

**CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL – 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2009**

Agenda Item 9 (i)

**CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Mrs Joanne Beavis****CABINET PORTFOLIO: Customers & Communication**

Portfolio covers:-

- Member Development
- Rural and Locality (Place Shaping) Development
- External Communications and Marketing Strategy
- Customer Access Strategy
- Democratic Support
- Corporate Consultation
- Customer Standards and Relationships

**REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 22<sup>nd</sup> September and ending 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009.****CUSTOMER SERVICES.****CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE (CSC).**

At the end of September 2009 the CSC was preparing to restructure after some staff left and moved over to Greenfields Community Housing. Members would be aware, from my last report to Council, that Greenfields Community Housing is now taking their own calls in their new office in Witham.

I would like to assure all of our Members that I will keep an eye on the CSC to ensure that our own customers do not suffer as a result from this transfer. Business is as usual and we are working hard to ensure that our customers receive the same level of service that they would usually expect from our CSC.

**LOCAL SERVICE PROVISION.**

Work continues to undertake a report into how we would like to work, in possible partnership, to provide a Face to Face provision in our three main towns. In addition we would want to also consider the possibility of working in partnership to deliver customer service points in some of our rural areas.

Face to Face is important to our customers and we would like to offer a continued service where our customers can access a range of services from Customer Service Desks in our three main towns. This demonstrates our commitment to offer services locally to our customers and fits our agenda to 'Go Local'.

## **CORPORATE CONSULTATION.**

### **THE PEOPLES PANEL.**

Cllr Bebb is working hard to ensure that the membership of the Peoples Panel is spread evenly throughout the district. He is paying particular attention to ensure that the membership is representative of all our residents.

During the month of October Cllr Bebb will be visiting some of the schools in our district to chat to our young residents about the Peoples Panel. In looking ahead it is important that we do engage with young people to ensure that our direction of travel for the future is considered and understood by all.

### **LOCAL CONSULTATION EVENT.**

Thank you to all members that participated in the Local Consultation Events.

- \* Witham - September 15<sup>th</sup>.
- \* Halstead - September 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- \* Braintree - September 29<sup>th</sup>.

All of the three events above were well attended and the feed back so far has been positive with many of the evaluation forms saying: EXCELLENT.

Many thanks go to Cllr Bebb, Local Committee Chairmen and Officers for putting together this programme of events. I am sure that the priorities and actions identified will feature in many areas as we set out our budget plans and priorities for the coming year.

### **LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK. Week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009.**

We are keen to engage with the youth of our district to highlight Local Democracy Week. Our birthday card competition is now underway and I look forward to meeting the winners. We are hoping to take the winners of the competition to London for a trip around The Palace of Westminster.

## **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT.**

The latest edition of Democracy Counts is out. This edition covers a wide range of issues including an update on Outlook Web Access. Members will now be aware that as from the 16<sup>th</sup> October 09 Democratic Services will stop forwarding emails to Members private email accounts.

### **Members Development Evening on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009.**

I hope that all members found the training evening of interest and, like me, you are finding the new Members Handbook useful.

### **Member Development Working Group.**

By now you will all know who your representatives are on the working group. The Member Development Working Group has recommended its draft strategy to Local Government Reform (LGR) LGR has now recommended the strategy to Cabinet.

## **RURAL ISSUES.**

### **ACTION FOR MARKET TOWNS/RURAL SERVICES NETWORK CONVENTION.**

I was delighted to represent Braintree District Council at Rural Services Network Convention in Melton Mowbray on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

Our workshop concentrated on the problems of delivering quality services across broad geographical areas and how these can be to overcome

The convention was impressed by many of the services being delivered by Braintree in the rural areas and in particular our partnership models. Delegates wanted to understand further our Local Committee processes, LAA funded projects such as the Village Agents Projects and our Community Wardens Project.

### **CASTLE HEDINGHAM POST OFFICE PROVISION.**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October I attended the opening of the new Post Office provision in Castle Hedingham. The residents of Castle Hedingham were grateful to all partners and supporters that had enabled the new Post Office provision to open. It is pleasing to see residents truly grateful for the return of this provision. I was impressed by the new Essex County Council Service Information Point – another possible partnership opportunity that I must follow up!

## **CORPORATE AFFAIRS.**

### **JAPANESE REPRESENTATIVES.**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October other Cabinet Members and myself were delighted to receive a group of Local Government Representatives from Japan. The aim of the visit was for our Japanese Representatives to understand how Braintree Council is delivering services in partnership across the district.

The networking opportunity, as always, gave us all the greatest chance to discuss issues that affected all members when looking at new and innovative ways of delivering services in partnership. Countries apart we might be but the issues were common and the opportunity fruitful. Many thanks to the Officer that put together this unique opportunity.

**FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING:**

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***Our further contact details are now available on the Councillors Website.***