Minutes
Economic Development
and Transportation
Partnership Board

4th April 2011

Present
Brian Cutmore (Chairman) Business Council
Chris Bailey (from 6.45pm) Witham Chamber of Trade
Brenda Baker Braintree Chamber of Trade
Councillor John Bendall Earls Colne Parish Council
Robert Bucknell (from 6.40pm) W P Bucknell & Son
Sally Carpenter Client Act PR
Ian Cass Witham Chamber of Trade/FSB
Councillor John Collar Braintree District Council
Eleanor Dash (until 7.08pm) Braintree District Council
Councillor Michael Gage Braintree District Council
Dave Gronland Micromech
Councillor Nigel Harley Braintree District Council
Jon Hayden Braintree District Council
Tony Hayward Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC)
Drew Keavey The College at Braintree
Councillor David Mann (until 7.28pm) Braintree District Council
Councillor Janet Money (from 7.05pm) Braintree District Council
Zoe Myddelton Braintree District/Essex County Councils
Linda Riley Voluntary Sector Training
Juliet Strathern (until 7.08pm) Braintree District Council

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jo Beavis and Councillor Nigel McCrea.

The Chairman welcomed Robert Crayston and three colleagues to the meeting, who were in attendance for the West Tey Consortium presentation (Agenda Item 6).

35 **MINUTES**

**DECISION:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board held on 24th January 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36 **MATTERS ARISING**

** INFORMATION:** There were no updates or issues to be raised.

37 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

** INFORMATION:** There were no interests declared.
CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Brian Cutmore referred to the paper ‘Budget Review March 2011’ circulated at the meeting, with specific reference to the presumption on planning reforms to encourage investment and the default answer to development being ‘Yes’, and considered an opportunity for manoeuvre at the detail stage of the application. Other issues raised was the interpretation of the Localism Bill and concerns of Parish Councils; and that the budget overall had positive implications for work experience and apprenticeships; the importance of skills in the workplace; and encouragement for further BIDS and tourism.

Mr Cutmore also reminded Members that at the next meeting on 4th July 2011 a new Chairman of the Board will be selected for the Civic Year. It was confirmed that the Chairman of the Business Council who would normally take this role would not be standing for this appointment. Therefore, Members were requested to consider their candidate.

All Members

DECISION: That the Chairman’s Report and the paper on Budget Review March 2011 be noted.

WEST TEY CONSORTIUM

Robert Crayston is one of the nine local landowners in a consortium for a coordinated approach for development at West Tey, Colchester and at Temple Border, east of Braintree and associated transport infrastructure. This will achieve gains for the local economy and the area as a whole, and provide an upgrade of the A120 between Braintree and Marks Tey to meet the current infrastructure deficit.

Mr Crayston’s colleagues were Andy Stevens, Planning Consultant; Steve Walker, Master Planning Practitioner on sustainability; and Nigel Weekes of Stirling Maynard on highways issues. A combined presentation was made including:-

- The economic benefits
- For sustained growth to support the Haven Gateway, and transport links between the west and east of the region, i.e. Harwich and to attract traffic away from the A12 and A14 routes
- A diagram of an alternative route for the A120 was displayed with prime development at both ends. Discussions had been held with Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council planning
- Highway proposals of dual carriageway for the A120 – being straight through at Galleys Corner, Braintree and grade separated junctions (at the A12 at Marks Tey) and road junctions along the route
- The sustainable development close to centres, i.e. railway stations and neighbourhoods with shops, schools and facilities
- Energy systems, including local power generation, i.e. wind and solar power, and energy master-planning to feed local homes and business
- New settlements/Locations for Growth at the West Tey site at Colchester and the Temple Border site, east of Braintree.
  - West Tey comprises of significant employment focus, a housing mix (total 6,000) for a balanced community, within seven neighbourhoods
  - Temple Border is an urban extension supplying a local employment mix, with a mix of houses (total 3,500 – 4,000) in two neighbourhoods and infrastructure

For further information regarding these minutes, please contact Eileen Self, Member Services on (01376) 551414 or e-mail eileen.self@braintree.gov.uk
During the discussion the following issues were clarified:-
- the reaction from Colchester Borough Council to the proposals, and initial feedback that brownfield development is to be delivered first. However, Colchester are commencing their next Core Strategy from May 2011, and following its completion the Consortium’s proposals will be considered.
- the proposed Braintree settlement of 3,500-4,000 homes being compared to the 2,000 properties at Great Notley Garden Village
- the need for large scale development to provide the funding for the A120 proposals. It was noted that the majority of road from Galleys Corner to the Dolphin pub at Bradwell, and the section between Coggeshall to the A12 can be funded from the size of the proposed development. However, funding from other sources, i.e. European funds or PFI, will be required to provide the remaining road
- proportion of affordable housing in the settlements may be dependent on finance spent on roads. However, the scheme is at a preliminary stage and the public will be encouraged to become involved.
- the current criteria by Braintree District Council on affordable housing is 30% for any new development
- the proposed scheme will not cost the same as the Highways Agency budget (£35m per mile) as the majority of land is under the ownership of Consortium members
- grade separated junctions will be provided for the Earls Colne turning on the Coggeshall by pass, with safety audits undertaken as the design develops

In conclusion, the Chairman requested if it was the Board’s view that Braintree District Council gives consideration to the Consortium’s proposals.

**DECISION:** That the Partnership Board considers the concept of the proposals put forward by the West Tey Consortium as acceptable and should be considered by Braintree District Council, with more information to be provided as the scheme progress.

40 **BRAINTREE BRANCH LINE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Jon Hayden, the Head of Sustainable Development, presented a verbal progress report on the feasibility study. It was advised that discussion had been held with Network Rail and further issues requested before their report can be finalised. These consist of looking at other surveys as the franchise for rail provider is soon to be determined. However, Network Rail had indicated in their initial report that providing a loop on the system is achievable – although significant cost is involved.

Therefore, further clarification is awaited and more detailed information will be brought to a future meeting to discuss how the opportunity can be taken forward.

**DECISION:** That the verbal report be noted.

41 **INTEGRATED COUNTY STRATEGY**

Zoe Myddelton, the Regeneration and Economic Development Officer, presented a report on the Integrated County Strategy (ICS) that is a spatial planning and investment strategy prepared on behalf of the Essex Chief Executive’s Association. The Cabinet meeting held on 28th March 2011 had accepted the ICS with comments regarding a bias towards South Essex existing as certain aspects for Braintree had been omitted, i.e. the regeneration of the town centres, the rural economy and A120 in the Braintree District.
Phase 2 of the ICS commences in April 2011, and Members noted more information and progress reports will be provided.

Jon Hayden, the Head of Sustainable Development, reported that he had attended the first ICS Workshop earlier that day and Key Priorities for the ICS had been identified, including Business Start-ups, job creation, Connectivity (i.e. broadband), and sustainable growth. It was questioned how the ICS will deliver the infrastructure desperately needed for the region, especially across the Haven Gateway. Mr Hayden advised that it builds upon the lobbying taking place on certain projects, utilises the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and looks towards funding streams (including those in Europe) and the deliverability of short, medium and long term issues, i.e. broadband, transport links and strategies. A possibility of government introducing a different approach to Business Rates enabling the District Council to keep Business Rates within the District and accruing a £300m amount over a 10-year period was also considered a valid point.

DECISION: That the progress report be noted.

42 BUSINESS SUPPORT UPDATE

Zoe Myddelton, the Regeneration and Economic Development Officer, reported on three issues:-
- Regional Growth Fund. The results are awaited of a bid for £740,000 for an extension to the Business Enterprise & Acorns Units (BEAU) at Springwood Drive, Braintree
- BEAU and BDS. A tender had recently been issued for a facilitator for BEAU/BDS, to take the project forward
- Business Link. More detail is awaited on proposals for the Business Link service that will end in its current form on 25th November 2011. Under a national theme, delivery is proposed through an internet and phone based service.

DECISION: That the verbal report be noted.

43 TALK OF THE TOWNS AND TOWN CENTRE ‘FUTURES’ PROJECTS

Jon Hayden, the Head of Sustainable Development, reported that public consultation will end on 31st March 2011, on ways to improve the three town centres. Information is being collated from the responses and a report on proposals and costing will be put to Councillors. A key message already identified is for the individual identity of the towns to be retained, with more connectivity, improved signage, street furniture, markets and opportunities for pedestrianism to be explored.

Members agreed that each town has to be considered separately, to address their specific issues. The case for free car parking, Sunday opening of local retailers and supermarkets was also discussed.

The timetable for publishing the information was queried, and it was advised that Braintree will be available in June 2011, and the three town centres to run in parallel and a strategy proposed for each town.

With regard to the Braintree Town Centre scheme the Chairman sought and obtained an assurance from Councillor Harley that no contracts for the
development would be entered into prior to the forthcoming elections and the subsequent formation of a new Cabinet.

DECISION: That the verbal report be noted.

44 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

Zoe Myddelton, Regeneration and Economic Development Officer, provided an update on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and stated that the second interim Board meeting had taken place on 14th March 2011. An Executive Group, comprising 24 Members will meet four times a year, and Task & Finish Groups will be set up for thematic issues. A workshop during April or May will determine the draft Work Programme. It was noted that the secretariat function will be delivered by Essex County Council, and the Chairman of the LEP will be from the Private Sector.

DECISION: That the verbal report be noted.

45 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman referred to the last Steering Group meeting held on 17th February 2011 and reports on NEET data in the area; and the Riverside Walk project in Halstead utilising S106 monies and the possible involvement of the Essex Wildlife Trust to help on a planting scheme along the Walk.

The future of the LSP remains unsure, with the two supporting Officers either left the Council or moved to other roles. It was noted that the LSP are to hold a Workshop meeting on 18th April 2011; followed by an Executive Workshop on 20th June 2011 to finalise the future of the LSP.

46 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

INFORMATION: Contact details for the Braintree Town Centre BID were noted as:-
Room B, Second Floor, 36 George Yard Shopping Centre, Braintree CM7 1RB
www.braintreebid.co.uk
Tel: 01376 551818

47 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

INFORMATION: It was noted that the next meeting of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board would be held on Monday 4th July 2011 at the Town Hall Centre in Braintree starting at 6.00pm.

The next meeting of the Business Council is on Monday 23rd May 2011 at 6.00pm, at The Corner House, Braintree.

At the close of the meeting the Chairman with other Board Members wished Councillors Collar and Harley who are not standing for re-election, and Eileen Self who is leaving the Council in May 2011, all the best for the future.

Councillor Harley advised that progress had been made over the years, and it was important to position the District well for its link with the Haven Gateway. The Chairman thanked Nigel for his support and enthusiasm.

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The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.50pm.

B CUTMORE

(Chairman)