of papers from the Head of Policy to assist in assessing the district priorities. These papers included the results of consultation and the national set of outcome based indicators against which we will be measured from 2008 as part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment in conjunction with the County Council and our partners. Copies of the papers are attached as Appendix A.

Two schedules of bids, revenue and capital, requesting funding for 2008/09 prepared by senior officers were presented at the workshop. A process to enable a review of the bids was agreed which would enable the presentation of a prioritised schedule of bids to be tabled at tonight's Cabinet meeting.

## **3. Update of Assumptions**

The following provides an update on financial resources and spending pressures:

- An initial report on the outcome of the Triennial Review of the Essex Pension Fund has been received. Whilst other authorities in Essex have received details of the contributions required and deficit to be recovered over the next three years

the Actuary is currently working on a breakdown of our figures between those attributable to Greenfields Community Housing staff and to the Council's staff.

The overall position of the Essex Fund has improved from a position as at 31 March 2004 of 71% of liabilities covered by assets to 86% as at 31 March 2007 (on a like for like basis).

The actual position reduces to 79.6% when Scheme changes, changes in the mortality rate and ill-health retirements are taken into account.

The information received to-date indicates that the average amount required to fund the deficit will reduce from 8.5% to 7% of pensionable pay and the employers ongoing contribution rate will increase from 10.1% to 13% of pensionable pay.

- Capital receipt from the transfer of the housing stock to Greenfields Community Housing was as follows:

£24.7million – net receipt (after payment of £5.9m for Pension Fund deficit contribution and £11m to Community Fund)

Less: £10.2m – estimated set-up costs and debt premia costs

£14.5m - net before calculation of the levy payable to the Government

The levy due has to be calculated and paid to the Government by 10 December 2007. Details of the final set-up costs together with the outcome of the Essex Pension Fund review are awaited before the final calculation is determined.

The capital receipt was received on 13 November 2007 and has been invested to provide interest to support the General Fund revenue account.

- The value of Service Level Agreements with Greenfields Community Housing has increased to £1.8million from £1.4million as provided in the Draft MTFs. The majority of the agreements run until 30 June 2009, when it is anticipated that Greenfields CH will vacate Causeway House and Millenium Tower. The Council will need to determine well before this date, which agreements it wishes to tender for with Greenfields CH.
- New Spending Demand – Concessionary Fares. Information regarding the cost of the concessionary fare scheme for both the current financial year and 2008/09 has been received recently from MCL Travel Consultants to the Essex Scheme.

This anticipates the cost for Braintree District Council in the current year to be £990,000, compared to the budget provided of £910,000.

From April 2008 the new national concessionary fare scheme commences, enabling free off peak travel (from 9.30am to 11.00pm) anywhere in England for people aged 60 years and above and eligible people with disabilities. The projected costs of the scheme for the Council is £1.253million. The budget provision for 2008/09 currently allowed is £910,000.

The Government has provided £212million for the introduction of the new scheme and is currently consulting on the methodology of allocating this sum to local authorities. Four options are proposed providing an additional grant to this Council of: £198,000; £226,000; £239,000 or £281,000.

The additional cost of the new scheme to this Council has been calculated by MCL to be £397,000.

Comparing the anticipated cost against the budget provision and the additional grant provides a shortfall of funding of between £62,000 and £145,000.

Both the existing and new schemes allow for discretionary additions, these being travel outside off-peak times and companion passes. The Council's current scheme allows travel between 9.00am and 11.00pm and offers companion passes (for which a charge is made).

A briefing paper prepared by the Street Facilities Manager is attached as an Appendix.

Members are asked to consider whether only the statutory minimum scheme (travel during off-peak 9.30am to 11.00pm) should be offered from April 2008, as is being suggested by the majority of authorities in the Essex Scheme and whether companion passes should continue to be offered (28 issued in current year), there being no consensus on this between authorities in the Essex Scheme.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Braintree District Council – Strategy Workshop – November 2007</b> <b>Assessing the District's priorities</b></p>
---

## **Introduction**

As best practice it is important to be able to demonstrate that we have considered a number of different issues when contributing to the development of the District-wide Vision and Community Strategy and when assessing our own priorities for the next four years and our priority actions for the coming year.

These issues are:

- The results of consultation (quantitative and qualitative)
- Analysis of statistics (which may or may not validate the issues which arose from the consultation)
- The introduction of Comprehensive Area Assessment and its national set of outcome based indicators against which we will be measured with effect from 2008 onwards in conjunction with the County Council and our other partners

The purpose of this paper is to consider each of the above and to use them to inform the discussions at the Strategy Workshop.

## **Consultation**

The following five consultation exercises have been carried out during late 2006 / 2007:

1. The Local Area Agreement – Tracker Survey Wave One – October 2006
2. The Best Value General Survey – October 2006
3. The Local Development Framework and the Braintree District Community Strategy consultations.
4. The Essex Citizens Panel – Braintree District Focus Group.
5. Town centre consultations in Witham, Braintree and Halstead – September 2007.

Further details are set out below:

1. The Local Area Agreement – Tracker Survey Wave One – October 2006 and
2. The Best Value General Survey – October 2006

These provided mainly quantitative data however they can be used to draw general conclusions about quality of life issues.

A summary of the some of the results which may be more pertinent to the discussions at the Workshop is set out at Appendix 1. Also included (from the LAA Tracker Survey) are the scores from the best and worst local authority areas in Essex to help put things into perspective!

The BV General Survey also asked a question about what was important in making somewhere a good place to live and gave a list of choices. The responses to this question are included in Appendix 2 (see below).

Further information about the BV General Survey – together with comparisons with the other Essex authorities can be seen in the report to Cabinet in July 2007 – 'Best Value Performance Indicators – Satisfaction Survey Results'. A copy of the summary results from

this report together with comparisons with the other Essex authorities is attached at Appendix 3.

3. The Local Development Framework and the Braintree District Community Strategy Consultations.

Details of the amount and types of consultations which were carried out are included in the Report 'A Vision for the District' – Cabinet - 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007. The methodology and extent of consultation was set out in the statutory Statement of Community Involvement which had been agreed prior to the exercises beginning.

4. The Essex Citizens Panel – Braintree District Focus Group.

The initial meeting of this group was held in October 2007 at Causeway House. It was organised by Essex County Council and independently facilitated. 9 people who live in the District took part. The recommended appropriate number of people for a focus group like this is between 8 and 12.

Both 3 and 4 provided mainly qualitative data. A summary of the main results is attached at Appendix 2.

5. Town centre consultations in Witham, Braintree and Halstead – September 2007.

Again, these provided mainly qualitative data. They can only be used to get a general feel for the issues which are particularly relevant to local areas. For a number of reasons only a crude analysis can be applied because those interviewed were not a representative sample (ie in Halstead the majority of respondents were elderly). The main outcomes from the town centre exercises are attached at Appendix 4.

## Statistics

There are many, many statistics available in relation to the issues which have arisen through the consultation exercises and not enough room to include them in this paper!

## Comprehensive Area Assessment (National Indicators)

All public sector agencies will be measured against these with effect from April 2008. There are 198 indicators and a list of them is attached at Appendix 5. Those which are particularly relevant to Braintree DC and which we are **likely** to be measured against at District level are shaded black. We will have a contributory part to play in relation to many others through our partnership working (ie. the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership).

The detailed definitions of the indicators and the methodology for implementing the CAA framework are still under discussion nationally.

Sara Moutard  
Head of Policy  
November 2007

## APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY AND COMPARISON OF BV AND LAA SURVEY RESULTS

Description	BV survey Braintree 2006	LAA Survey Braintree 2006	LAA Survey Worst authority score	LAA Survey Best authority score
<b>How satisfied are you with: . . .</b>				
your local area as a place to live (% satisfied)	78	83	70	87
the council generally (% satisfied)	55	<b>62</b>	48	<b>62</b>
<b>Local Democracy</b>				
How satisfied are you with the opportunities available for participation in local decision making provided by the council (% satisfied)	19	36	23	44
Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local areas (% which agree)	21	32	20	36
Would you like to be more involved in the decisions your council makes that affect your local area: % which would!	23	27	22	37
% which said that it would depend on the issue	56	N/A	N/A	N/A
% which believe that the council is making the area a better place to live either to a great or to a certain extent	66	N/A	N/A	N/A
% which believe that the Council provides good value for money either to a great or to a certain extent	39	62	50	69
<b>How well informed do you feel about: . . . (response is the % that feel well informed)</b>				
local decision making?	38	N/A	N/A	N/A
whether the council is delivering on its promises?	32	N/A	N/A	N/A
What standard of service you should expect from the council?	49	N/A	N/A	N/A
What the council is doing to address anti-social behaviour	18	N/A	N/A	N/A
What the council spends its money on	53	N/A	N/A	N/A
How well informed the council keeps its residents about the services and benefits it provides	47	50	32	55
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour Issues: Thinking about your local area, how much of a problem do you think are: . . . (response is the % that feel it is a fairly big or big problem)</b>				
Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children	58	47	55	35
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	55	49	53	33
Rubbish and litter lying around	37	38	50	29
People not treating other people with respect and consideration	44	38	45	26
Vandalism, graffiti, other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	33	26	40	18
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	25	19	29	17
People using or dealing drugs	25	16	38	13
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	12	14	20	8
Abandoned or burnt out cars	9	8	14	4
Feeling unsafe whilst outside during the day	4	4	8	2
Feeling unsafe whilst outside after dark	30	23	38	13

**APPENDIX 2  
QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

	<b>LDF / Community Strategy</b>	<b>Essex Citizens Panel (Braintree residents)</b>	<b>Best Value General Survey 2006</b>
	<p>Top ten priorities (out of 35)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve public transport</li> <li>2. Increase energy efficiency</li> <li>3. Improve leisure and recreation facilities</li> <li>4. Improve policing and community safety</li> <li>5. Provide good quality affordable housing</li> <li>6. Improve sports facilities</li> <li>7. Improve training opportunities</li> <li>8. Provide local employment opportunities</li> <li>9. Provide services locally without the need to travel</li> <li>10. Improve educational facilities and skills levels</li> </ol> <p>Bottom ten priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26. Preserve our heritage</li> <li>27. Provide park and ride</li> <li>28. Improve the cycle network</li> <li>29. Create vibrant town and village centres</li> <li>30. More autonomy / devolved responsibility / less govt legislation</li> <li>31. Build more hotels</li> <li>32. Legalise cannabis</li> <li>33. Provide more jobs for under 14's</li> <li>34. Provide support centres for young parents</li> <li>35. Improve mobility for elderly around towns</li> </ol>	<p>What is important in making somewhere a good place to live</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environment</li> <li>• Access to health services</li> <li>• Public Transport</li> <li>• Local amenities</li> </ul> <p>What most needs improving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to health services</li> <li>• Public transport</li> <li>• The ability of infrastructure to cope with development and growth in the population</li> </ul>	<p>The things that are most important in making somewhere nice to live (in order of priority) are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The level of crime</li> <li>2. health services</li> <li>3. clean streets</li> <li>4. affordable decent housing</li> <li>5. education provision</li> <li>6. parks and open spaces</li> <li>7. shopping facilities</li> <li>8. the level of traffic congestion</li> <li>9. public transport</li> <li>10. activities for teenagers</li> <li>11. job prospects</li> <li>12. access to nature</li> <li>13. sports and leisure facilities</li> <li>14. road and pavement repairs</li> <li>15. wage levels and local cost of living</li> <li>16. facilities for young children</li> <li>17. the level of pollution</li> <li>18. cultural facilities (ie cinemas, museums)</li> <li>19. community activities</li> <li>20. race relations</li> </ol> <p>The top five things that most need improving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Activities for teenagers</li> <li>2. the level of traffic congestion</li> <li>3. road and pavement repairs</li> <li>4. the level of crime</li> <li>5. public transport</li> </ol> <p>The thing which least needed improving was race relations</p>

## Additional data around specific issues

The top ten priorities highlighted in the LDF / Community Strategy consultation are considered in further detail below to aid discussion.

### 1. Public transport

Additional points which emerged from the LDF / Community Strategy consultation were:

- Bus and rail services to surrounding rural areas should be improved
- Need for additional car parking in town centres and railway stations at Witham, Kelvedon and Hatfield Peverel
- The District should take measures to support inter-urban and rural bus services to Stansted Airport

In the LAA Tracker Survey, 59% of residents said they were satisfied with local bus services (the best score was 72% in Colchester and worst was 35% in Brentwood)

The Essex Citizens Panel (Braintree District Focus Group) also discussed the issue of public transport. They felt that:

- a better frequency of service would help residents to travel around the district quicker and easier and that this may also help encourage more people to use public transport.
- they do not know who is accountable for what services since the deregulation of the bus service to private companies
- there are different routes ran by different companies which have caused confusion for residents.
- they would like better timetable information to be available, in particular in rural parts of the district (i.e. on bus stops)
- an integrated transport system is needed between the rail service and the bus service to enable residents to use the service effectively.
- the issue of access to health services at Broomfield Hospital was a major concern (ie getting there and then parking) and access in particular by public transport was not adequate for people to use easily. Therefore there needs to be an emphasis on making sure that public transport is available and integrated to allow all residents in the local area, access to all health services easily and affordably.
- If there was sufficient funding available (and recognising that there probably isn't!) there should be conductors on the buses at night to encourage more people to use public transport in the evening but for them to feel safe.

The new statutory National Indicators relating to public transport and against which we will be measured from 2008 onwards are:

175	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
176	Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specified modes)
177	Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area
178	Bus services running on time

## 2. Increase energy efficiency

Additional points which emerged from the LDF / Community Strategy consultation were:

- Support for the option to increase the proportion of buildings needs to be met by low carbon and renewable sources of energy to 15% as this would be consistent with Policy ENG1 of the Proposed Changes to the Draft East of England Regional Plan.
- However, the practicalities of any renewable energy options and the financial / cost implications of increasing them should be considered.
- The 'Code for Sustainable Homes' and building regulations can assist in achieving Carbon Neutrality

Energy efficiency was not mentioned in other consultations as a priority however the environment was. It may be the case that when consultees referred to the environment as a priority, they were also inferring that responding to climate change, energy efficiency measures and biodiversity issues were linked to it.

The new statutory National Indicators relating to energy efficiency specifically (ie. not including the National Indicators which relate to the environment generally) and against which we will be measured from 2008 onwards are:

185	CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations
186	Per capita CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area
194	Level of air quality – reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations

## 3. Improve leisure and recreation facilities

This can be linked to number 6 – Improve sports facilities.

The provision of schooling, education and sports were highlighted as important in the LDF / Community Strategy consultation.

The Essex Citizens Panel (Braintree District Focus Group) felt that a number of leisure services needed improving - in particular it was felt that there was a need for an Olympic pool (that it was a shame that the new Braintree pool had not been built to this specification) and better facilities for teenagers - however respondents acknowledged that teenagers may not know what they want and even if they did know - would they use whatever was provided and who would provide it!?

In the BV General Survey 59% of respondents said they were fairly or very satisfied with the sports / leisure facilities and events provided or supported by the Council.

The new statutory National Indicators relating to leisure, recreation and sport and against which we will be measured from 2008 onwards are:

8	Adult participation in sport
9	Use of public libraries
10	Visits to museums or galleries
11	Engagement in the arts
57	Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport
110	Young people's participation in positive activities

#### 4. Improve policing and community safety

As we know, data shows that the Braintree District is one of the safest in the country in terms of crime levels. However, anti-social behaviour / youth nuisance and perceptions of crime / the perceived threat from young people 'hanging about' continues to be a real issue for local people.

The data supplied in Appendix 1 in relation to perceptions of anti-social behaviour – and particularly the comparisons with the best and worst local authority areas in Essex - are useful when considering this issue.

Policing was raised as an issue in the LDF / Community Strategy consultation with people wanting to see more police especially in rural areas to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The new statutory National Indicators which relate to how we are dealing with anti-social behaviour and against which we will be measured from 2008 onwards are.

17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area
23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity
24	Satisfaction with the way the police and local council dealt with antisocial behaviour
25	Satisfaction of different groups with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour
27	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem

#### 5. Provide good quality affordable housing

This was frequently mentioned as a priority issue.

Additional points emerging from the LDF / Community Strategy consultation:

- A mixed response with some representations seeking stronger policies to ensure that affordable housing is maximised with others commenting that changes to policy such as lowering the site size threshold may not be realistic or viable.
- Policies need to be based on an up to date strategic housing market assessment. Also a need to take account of individual circumstances of each site.
- Although there was a majority of responses in favour of not increasing the percentage requirement above 30% the East of England Plan has an aspiration to achieve 35%.
- Some support for a different threshold in rural areas. Also some support for commuted payments for affordable housing in certain circumstances.
- Also support for retaining the current rural exceptions policy and for allocating specific sites for affordable housing.
- Mainly opposition to allocating greenfield sites in urban areas with a much higher percentage of affordable housing.

The affordability of house prices in the District is well below the national average.

The new statutory National Indicators which relate to or affect how we are dealing with affordable housing and against which we will be measured from 2008 onwards are.

154	Net additional homes provided
155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites

## 6. Improve sports facilities

(see 3 above)

## 7. Improve training opportunities

From Braintree DC's perspective, training and employment issues are linked. See comments for Priorities 8 and 10 below.

## 8. Provide local employment opportunities

In view of the prevailing basic skills issue and low educational attainment standards in the District this priority links directly to Priorities 7 and 10:

Additional points which emerged from the LDF / Community Strategy consultation included:

- Support for identification of a new strategic employment area or business park.
- Support both for retention of existing employment areas and for the use of existing used or vacant employment sites for other uses.
- The results of the employment land review should be used to assess the suitability of employment sites for other uses.
- Support for the Option to encourage the use of suitable unused and underused farm buildings for employment subject to the capacity of local infrastructure.
- Also support for the allocation of additional land in rural areas for employment.

The Essex Citizens Panel (Braintree District Focus Group) felt that it was important that local amenities stayed local, such as individual shops and local butchers, newsagents, bakers. They were uneasy at the thought of supermarkets taking over from small independent businesses.

The new statutory National Indicators which relate to how we are dealing with employment issues and against which we will be measured from 2008 onwards are.

151	Overall employment rate
152	Working age people on out of work benefits
153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
166	Average earnings of employees in the area
172	VAT registered businesses in the area showing growth
174	Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers
182	Satisfaction of businesses with local authority regulation services

## 9. Provide services locally without the need to travel

Through the LDF / Community Strategy consultation, broad support was expressed for the continued provision of health care facilities within the District to reduce the need for people to travel.

See also the comments of the Essex Citizens Panel (Braintree District Focus Group) for Priority 8 above. In addition to this, they felt that there is still confusion surrounding what services the district council provide and which the County provide.

Almost all of the people interviewed in the town centre consultations expressed a desire for a Council presence to be retained in each of the town centres.

Access to local services affects satisfaction levels with the way that public services are provided. It also affects perceptions about value for money and the extent to which people feel engaged and involved in the way that services are provided. In the BV General Survey, 39% of respondents said they found the Council to be remote and impersonal.

The main new statutory National Indicator for access to local services – and against which we will be measured from 2008 onwards is:

175	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
-----	--

However other National Indicators will also be affected by how we address this priority issue:

5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area
4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
3	Civic participation in the local area

## 10. Improve educational facilities and skills levels

Increasing educational attainment and basic skills level is a high national priority as can be seen from the number of new statutory National Indicators.

It is also one of the biggest issues for the Braintree District as local data shows educational attainment and skills level to be amongst the lowest in Essex and well below the national average. The District can therefore attract funding from the Learning and Skills Council, the Investing in Communities Fund and other sources to focus on this issue.

The Local Strategic Partnership – through the Economic Development Partnership Board - has already carried out work to more accurately assess the situation in the District and in order to ensure that a joined up approach between service providers and funding organisations is put in place.

The new National Indicators which relate specifically to skills issues are:

163	Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
164	Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher
165	Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 or higher
166	Average earnings of employees in the area
174	Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers

**APPENDIX 3  
COMPARISON OF BEST VALUE GENERAL SURVEY SATISFACTION INDICATORS WITH OTHER ESSEX AUTHORITIES AND NATIONALLY**

	BV3 – Overall satisfaction with the Council	BV4 – Satisfaction with complaints handling	Satisfaction with cleanliness	Satisfaction with household waste collection	Satisfaction with waste recycling facilities	Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities	Satisfaction with libraries	Satisfaction with museums and galleries	Satisfaction with theatres and concert halls	Satisfaction with parks and open spaces
<b>Braintree</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25*</b>	<b>68</b>
Basildon	45	24	67	92	81	56	82	19	23	77
Brentwood	64	41	78	84	82	69	81	19	40	87
Castle Point	52	35	72	86	77	56	78	15	19	60
Chelmsford	62	44	76	92	77	66	82	52	56	83
Colchester	50	31	60	75	71	66	82	66	61	83
Epping Forest	52	38	65	67	73	59	72	24	18	76
Harlow	45	33	67	80	76	55	79	46	55	80
Maldon	50	41	78	86	83	64	80	35	18	83
Rochford	62	35	77	88	76	67	86	24	28	82
Tendring	50	39	71	83	76	53	76	23	46	67
Uttlesford	55	37	75	76	71	63	68	48	28	75
<b>Essex Average BDC is:</b>	<b>53.5</b> above by <b>+1.5%</b>	<b>36</b> above by <b>+2%</b>	<b>71</b> below by <b>-3%</b>	<b>82</b> below by <b>-5%</b>	<b>76</b> below by <b>-4%</b>	<b>61</b> below by <b>-2%</b>	<b>79</b> above by <b>+2%</b>	<b>34</b> above by <b>+5%</b>	<b>35*</b> below by <b>-10%</b>	<b>77</b> below by <b>-9%</b>
<b>National average BDC is:</b>	<b>55</b> same	<b>35</b> above by <b>+2%</b>	<b>71</b> below by <b>-3%</b>	<b>81</b> below by <b>-4%</b>	<b>72</b> same	<b>60</b> below by <b>-1%</b>	<b>75</b> above by <b>+6%</b>	<b>38</b> above by <b>+1%</b>	<b>37*</b> below by <b>-12%</b>	<b>74</b> below by <b>-6%</b>
National Top quartile parameter	60	38	74	86	76	65	78	50	52	78
National Median	55	34	71	81	72	60	75	38	37	74
National Bottom quartile parameter	50	32	65	73	68	55	71	26	26	68
<b>Braintree is in quartile . .</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Ranking in Essex (out of 12)</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Joint 5th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>Joint 7th</b>	<b>Joint 5th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>

\* The Braintree District does not have any Council owned or managed theatres or concert halls

**APPENDIX 4  
TOWN CENTRE CONSULTATIONS – SEPTEMBER 2007  
SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

***Braintree***

***What's not good***

Range of shops (7 out of 39 comments) (BUT of 55 comments about what was good in the town – 21 said the shops!)

High street traffic

Parking (cost and quantity)

Litter (BUT of 50 comments about what was good in the town – 11 said it was clean!)

Pedestrian areas need to be improved

***What's missing:***

Lack of good quality and good size of shops

Better transport

***Halstead***

***What's not good***

Shops (16 out of 69 comments made) (BUT of 76 comments about what is good in Halstead, 30 people said the shops were!)

Anti-social behaviour (yob culture)

Traffic (mentioned separately to road works which was a hot topic at the time!)

***What's missing***

Lack of good quality shops (see comment above)

CCTV

Things for young people to do (NB mostly elderly people were interviewed!)

Improved policing

Theatre / cinema

***Witham***

***What's not good***

Shops – not enough and not enough variety (7 out of 25 comments) (BUT of 29 comments about what is good in Witham – 11 said the shops were!)

Feeling of not being safe at night

Anti-social behaviour

***What's missing***

More, bigger and better variety of shops

Cinema / theatre

More things for young people to do

## APPENDIX 5 – New National Indicator Set

National Indicator	Indicator Title
	(those shaded in black are the indicators which BDC will possibly be measured against from 2008 onwards. We will have a contributory part to play in many others through our partnership working. Further details as to definitions and the methodology for data collection and reporting is awaited from government)
1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
3	Civic participation in the local area
4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area
6	Participation in regular volunteering
7	Environment for a thriving third sector
8	Adult participation in sport
9	Use of public libraries
10	Visits to museums or galleries
11	Engagement in the arts
12	Refused and deferred Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) license applications leading to immigration enforcement activity
13	Migrants English language skills and knowledge
14	Avoidable contact: The average number, of customer contacts per received customer request
15	Serious violent crime rate
16	Serious acquisitive crime rate
17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
18	Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision
19	Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders
20	Assault with injury crime rate
21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area
23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity
24	Satisfaction with the way the police and local council dealt with antisocial behaviour
25	Satisfaction of different groups with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour
26	Specialist support to victims of a serious sexual offence
27	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
28	Serious knife crime rate
29	Gun crime rate
30	Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders
31	Re-offending rate of registered sex offenders
32	Repeat incidents of domestic violence
33	Arson incidents
34	Domestic violence – murder
35	Building resilience to violent extremism
36	Protection against terrorist attack
37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area
38	Drug-related (Class A) offending rate
39	Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates
40	Drug users in effective treatment
41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem
43	Young people within the Youth Justice System receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody
44	Ethnic composition of offenders on Youth Justice System disposals
45	Young offenders engagement in suitable education, employment or training
46	Young offenders access to suitable accommodation
47	People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
48	Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
49	Number of primary fires and related fatalities and non-fatal casualties, excluding precautionary checks
50	Emotional health of children
51	Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health (CAMHs) services

52	Take up of school lunches
53	Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks from birth
54	Services for disabled children
55	Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year
56	Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6
57	Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport
58	Emotional and behavioural health of children in care
59	Initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 7 working days of referral
60	Core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement
61	Stability of looked after children adopted following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption
62	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves
63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement
64	Child protection plans lasting 2 years or more
65	Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time
66	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales
67	Child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales
68	Referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment
69	Children who have experienced bullying
70	Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people
71	Children who have run away from home/care overnight
72	Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy
73	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (Threshold)
74	Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3 (Threshold)
75	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (Threshold)
76	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS2 (Floor)
77	Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at KS3 (Floor)
78	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths (Floor)
79	Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19
80	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19
81	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19
82	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19
83	Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3
84	Achievement of 2 or more A*-C grades in Science GCSEs or equivalent
85	Post-16 participation in physical sciences (A Level Physics, Chemistry and Maths)
86	Secondary schools judged as having good or outstanding standards of behaviour
87	Secondary school persistent absence rate
88	Number of Extended Schools
89	Number of schools in special measures
90	Take up of 14-19 learning diplomas
91	Participation of 17 year-olds in education or training
92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest
93	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
94	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
95	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
96	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
97	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
98	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
99	Children in care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2
100	Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2
101	Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)
102	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2 and 4
103	Special Educational Needs – statements issued within 26 weeks
104	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths threshold
105	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving 5 A*-C GCSE inc. English and Maths
106	Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education
107	Key Stage 2 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups

108	Key Stage 4 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups
109	Number of Sure Start Children Centres
110	Young people's participation in positive activities
111	First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 – 17
112	Under 18 conception rate
113	Prevalence of Chlamydia in under 20 year olds
114	Rate of permanent exclusions from school
115	Substance misuse by young people
116	Proportion of children in poverty
117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
118	Take up of formal childcare by low-income working families
119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
120	All-age all cause mortality rate
121	Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75
122	Mortality from all cancers at ages under 75
123	16+ current smoking rate prevalence
124	People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition
125	Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation/intermediate care
126	Early access for women to maternity services
127	Self reported experience of social care users
128	User reported measure of respect and dignity in their treatment
129	End of life access to palliative care enabling people to choose to die at home
130	Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individual Budgets)
131	Delayed transfers of care from hospitals
132	Timeliness of social care assessment
133	Timeliness of social care packages
134	The number of emergency bed days per head of weighted population
135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information
136	People supported to live independently through social services (all ages)
137	Healthy life expectancy at age 65
138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood
139	People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently
140	Fair treatment by local services
141	Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living
142	Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
143	Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence
144	Offenders under probation supervision in employment at the end of their order or licence
145	Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
146	Adults with learning disabilities in employment
147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation
148	Care leavers in employment, education or training
149	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation
150	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment
151	Overall employment rate
152	Working age people on out of work benefits
153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
154	Net additional homes provided
155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
156	Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation
157	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major', 'minor' and 'other' application types
158	% decent council homes
159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites
160	Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services
161	Learners achieving a Level 1 qualification in literacy
162	Learners achieving an Entry Level 3 qualification in numeracy
163	Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher

164	Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher
165	Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 or higher
166	Average earnings of employees in the area
167	Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak
168	Principal roads where maintenance should be considered
169	Non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered
170	Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years
171	VAT registration rate
172	VAT registered businesses in the area showing growth
173	People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits
174	Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers
175	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
176	Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specified modes)
177	Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area
178	Bus services running on time
179	Value for money – total net value of on-going cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the 2008-9 financial year
180	Changes in Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit entitlements within the year
181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events
182	Satisfaction of businesses with local authority regulation services
183	Impact of local authority regulatory services on the fair trading environment
184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law
185	CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations
186	Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area
187	Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating
188	Adapting to climate change
189	Flood and coastal erosion risk management
190	Achievement in meeting standards for the control system for animal health
191	Residual household waste per head
192	Household waste recycled and composted
193	Municipal waste land filled
194	Level of air quality – reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations
195	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting)
196	Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping
197	Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites
198	Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used

## **Concessionary Fares – Briefing Paper**

There are changes looming ever closer regarding the above scheme, namely the statutory improvement of the free bus travel pass from a local to an England-wide concession in April 2008 (NB, this only applies to local scheduled services, not to national coach travel such as National Express, but does mean concessionaires will not be hampered by cross-border issues and so will be able to travel freely into Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, London and beyond, and will be able to travel free when staying elsewhere in England).

This comes just 2 years after the travel pass was statutorily improved from half-fare to fare-paid.

There have been ongoing disputes between bus service operators and local authorities regarding the financing of these improvements, including issues caused by the cost of the inevitable increase in take-up and usage of the pass.

Braintree has generally been in the fortunate position of having received more additional funding from government than was needed to provide the improved service. However, this position is unlikely to be sustained following the improvements in April next year, with all Essex local authorities projected to be in a deficit position and some (not including BDC) massively so, with inevitable consequences for their Council Tax levels.

As a result, the Essex countywide scheme wishes to demonstrate its dissatisfaction by reducing the concession to a statutory minimum, which will mean the bus pass not being valid from 9:00am as at present, but instead from 9:30am. This also strengthens the scheme's position in any dispute which may follow, as to offer above the statutory minimum does not demonstrate that the scheme is struggling desperately to fund itself. At the Scheme's AGM yesterday a straw poll showed a majority of authorities were in favour of introducing this measure. In the interest of consistency across the county and avoiding confusion for passengers and bus drivers alike, it is preferable to have the same level of concession across the county. It is understood that such a measure is also being proposed in other areas of England where an above-statutory level of concession has previously been offered.

The change from 9:00am in itself is unlikely to represent a huge financial saving, as many of those passengers affected will simply catch the next available service and hence the Council will still have to reimburse the agreed amount of the operator's foregone revenue. The scheme's contractors, MCL, have made it clear that exceptions can be made in areas where service is very limited and a reduction to 9:30 may have very limiting implications for rural residents, although I have done a quick check of the main rural services in Braintree district and most of these only run after 9:30am. Were the amendment to happen, it would be

publicised in local press and an explanatory leaflet would be sent out with the new passes prior to April next year.

I would suggest that the Council continue to offer the non-statutory companion pass, made available to companions of those so disabled that they find it almost impossible to travel without a nominated companion (the Council still has to pay the foregone revenue, but there is currently a charge of £34 for a companion pass). It is also not proposed to alter the travel tokens concession.

Simon Taylor  
Street Facilities Manager  
20<sup>th</sup> November 2007