

**LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL – 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2009**

Agenda Item 9 (i)

**LEADER: Cllr Graham Butland**

**LEADER PORTFOLIO: Overall Vision and Strategic Direction**

Portfolio covers:-

- Strategic Partnerships – National, Regional, County and District
- External Relationships (including PR and reputation)
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Corporate Governance

**REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER AND ENDING 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2009**

**1. Launch of Village Agents**

On Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October I attended, in my role as Chairman of the Braintree Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), the launch of the Village Agents Project at Belchamp St Pauls.

Employed by the Rural Community Council of Essex, the locally recruited Village Agents have an abundance of information at their fingertips and are in constant contact with local organisations and service providers. The Village Agents will not duplicate any existing services and they will work alongside County, Borough/District and Parish Councillors, as well as Parish Clerks and other key people in the community, to ensure that they can point people in the right direction for help and support.

Each Village Agent will work part-time in their area, meeting residents face to face in their home or at local community facilities. An on-line system will be used to refer people on to services and to manage the information process, as well as monitor performance. Local Stakeholder Groups have also been set up to support the agents', meeting every six months to share local knowledge, advice and discuss ways in which to raise awareness of the project.

Six areas in Braintree have initially been selected and each will be supported by a separate Village Agent. The areas covered are:

1. Bardfield Saling, Gt. Saling, Panfield & Shalford
2. Belchamp Otten, Belchamp St Paul, Belchamp Walter, Little Yeldham, Tilbury Juxta Clare, Ovington, Pentlow, Foxearth, Liston & Borley
3. Alphamstone, Lamarsh, Great Henny, Little Henny, Middleton, Twinstead and Bulmer
4. Fairstead, Faulkbourne, Terling & White Notley
5. Stambourne, Toppesfield, Birdbrook, Ridgewell & Ashen
6. Silver End

All will play a vital role in our rural communities, ensuring older residents living independently are not isolated and have easy access to local services and support through their friendly and supportive help and advice. This is an excellent example of the work of the LSP bringing together the expertise and resources of different agencies.

## **2. Local Strategic Partnership Forum**

I was delighted to see that several District Councillors attended the LSP Assembly on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October at the Colne Valley Golf Club. The evening was very successful and enabled those attending to learn more about the structure and working of the various parts of the LSP. Again it was a practical example of joint working by statutory and voluntary agencies across the district.

## **3. East of England Plan**

On Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October, together with Councillors McCrea and Wilkinson, I attended a workshop organised by Essex County Council to discuss the County Council's response to the East of England Plan.

The purpose of the workshop was to test out whether it would be possible to produce a united response from the County and District Councils to the four growth scenarios set out in the consultation document. There was a unanimous view that the provision of appropriate infrastructure was an essential requirement if even the lowest increase in housing provision was to be achieved.

It is clear that individual District Councils have differing aspirations that range from those who want no further development to others who would be prepared to accept an appropriate level of sustainable development accompanied by the necessary infrastructure.

It was agreed that the County Council's overarching response would accommodate these different approaches.

## **4. A120 – Littering by the Highways Agency**

Those members who use the A120 between Braintree and the M11 may recently have seen the enormous amount of litter on the verges. This followed the grass cutting carried out by the Highways Agency that not only cut the grass but successfully shredded the litter spreading it far and wide.

The mess has been cleared up by our Clean Team. The Highways Agency had previously agreed to supply BDC with its work programme in order that we can carry out a litter pick **prior** to the grass being cut. This did not happen. We have written to the Highways Agency to seek reassurances that this will not happen again. Irresponsible actions like this by a Government agency seriously undermine BDC's efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the district.

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