

**CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

Agenda Item 9(i)

**CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Lady Patricia Newton****CABINET PORTFOLIO: Housing & Well-Being**

Portfolio covers:-

- Housing and Homelessness Strategy
- Health and Well-Being
- Leisure
- Affordable Housing
- Older People

**REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 22<sup>nd</sup> September – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009****Housing**

1. The Housing Strategy is now nearing completion. Following a number of workshops, consultation with local committees, parishes, et al, some new actions have been added. The target date for publication (November 2009) will be met.
2. On 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009 I attended a meeting of the Supporting People Commissioning Body at County Hall. Supporting People is the system by which housing-related support is planned, funded and administered. Its aim is to fund and develop services that intervene earlier in order to prevent reliance on more expensive institutional provision.  
The main older persons' services that receive funding from Supporting people are sheltered housing, Home Improvement Agencies (such as Hanover at Home) and Carecall alarm systems.  
The county-wide review of services for older people has concentrated mainly on sheltered housing. In particular, it proposes that a "Hub & Spoke" model of support is established, whereby any excess capacity of the "warden" service in sheltered schemes is used to provide services to people in their own homes. This excess capacity arises from making the support within the schemes available only to people who specifically need or want it. Currently tenants are expected to pay for and receive support, regardless of how capable they are.  
The funding model that allows this service to be provided is under discussion. Different providers will be affected in different ways by the various options being considered. Braintree Council officers are involved in the discussions because the provision of support to people in their own homes is a significant strategic issue. However the funding models chosen will influence how it is implemented and Greenfields will be taking a lead on implementation locally.

## Health and well-being

- 1 On 5<sup>th</sup> October the Chief Executive of NHS Mid Essex, Sheila Bremner, came to Braintree to brief members on the Strategic Plan covering the next five years. The meeting was attended by about fifteen district councillors and provided an opportunity for members to seek clarification on matters of local concern and plans for improving the provision of services in the district. The Strategic Plan was written in a different economic climate and is in the process of being refreshed to take account of the current economic climate. Some of the issues raised by members were lack of services in Witham – including phlebotomy and oncology services; cross-boundary issues in Halstead; the use of private sector health services; and duplication of consultation and information services.

A second meeting of the Braintree Local Strategic was held on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October and was very well attended by district councillors, partners and voluntary organisations. The purpose of the meeting was to give a better understanding of the Essex Strategy and Local Area Agreement, the District Sustainable Community Strategy, and the work of the eight Partnership Boards.

The Village Agents project was officially launched on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> October at Belchamp St Paul and was attended by Cllr Butland as chairman of the Braintree Local Strategic Partnership, and other partners.

## Leisure

1. The Heart and Sole health walks continue to do well. Since April 298 new walkers have joined the scheme and walk attendances total 3,366. NHS Mid Essex has recognised the value of the work being done by the district council and has now offered £2000 to support the scheme. I hope this will enable us to increase participation rates.  
On Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> October I attended an event for all volunteer leaders of walks to thank them for the time and effort they put into leading and organizing the walks.

A report on the future of swimming and leisure facilities in Witham is covered in the Cabinet report to Council.

## Other activities

Since last Council meeting I have attended the following:

DC Leisure Partnership Board  
Supporting Our Communities Programme Board  
Ground clearance work at Bocking cemetery  
Opening of St John Ambulance Headquarters at Spring Lodge  
Memorial Service for ex-councillor Wilhelmina Drake  
Opening of Braintree Sixth Form Centre  
Re-think Art Exhibition preview  
Receiving Japanese delegation to BDC

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

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