# Braintree Branch Line Improvements – Feasibility Study Update

| Corporate Priority: | Housing and transport meet local needs  
| Business is encouraged and the local economy prospers |
| Report presented by: | Eleanor Dash |
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| Background Papers: | N/a |
| Options: | Public |

## Key Decision:

**NO**

### Executive Summary:

Network Rail were commissioned in July 2010 to undertake a feasibility study into increasing the frequency of services on the Braintree Branch Line, which has been a Council priority for some time. The study was funded by Growth Area Funding.

It had been anticipated that the outcomes of the study would be made available at the Economic and Transportation Board on the 18th October 2010. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this committee report the Council had still not yet received the final report as Essex County Council and Braintree District Council have requested that some further matters are investigated and incorporated into the study to ensure that we have a comprehensive report.

To enable officers sufficient time to prepare a report on the study findings it is suggested that the outcomes are presented at the Economic and Transportation Board meeting in April 2011.

### Decision:

To note the progress made with the study and timetable for reporting.

### Purpose of Decision:

To update Members on the progress of the study.

### Corporate implications

| Financial: | The cost of the study is £37,000 and this is being financed by Growth Area Funding as agreed by the Council’s LDF Panel. |
| Legal: | None. |
| Equalities/Diversity | None. |
| Customer Impact: | Improvements to the Braintree branch line will benefit residents in the catchment area of the line. |
| Environment and Climate Change: | Improved train services may discourage car journeys. |
Consultation/Community Engagement: None.

Risks: Risks associated with carrying out the study are limited. The main risk relates to the deliverability of proposals that are identified in the study.

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Background

1. At present the frequency of services on the Braintree branch line is limited because it is single track. As a result the minimum interval between services is about 45 minutes in the peak hours. An hourly service operates outside of peak hours. As a result many people within the catchment area of stations on the branch line prefer to drive to stations on the mainline where there is a great frequency of service. The limited frequency of services is also a constraint on Braintree’s economic development. It has therefore been an objective of the Council for sometime to secure improvements to the line to enable a greater frequency of train service to be achieved.

2. The award of Growth Area Funding to the Council has provided resources for a study to be carried out and this has now been commissioned from Network Rail. The study will look at 2 main issues:
   - physical improvements that are required on the line to enable a greater frequency of service to be achieved.
   - Implications of a greater frequency of service on the operation of services on the mainline and the timetable.

Current Position

1. The study is being carried out by Network Rail’s Fast Track team and the final report was due to be presented to the Economic and Transportation Partnership Board at this meeting. However, Essex County Council and Braintree District Council have requested that some further matters are investigated and incorporated into the study to ensure that we have a comprehensive report, which can provide a strong evidence base when responding to future franchise consultations and seeking funding sources.

2. The final report is due to be received in February 2011, to enable officers sufficient time to prepare a report on the study findings it is suggested that the outcomes are presented at the Economic and Transportation Board meeting in April 2011.