

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

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# MEMBERS' FOCUS

AREA: **Braintree Area**

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Regeneration and Transportation

<b>SUBJECT: Braintree Market Place Improvements</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER: Barry Mills</b>
TEL/EMAIL No.:01376 551414 ext 2592 e-mail barmi@brantre.gov.uk	<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b> Braintree Area Committee 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2002
<b>INFORMATION:</b>	

## **Project News**

The Market Place improvement project has progressed to its third phase, with work now well underway to the area at the centre of Market Place. This includes the construction of 6 disabled person parking bays and a central area for café culture.

Work to phase one and two (adjacent to Tesco and the Bull PH) is complete apart from the positioning of some street furniture items. Two new trees have been planted to the front of 'Corner House' to replace two existing trees which were in poor condition and too close to the existing buildings.

## **Road Resurfacing**

The existing roadway through Market Place has now been narrowed down from its original, excessively wide carriageway, which will make the area a better and safer place for pedestrians.

The road will be completely resurfaced during the period 3<sup>rd</sup> July – 22<sup>nd</sup> July and due to Health and Safety requirements, there will need be a road closure through Market Place and Great Square. During this period access to Market Square/Great Square and High Street will be via the signed diversion route through Bank Street. During working hours, vehicles for access and delivery will be physically walked through the pedestrian area of Bank Street to ensure health and safety to the public.

The resurfacing will be carried out in two phases, with phase one commencing on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2005 which will include the road way to the corner of Fairfield Road and Manor Street (opposite the Town Hall Centre) and the access to Market Place (opposite the Globe PH) Access to Market Place/Great Square and High Street will be via Bank Street.

Phase two works will be carried out from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July until Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2005 and will extend from Market Place to Great Square. During this period access to Market Place will remain as normal from Manor Street/Fairfield Road. Access to High Street will be and Great Square will remain via the signed diversion route as for phase 1.

It is appreciated that during this final period of works there will be disruption to the town centre but every effort will be made to keep this to a minimum. The restrictions are however necessary to allow the safe movement of both delivery vehicles and pedestrians during this key stage of work.

June 2005

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## **Programme**

Work on the final stages of the project is due for completion by the end of July 2005 although as the project is being progressed on a phased basis with phases one and two are already complete.

## **Thank-you**

The project team would like to thank the public, town traders and market traders for their patience and understanding during these Market Place Improvements which when complete will enhance the environment and safety to this important area of Braintree town.

## **Contact Details**

If you have any questions you wish to ask, please do not hesitate to contact one of the following who are part of the main project group.

Barry Mills	Project Manager	Tel 01376 551414 ext 2592
Barry Hardy	Project Engineer	Tel 01376 551414 ext 2252
Jenny Claydon	Landscape Architect	Tel 01376 551414 ext 2565

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

AREA:

CORPORATE THEME HEADING:

SUBJECT: Community Support Officers for the Braintree District	CONTACT OFFICER: Nikki Brewster
TEL/EMAIL No.: <a href="mailto:nikki.Brewster@braintree.gov.uk">nikki.Brewster@braintree.gov.uk</a> Ext 2354	BACKGROUND PAPERS:
INFORMATION:  Please find detailed below the updated list of the Police Community Support Officers and the areas they cover across the Braintree District.  <b>Braintree Town Centre:</b>  PCSO <b>7767</b> Nicole Durrant PCSO <b>7254</b> Paul Rowell PCSO <b>8760</b> Stuart Stranger (also Mobile Police Unit)  <b>Goldingham Estate:</b> PCSO <b>8760</b> Laura Hearn  <b>Fairview Estate:</b> To be confirmed  <b>Glebe Estate:</b> PCSO <b>8785</b> Jason Poole  <b>Bartrams Avenue, Cressing Road, Beckers Green Estate, Avenue, Marks Farm:</b> PCSO <b>7805</b> Ella Hearn  <b>Bradwell, Stisted, Blackmore End, Cressing, Tye Green, Black Notley, Wethersfield, Panfield, Shalford, Beasley End, Duck End, Finchingfield, Great Bardfield, Waltham Cross, Great Sailing, Rayne:</b> PCSO <b>6437</b> Will Gladwell  <b>Great Notley:</b> PCSO <b>8143</b> Terrie Johnson  <i>HALSTEAD:</i>  <b>Town &amp; Rural Areas</b>  PCSO <b>7824</b> Andrew Emery  PCSO <b>8741</b> Debbie Green PCSO <b>8550</b> Anne Seville	

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# MEMBERS' FOCUS

PCSO **8312** Neil Rogers

*WITHAM:*

PCSO **7788** Hayley Edmonds

PCSO **6642** Nikki Doubleday

PCSO **8335** Charlotte Pearce

PCSO **8145** Ashley Wynn

PCSO **8742** Danny Spence

To email any of the PCSO's, you can do the following: -

Type in their collar number (highlighted in bold above) followed by @essex.pnn.police.uk

For example Ella Hearn would be [7805@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:7805@essex.pnn.police.uk)

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

AREA: Customer Service

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Customer First

SUBJECT: Customer First	CONTACT OFFICER: Roger Bramwell
TEL/EMAIL No.: x 2919	BACKGROUND PAPERS: None
INFORMATION:	
<b><u>Improvements to Reception</u></b>	
<p>On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June work will begin to revamp the reception area of Causeway House. A two-week project will see the old dark-wood furniture replaced with maple-coloured, bright desks, the switchboard operators relocated to the Customer Service Centre on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, and a new space for a customer services advisor to sit with customers and answer their queries on a range of subjects.</p>	
<p>These improvements are part of a wider a wider plan to transform the reception area into a modern, bright space where customers can have most of their queries dealt with on the ground floor and at one desk. Frontline members of staff from across the organisation have been involved in putting developing ideas and drawing up the plans for the reception area. The improvements taking place now are interim arrangements whilst the wider plan is reviewed in the light of Housing Options.</p>	
<b><u>Customer Service Centre Roadshows</u></b>	
<p>Advisors from the Customer Service Centre are touring the district and meeting the public this month. The teams are offering access to Council Services from unique locations and are visiting Braintree, Halstead and Witham town centres on market days to raise awareness of the services we can now offer to the public. Using laptops and a mobile phone wireless connection they are answering and resolving questions on the spot with remote access to the Customer Relationship Management System (Siebel). This is an example of the new technology giving real, tangible improvements in customer service.</p>	
<p>The first of these events in the bandstand at George Yard on 8<sup>th</sup> June was a huge success with the team fielding over 400 enquiries from the public.</p>	
<p>This service will be developed as a regular feature and will also involve the Mobile Library Service. The remaining events in June will take place as follows between 10.30am and 4pm:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Grove Centre, Witham on Tuesday 14th June</li><li>• Somerfield supermarket, Halstead on Friday 24th June</li><li>• Outside Sainsbury's supermarket, Braintree on Wednesday 29th June</li></ul>	

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### Detailed design stage for new Braintree pool

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**Designers of the new Braintree pool** have been commissioned to proceed with the next stage of development work. Following the proposed change of location within the Freeport site, new architect's impressions have been released showing the scope and style of the pool building to house the eight lane, 25m pool, with spectator seating for regional swimming events. Due to open in 2007, the building will also house a teaching pool with water features and the style and quality of the design will be in the same league as the pool opened just a year ago in Halstead, thanks to significant lottery funding from Sport England.

The cost of the Braintree pool will be shared between Braintree District Council and Hermes, the new owners of the Braintree Freeport site.

**Council Leader Graham Butland** comments: "The next stage of the design work is underway and we're looking forward to seeing a more detailed picture of this exciting and imaginative new pool building. With such a large project, there are obviously many details to be finalised so that the project can proceed and we are working with our partners to do this as quickly as possible."

**ENDS**

**For more information contact: Chris Trim - PR Section, 01376 557752**

Issued by: PR Section 7 June 2005

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### Community halls improvement plan progress

Page 1 of 1

**The council's improvement plan for community halls moves forward another step, with over £735,000 of work due to begin during July and August in Braintree on the Glebe hall, Goldingham hall and The Institute; and the Public Hall in Witham.**

**In Witham, agreements in principle have been reached for the relocation of St John Ambulance and Scout group from the far end of the Spring Lodge site, nearer to Spring Lodge itself. New lease agreements will replace existing arrangements to enable land to the rear of Spring Lodge to be released to developers, with the legal technicalities taking place during the next few weeks. These moves will enable significant investment to be made to Spring Lodge itself and other sites throughout Witham.**

**Agreement** with the Jehovah's Witness organisation is imminent and detailed discussions are taking place with the Witham Community Association with regard to a new 50 year lease, with significant refurbishment of Spring Lodge. This will meet their preference for a leased rather than freehold tenure of the site.

**Council Leader Graham Butland comments:** "Getting all the stages into line and all the details sorted can take a lot of time and effort, but I am sure it will all be worthwhile. We need to take care with these first stages of our £5m investment programme so that the improvements can be made successfully for everyone's benefit."

**Within the next two months**, it is likely that a planning application will be made for the area of the Spring Lodge site to be developed, but unlikely that any work will begin for at least six to nine months.

**ENDS**

**For more information contact: Chris Trim PR Section, 01376 557752**

Issued by: PR Section 20 May 2005

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### Council asks for people's views on services

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**Nearly 3,000 residents** throughout the Braintree District will receive a new questionnaire; asking for views about council services and life in the district. Called the 'Best Value' survey, it will be sent out at the end of May and results will be analysed by the nationally recognised opinion research company NOP. Residents can use a freepost address for their replies and the survey should only take a few minutes to complete. The more surveys which are returned, the better the quality of information to be analysed: and all replies will be confidential, with no names or addresses released to the council.

Questions cover every local topic, from refuse collection and quality of life, to cultural activities and anti-social behaviour.

**Cabinet Leader Graham Butland** comments: "Now is a good time to see whether people think the council has responded to what people said in the last survey two years ago. We want to make a difference to local services: the question is - do local people think we have?" He added: "It's an valuable opportunity for people to tell us what they think, and be assured, no one in the council sees individual surveys or personal details."

Surveys need to be returned by the end of July with results and analysis available in September.

### **ENDS**

**For more information contact:**

**Chris Trim - PR Section, 01376 557752 or Ian Haines on 551414 x 2207**

Issued by: PR Section 20 May 2005

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### Twelve new homes for rent in Hatfield Peverel

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**Braintree Housing Partnership** has welcomed new tenants to the twelve completely new homes at Wilkinson Place in Hatfield Peverel. Warden Housing, working in partnership with Braintree District Council and DCH Construction, have replaced the former sheltered housing block with an attractive development providing a mix of three bedroom houses and one bedroom flats.

The new homes will be managed by Warden Housing and the new residents, nominated by Braintree District Council, will be assisted by John Sones: the community development officer employed by the partnership.

The project is managed by consultants, Baily Garner. They specialise in bringing together private and public sector organisations to meet the demands for new affordable homes for local people, within the standards set out by the Housing Corporation, which manages government housing grants.

**Cabinet member Simon Walsh** comments: "With the present high demand for new homes this project makes excellent use of a council owned site and through the housing partnership provides twelve high standard properties for new tenants. These properties have been built to Lifetime Homes Standard so that they can be easily adapted to suit people's changing needs throughout their lives and we hope the new residents will enjoy living here for a long time to come."

**ENDS**

**Photo opportunity with new tenants: 10.00 am Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May at Wilkinson House which is on the corner of Church Road/Baker Avenue, Hatfield Peverel**

**For more information contact:**

**John Sones, Community Development Officer, 01376 551414 ext 2168**

Issued by: PR Section 18 May 2005

Note for editors follows on next page

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## **The Braintree Housing Partnership**

Braintree Housing Partnership was formed in December 1998, involving both public and private sectors to make the most of investment opportunities and ever rising standards. Braintree District Council, Suffolk Heritage Housing Association (a key member of Flagship Housing Group), Warden Housing (a division of Home Group Ltd), Swan Housing Association (central to the Swan Housing Group) and consultants Baily Garner and developers, agreed to work together to provide housing of various types and sizes throughout the district to meet the demands for new affordable homes.

Countryside in Partnership was the developer in the partnership for the Great Notley Garden Village, which has received national recognition for its holistic approach to developing a community rather than simply building houses.

Future new homes may involve other developers.

The council continues to manage their existing housing stock and tenants for new properties built through the partnership are selected from the council housing list. These new properties will continue to be owned and managed by one of the three housing associations.

To assist people moving into a new area, the partnership employs a Community Development Officer based in the Braintree District Council offices. The role is to facilitate sustainable communities, promote social inclusion and provide best value to tenants irrespective of which housing association manages their property.

As part of the continuing review and improvement process, occupants are given the opportunity to complete a survey about their new home and the surrounding area after they have lived there for a few months. The results of these are used so that feedback from earlier phases of building is used to influence the design of later properties.

The Partnership approach is providing truly affordable homes working towards increasing property specification and raising management standards together with promoting sustainable communities.

**ENDS**

**c/o Housing Research & Development**

Causeway House, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9HB (01376) 552525

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### Improvements to Council reception area

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Work to improve customer services at Causeway House will begin this weekend (Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June) and continue for a fortnight.

Improvements are being made to enhance call handling and face-to-face customer service. When customers visit the Council with general enquiries, they will be directed to a customer services advisor who will be able to answer enquiries on a range of Council services. The advisor will be equipped with up-to-date technology, which allows them access to information from across most Council departments.

Improvements include the relocation of the two switchboard operators to the Customer Service Centre on the second floor. By doing this all telephone calls to the Council can be answered in one place. The Customer Service Centre has reduced the time customers have to wait for their call to be answered from over a minute to just a few seconds. Customers can still call the switchboard on 01376 552525.

The call centre advisors will have access to the same information as the advisor who will answer customers' queries on the ground floor, ensuring the quality of information provided is high and consistent. The improvements will also include minor changes to the furnishings within the reception area to offer customers a bright, modern and welcoming environment.

### **ENDS**

**For more information contact:  
PR Section, 01376 557752**

Issued by: PR Section 14 June 2005

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### Investment pays off for cleaner public spaces

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**The effectiveness of increased Council spending on cleaner open spaces** has been commended by the government 'Best Value' inspectors of the 'street scene' service. Published on 26<sup>th</sup> May, their report gives Braintree a 'good' rating, with excellent prospects of improvement and is only critical of less effort going into educating people to be more thoughtful about litter of all kinds.

**The council has shown** that it works in a co-ordinated way, adopting new and innovative partnerships with parish councils and community associations. The Customer service centre offers rapid and accessible answers to people's concerns about litter, abandoned cars, fly tips and graffiti.

**The inspectors noted** that staff are customer friendly and go out of their way to find solutions to local environmental problems. Best of all for local taxpayers, the inspectors said the service offers good value for money, comparing well with other councils at below average cost.

**Cabinet member Roger Walters** comments: "This inspection result is good news for people throughout the District because it shows that the promised effort that we have put into keeping the district cleaner and better maintained has really paid off. Even so, the report has shown that we need to educate people about litter and work on the public's low opinion of the quality of our open spaces. I think if we educate people more about our litter problems, they will begin to appreciate how hard we work to clean up the District and will value the efforts of the staff who work to continuously improve the neighbourhood environment."

**The inspectors commended the council's record for improvement and learning from others while highlighting the need to understand why public opinion appears to conflict with the facts.**

**ENDS**

**For more information contact:**

**Chris Trim PR Section, 01376 557752 or Paul Partridge 551414 x 3353**

Issued by: PR Section 26 May 2005

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### Now that is customer service!

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Braintree District Council is making customer service easy for the district's residents this month.

From **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June**, a team of customer service advisors from the Council's Customer Service Centre at Causeway House will be visiting Braintree, Halstead and Witham town centres to answer people's questions about a range of the Council's services.

People are invited to go and meet the advisors to have their questions answered, or to find out more about how the Customer Service Centre can help them. If they have a question, the advisors will contact their colleagues in the centre who will be able to answer most of the queries straight away.

The Customer Service Centre can answer calls about the following services:

- Housing repairs
- Refuse and recycling
- Pest control
- Abandoned vehicles
- Special collections
- Compost bins
- The Clean Team
- Street name plates
- Street cleaning
- Street lighting
- Electoral registration
- Parking

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To have your questions answered or to find out how the Customer Service Centre can help you, visit the advisors at the following venues between 10am and 4.30pm:

- Wednesday 8th June - George Yard Shopping Centre, Braintree
- Tuesday 14th June -The Grove Centre, Witham
- Friday 24th June - Somerfield supermarket, Halstead
- Wednesday 29th June - outside Sainsbury's supermarket, Braintree

Call the Customer Service Centre with your questions on 01376 331616 between 8am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday, email [csc@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:csc@braintree.gov.uk). Alternatively, see the Council website on [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk) or [www.iammoving.com](http://www.iammoving.com)

**For more information about the Customer Service Centre contact Phil Wilson, Customer Services Manager at Braintree District Council on 01376 551414 Extn 3450.**

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## Background information:

The Customer Service Centre was established in 2002 to provide a more efficient service to customers who call with simple enquiries. Between January and December 2004 the centre received 115,000 calls that were answered within an average of seven seconds. 94% of these queries were resolved immediately by the first person customers spoke to.

## **ENDS**

**For more information contact:  
PR Section, 01376 557752**

Issued by: PR Section 6 June 2005

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### 'Firebreak' training for local teens

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**13 teenagers** took part in an exciting week of fire fighting training with the Essex Fire and Rescue Service – leading to a practical fire fighting demonstration for parents and friends. The programme took place last week at the Halstead fire station, led by Essex Firefighter Duncan Lewis: it's aim is to provide teenagers with a better understanding of the risks and problems faced every day by the fire service.

The training covered equipment demonstrations, first aid, traffic accidents, hoax calls, how people react in a fire and the different causes of fires. It challenged everyone to overcome their fear of heights, confined spaces and visible hurdles such as smoke filled rooms using breathing apparatus in a chamber in Chelmsford.

The course is specifically aimed at improving the young people's self esteem and confidence, instilling a sense of self-discipline and responsibility. The teenagers were invited to join the team to help them develop their social skills while working as a group and helping them play an active role as a member of their local community. The course was supported by Home Office 'Building Safer Communities' funding, via the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership with most of the coordination work undertaken by Braintree District Council's Community Safety & Development Team.

**Cabinet member Wendy Schmitt** comments: "It was a demanding week and the group discovered the importance of how the strength and energy of some of the team could help the others sustain their effort: to the extent that they all wanted to go back and do it all again."

### **ENDS**

**The photograph shows the group demonstrating high-pressure hoses at Halstead fire station.**

**For more information contact: Chris Trim PR Section, 01376 557752**

Issued by: PR Section 20 May 2005

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## News

### Housing Transfer Recommended

The Housing Options Steering Group has recommended that Braintree District Council's housing be transferred to a housing Association.

At a meeting held last night (Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005), 13 voted for the recommendation and three against. The details of the recommendation still have to be decided. The recommendation reads:

"The transfer of the whole housing stock and subsequently determined related assets to a registered social landlord committed to maximising opportunities for tenant and leaseholder participation, management, and the collective ownership of their homes in accordance with the principles of the community gateway model."

If approved by the Council at its full meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June and then by the Government in August, the Council will conduct extensive consultation with tenants and leaseholders on the proposed transfer of its housing to a housing association. Tenants and leaseholders will then vote in a ballot on the proposal – and over 50% of tenants who vote must support transfer for it to succeed.

#### **Timeline:**

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 7pm Causeway House, Braintree** - Cabinet discusses the Steering Group's recommendation and forwards this on to the Full Council.

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 7pm Causeway House, Braintree** - Full Council discusses the Cabinet's recommendation and submits the Council's choice to the Government.

**By the end of August** - the Government will inform the Council if its choice to transfer its housing to a Registered Social Landlord is accepted or not.

**September onwards** - If Government accepts the choice then the Council will begin to consult with tenants and leaseholders again, but this time about the transfer. More and detailed information will be distributed about what a transfer involves, tenants' rights and how they can influence the management of their homes. A ballot would be expected to take place in about a year's time.

For more information about Housing Option Appraisal, see the Braintree District Council website on [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk) or call Martyn Woodward, Option Appraisal Manager, on 01376 551414 Extn 2001.

Tenants and leaseholders can contact their Independent Tenant Advisor, Solon Community Network, on **FREEPHONE 0800 169 4406**.

#### **ENDS**

**For more information contact:**

**PR Section, 01376 557752**

Issued by: PR Section 27 May 2005

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

AREA: All

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Improving performance and delivering better value for money

SUBJECT: Performance Management – Housing	CONTACT OFFICER: Mike Gosling
TEL/EMAIL No.: 01376 552525 ext 2115 <a href="mailto:Mikgo@braintree.co.uk">Mikgo@braintree.co.uk</a>	BACKGROUND PAPERS:
<p>INFORMATION:</p> <p><b>1. <u>PURPOSE</u></b> The purpose of this report is to update Members on performance and customer focus within the Housing Service during the year 2004/2005 and reflects the Service's commitment to <i>Improving performance and delivering better value for money</i>.</p> <p><b>2. <u>summary</u></b></p> <p><b>2.1 THE REPORT PROVIDES INFORMATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE HOUSING SERVICE IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/2005 IN THE FOLLOWING KEY SERVICE DELIVERY AREAS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RENT ARREARS</li> <li>• REPAIR SERVICE</li> <li>• STOCK CONDITION;</li> <li>• RESPONSIVENESS/CUSTOMER CARE</li> <li>• VOIDS/RE-LETS</li> <li>• HOMELESSNESS</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety</li> </ul> <p><b>2.2 APPENDIX 1 SHOWS AN OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE WITHIN THE KEY SERVICE DELIVERY AREAS.</b></p> <p><b>2.3 TO SUMMARISE THE KEY POINTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARREARS HAVE INCREASED SLIGHTLY – BUT WE CONTINUE TO BE A TOP PERFORMING AUTHORITY;</li> <li>• REPAIRS PERFORMANCE HAS IMPROVED FOR THE THIRD YEAR RUNNING</li> <li>• OVERALL RE-LET PERFORMANCE HAS IMPROVED</li> <li>• WE HAVE CONTINUED TO AVOID THE USE OF BED &amp; BREAKFAST FOR HOMELESSNESS</li> <li>• THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN RIGHT TO BUYS</li> <li>• WORKING WITH PARTNER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS WE HAVE BUILT 69 NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES (INCLUDING 2 VILLAGE SCHEMES)</li> <li>• WE HAVE REDUCED THE TIME TAKEN TO PROCESS HOMELESS APPLICATIONS</li> <li>• IMPROVED OUR SICKNESS/ABSENCE RATES BY 439 DAYS TO AN AVERAGE OF 10 DAYS PER EMPLOYEE PER YEAR – RESULTING IN AN EFFICIENCY SAVING OF £46,828.</li> </ul> <p><b>3 <u>CONSIDERATIONS</u></b></p> <p>3.1 Regular performance monitoring and reporting is integral to the management of the Housing Service and continues to be refined and developed. This enables managers to examine performance and to work towards improving areas where the service falls</p>	

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below agreed targets.

3.2 Performance information is supplied to all Housing staff and managers to assist in the monitoring and tracking of performance levels.

3.3 Members are asked to:

- Note the report and current performance levels in key service delivery areas;
- Note the analysis of performance and the action being taken to improve performance in the key areas; and
- Note that the 2004/2005 Statutory Performance Indicators relating to Housing remain subject to audit and there may be further changes.

## 4 Rent Arrears

4.1 Performance was slightly below the previous year's, primarily due to implementation of a new housing benefit IT system creating a substantial backlog of housing benefit payments. See table 1:

Year	% of Debit	Prev Year's Top 25% Performance
2002/3	1.10%	1.8%
2003/4	1.10%	1.8%
2004/5	1.27%	1.8%

**Table 1 Rent Arrears**

4.2 The successful management of rent arrears is key to demonstrating Service commitment to all tenants in terms of financial management and investment into improving performance and service delivery.

## 5 Repairs Service

### 5.1 RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

Performance has improved for the third year with 97.7% of all repairs carried out within the council's timescale. Comparing this year's figure to that of 2003/04, there has been a significant improvement in performance. Further more the % of appointments made and kept of all non-emergency jobs – a BVPI improved by 5% to 76% which places the Council in the above average performance quartile of Districts. It should be noted that the this indicator states the figure of appointments both made and kept is a percentage of all non-emergency repair jobs reported.

#### **Non Emergency Repairs**

	% Completed on time	Number of repairs
2002/3	91%	17678
2003/4	91.8%	14864
2004/5	97.7%	15666

**Table 2 Percentage & numbers of non emergency repairs completed within target time**

## 6.2 TENANT SATISFACTION

**6.2.1 TENANT SATISFACTION WITH WORK CARRIED OUT IS A KEY INDICATOR IN DETERMINING WHETHER THE COUNCIL IS ACTUALLY MEETING THE NEEDS OF ITS TENANTS IN RESPECT OF REPAIRS. TENANT SATISFACTION WITH COMPLETED REPAIRS WAS COLLECTED IN TWO FORMS IN 2004/2005; 1) THE QUARTERLY**

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INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE SURVEY WHICH INDICATES AN AVERAGE SATISFACTION RATE OF 83%, AND 2) THE FACE-TO-FACE SURVEY CARRIED OUT AS PART OF THE OPTIONS APPRAISAL PROCESS WHICH INDICATED A SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER SATISFACTION RATE OF 71%. A POSSIBLE REASON FOR THE DISCREPANCY COULD BE THE TIME FACTOR – THE TELEPHONE SURVEY CONTACTS TENANTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED A REPAIR WITHIN A MONTH OR SO, WHEREAS THE FACE-TO-FACE SURVEY ASKED A RANGE OF GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SERVICE WHICH FED INTO THE HOUSING OPTIONS PROCESS.

WHILST THE OVERALL SATISFACTION LEVELS ARE COMPARATIVELY HIGH, FURTHER ANALYSIS IS PLANNED TO IDENTIFY THE FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE REPAIRS SERVICE.

## **6 Stock Condition**

7.1 The Audit Commission requires Best Value Local Authorities to report the proportion of homes that are non – decent at the year-end. In 2004/5 65% of homes failed to meet the DHS criteria. This places Braintree in the bottom quartile of authorities. The Housing Options process is intended to address the DHS shortfall enabling the service to meet the 2010 target. Refer to Housing Options report to Council 20<sup>th</sup> June.

## **7 Customer Care & Complaints**

8.1 Responsiveness is a key priority for the service in achieving effective service delivery. Ongoing monitoring of telephone, visitor, correspondence and e-mail continues via the council's contact centre and housing's internal procedures. Telephone requests for repairs accounted for over 80% of all contact centre calls in 2004/5 from a total of 61,200.

8.2 In addition to the corporate complaints quality procedure, all housing service complaints are acknowledge within 3 working days of receipt and managers aim to provide a detailed response/resolution within 7 working days. Furthermore, a dedicated complaints forum meets regularly to analyse complaints across the service and identify improvements/trends.

8.3 Overall the number of complaints has continued to decrease from 243 in 2002/2003 to 203 in 2003/04 and now to 172 in 2004/2005. 34% of complaints were considered 'justified'.

8.4 The Housing Service continues to explore new methods of promoting the customer feedback/comments to ensure accessibility to all service users.

## **8 Void Re-lets**

9.1 The total number of re-lets in the year has fallen from 659 in 2003/04 to 591 in 2004/05. The average relet time for all property types was 73 days, which has improved from 80 days in 2003/4. The average relet time for standard voids (requiring minor repairs works) also improved by 5 days to 34 days.

9.2 Housing Services continues to seek further options for efficiency gains to improve performance in this area.

## **9 House Sales**

10.1 Council House sales peaked in 2002/03 with 269 homes sold. Since then the number has significantly reduced. There was a 50% reduction in the number of Council house sales in 2004/5. The number reduced from 165 in 2003/2004 to 80 in 2004/2005. Three and four bedroom houses accounted for 50% of the total sales.

## **10 Homelessness**

**11.1 THE HOMELESSNESS SERVICE DEALT WITH 769 HOMELESS APPLICATIONS DURING 2004/2005, SLIGHTLY UP FROM 757 IN 2003/04. 363 (47%) OF THESE WERE**

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

ACCEPTED IN PRIORITY NEED, SLIGHTLY DOWN FROM 390 IN 2003/04. THERE HAS BEEN AN IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE ON DECISION MAKING WITH 95% OF ALL DECISIONS BEING MADE WITHIN 33 DAYS, AGAINST 93% IN 2003/2004.

**11.2 BED AND BREAKFAST WAS NOT USED DURING 2004/5 – A KEY PRIORITY ■ THE AVERAGE TIME FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN AND/OR PREGNANT WOMEN SPENT IN HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION IMPROVED IN 2004/5 TO 21 WEEKS FROM 25 WEEKS IN 2003/04.**

## **11 Health and Safety**

12.1 The number of Health and Safety incidents reported by staff has increased from 13 to 18. Of these 6 incidents/accidents were reported to the HSE under the RIDDOR regulations. In addition to laid down criteria the regulations require all accidents resulting in over 3 working days lost must be reported. This increase is believed to be at least partly due to an increased awareness by staff and encouragement by managers of the need to report incidents through the health and safety accident procedure.

**12.2 MANAGERS CONTINUE TO STRESS THE MESSAGE TO SERVICE USERS THAT VERBAL/PHYSICAL ABUSE AGAINST EMPLOYEES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. MANAGERS CONTINUE TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING THESE INCIDENTS.**

## **12 Conclusion**

13.1 Appendix 1 provides the Council's estimated position in the Performance Indicator tables for 2004/2005 and assumes that other authorities performance remains unchanged. This is only indicative, as the official figures will not be available until October 2005.

13.2 Appendix 1 indicates the service is improving in 73% of all comparable performance measures.

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

AREA: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: PLANNING DECISIONS

SUBJECT: Planning Appeals	CONTACT OFFICER: Alison Webb
TEL/EMAIL No.:01376 551414 Ext: 2614 <a href="mailto:alison.webb@braintree.gov.uk">alison.webb@braintree.gov.uk</a>	BACKGROUND PAPERS: Nil
<b><u>INFORMATION: APPEAL DECISIONS</u></b>	
Appellant:	Mr E Howorth
Site:	6 Oxford Court, Earls Colne
Development:	Erection of bungalow
Application No:	04/01040/OUT
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED - 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2005
Appellant:	Mr L Wilson
Site:	15 East Mill, Halstead
Development:	Erection of extension to form a separate dwelling unit
Application No:	04/00888/FUL
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2005
Appellant:	Mr G Jobson
Site:	68 Little Yeldham Road, Little Yeldham
Development:	Conversion and extension of existing outbuilding to form holiday accommodation
Application No:	04/01488/FUL
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

Appellant:	ACH Interiors
Site:	The Workshop, Cobbs Fenn, Sible Hedingham
Development:	Proposed replacement of existing buildings with new
Application No:	03/02391/OUT
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2005
Appellant:	Mr & Mrs Ellmers
Site:	19 Julien Court Road, Braintree
Development:	Proposed loft conversion and lantern light to rear flat roof
Application No:	04/01055/FUL
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2005
Appellant:	Curry Palace
Site:	33A Challis Lane, Braintree
Development:	Change of use to Indian Takeaway delivery outlet and provision of false chimney to encase extract ventilation
Application No:	04/00668/COU
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2005
Appellant:	Mr A J Kinloch
Site:	Hobarts Hall, Borley Road, Belchamp Otten
Development:	Restoration of existing brewhouse building including erection of extension to form a three bedroomed dwelling
Application No:	04/01124/FUL
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2005

## MEMBERS' FOCUS

Appellant: Orange PCS Ltd  
Site: Little Maplestead Water Tower, Cock Road, Little Maplestead  
Development: Installation of 6 antenna and 3 dishes at the top of water tower and equipment cabinet at the base within 3m x 8.5m compound  
Application No: 04/01217/FUL  
Decision and Date: DISMISSED – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Appellant: T Mobile (UK) Ltd  
Site: Land adjacent to Multi Storey Car Park, Pierrefitte Way, Braintree  
Development: Erection of 9.7 metre telecommunications pole with integral antennae, equipment cabinet and development ancillary thereto  
Application No: 04/01279/FUL  
Decision and Date: DISMISSED – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Appellant: FH Nash Ltd  
Site: Four Elms Mill, Bardfield Road, Bardfield Saling  
Development: Erection of boundary fence  
Application No: 04/01314/FUL  
Decision and Date: DISMISSED x 2 – 13<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Appellant: Exors. Mr F Hunt  
Site: Land adjacent to Clematis, The Street, Bulmer  
Development: Erection of one detached dwelling  
Application No: 04/01093/FUL  
Decision and Date: DISMISSED – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005

## MEMBERS' FOCUS

Appellant:	Mr R Schartau
Site:	Aukland & Derwent, Maldon Road, Witham
Development:	Erection of two new bungalows
Application No:	04/01302/FUL
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2005
Appellant:	Mr E W King
Site:	Land adj. 37 Kelvedon Road, Coggeshall
Development:	Erection of single dwelling and garage
Application No:	04/01374/OUT
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2005
Appellant:	Mr R Nightingale
Site:	128 Broad Road, Bocking, Braintree
Development:	Proposed first floor dormer extension
Application No:	04/01494/FUL
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2005
Appellant:	Mr E Cable
Site:	1 Meadway, Gosfield
Development:	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 3 No. 4 bed detached dwellings
Application No:	04/01542/OUT
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2005

## MEMBERS' FOCUS

Appellant:	Mr S Mann
Site:	119 White Horse Avenue, Halstead
Development:	Erection of hand rails and second floor balconies
Application No:	04/01141/FUL
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2005
Appellant:	Mr & Mrs Ketley
Site:	18 Silver Street, Silver End
Development:	Replacement of two rear windows
Application No:	04/01417/LBC
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2005
Appellant:	Mr R Green
Site:	Pavement outside Going Place, New Street, Braintree
Development:	Proposed siting of an ice cream van
Application No:	04/01538/COU
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2005
Appellant:	Mr R Read
Site:	Glebe Barns, Rectory Road, Stisted
Development:	Conversion of storage barn to residential use and erection of storage building
Application No:	04/01610/COU
Decision and Date:	DISMISSED – 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2005

## MEMBERS' FOCUS

Appellant: Mr & Mrs A Rider  
Site: 112 South Street, Braintree  
Development: Conversion of existing offices into 5 No. 2 & 3 bedroomed residential flats  
Application No: 04/01700/COU  
Decision and Date: DISMISSED – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005

Appellant: Mr G Finch  
Site: North House, 3 Bridge Street Green, Finchingfield  
Development: Proposed replacement of existing shop door  
Application No: 04/01740/LBC  
Decision and Date: DISMISSED – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Appellant: Mr J Wiles  
Site: 48 Sudbury Road, Halstead  
Development: Erection of one dwellinghouse  
Application No: 04/01981/OUT  
Decision and Date: DISMISSED – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Appellant: Mr T Earey  
Site: Land between Plough Cottage, and 2 Webbs Cottages, The Green, White Notley  
Development: Erection of detached dwelling  
Application No: 04/02036/FUL  
Decision and Date: DISMISSED – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2005