Judy Cuddeford of the Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency (BDVSA) was also in attendance (until 6.30pm) for Item 6 - Compact Strategy.

Hannah Neve and Chris Stevenson of Essex County Council (ECC) were present for Item 7 – Local Transport Plan 3.

Apologies for absence were received from Jim Addison, Councillor Harley and Zoe Myddelton.

Councillor Michael Gage, in the Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**MINUTES**

**DECISION:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board held on 19th October 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to Minute 42 Economic Development Strategy being amended to ‘the Commercial Competency document’ (not Incompetency document) referred to by Keith Hughes of Business Link.
MATTERS ARISING

(i) The comments and actions under this minute have been addressed by Zoe Myddelton, the Regeneration & Economic Development Officer.
(ii) With regard to the car parking issue at Tabor House, Braintree this is an issue being looked at generally under parking opportunities, and a report will be made to a future meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION: Councillor J C Collar declared a personal interest as a member of the Planning Committee that had refused an application for a hotel at Cressing that is referred to in the Economic Development Strategy report (Item 10).

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

INFORMATION: No report was received.

COMPACT STRATEGY

INFORMATION: The Partnership Board received a presentation from Judy Cuddeford of the BDVSA on the Braintree District Local Compact (BDLC) and what it means for the Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership (BDLSP). A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes (Appendix 1).
It was noted that 55 organisations had joined the Steering Group of the Essex Compact Forum and details of this and the Braintree Compact can be found on the website addresses quoted on the slides. The Braintree Compact is one of the most active in Essex, and the National Compact had been ‘refreshed’ to allow for vetting systems, CRB checks and other recent updates.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Cuddeford for the presentation and the leaflets, and advised other Councillors, officers and colleagues to recognise the changing attitudes for all and to involve the voluntary sector as an equal partner.

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3

Chris Stevenson, Head of Transportation (ECC) and Hannah Neve who looks after the ‘Heart of Essex’ at ECC, gave a presentation on the Local Transport Plan 3. A copy of the presentation is appended to these minutes (Appendix 2).
The current Local Transport Plan (LTP) ends in March 2011, and to develop Version 3 of the LTP and implement from April 2011 will entail a consultation in draft form during Spring/Summer 2010.
Key projects for the Braintree District are:
- A120 Improvements – Braintree to Marks Tey
- Galley Corner Improvements
- Witham Station footbridge
- Braintree Freeport footbridge
- The Cressing loop
- Traffic Management
- Cycle routes in towns
- Traffic issues in Halstead town centre.
Mr Stevenson explained they are at the beginning of the process to shape the LTP for Braintree and the Heart of Essex, and can return to a future meeting or workshop of the Partnership Board for its’ input.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:

- Councillor Mrs Beavis referred to the six Parish Councils in her ward, and stated that during the recent two month cold spell more gritting for rural roads would have been beneficial. Mr Stevenson stated that this is an area the LTP could do by referencing to the Maintenance Policy/Contingency plans as ECC provide gritting for bus routes, and routes to schools. However, this could be an area for the Third Sector/Compact and the use of shared services on a regional basis. Colleagues at ECC are ‘open to suggestions’ on this issue as alternative measures would save the County Council time, resources and funding over a bad winter period.

- Councillor Collar questioned the insurance situation if a resident was injured whilst gritting rural paths/roadways, as Third Party liability insurance is not applicable. Mr Stevenson agreed to contact Chris Smith and/or legal colleagues to issue legal guidance to all Parish Councils. Chris Stevenson

- One rural parish in the Bumpstead Ward has volunteers for gritting, and Councillor Collar stated they could approach ECC to advise of this. John Bendall advised that Earls Colne Parish Council is prepared to work with ECC, as they employ a Community Worker who assists the gritting of footways. Mr Stevenson stated that ECC can supply quantities of grit in suitable locations.

- Brenda Baker stated the provision of bus services should be interfaced within the LTP. In response, Mr Stevenson explained that ECC has bus partnership arrangements and are looking to invest in ways to provide a similar level of bus service everywhere across Essex. Mr Stevenson agreed to provide further information on this topic. Chris Stevenson

- Tony Hayward spoke as Chairman of the Braintree Association of Local Councils and their input on Panels that feed into ECC strategy, and whether the system could be simplified. Mr Stevenson confirmed that ECC are targeting existing mechanisms and meetings to look at different ways of working.

- Paul Evans made the proposal of weight limits on country lanes, and the inappropriate use by lorries on these routes. Mr Stevenson stated that Tendring District Council had introduced ‘Lorries Plans’ following the ‘satnav’ problems placing heavy vehicles on unsuitable roads. There is also opportunity for amendments to be put forward on ECC policies on freight routing.

- Robert Bucknell also confirmed that roads in Great Saling suffer from heavy lorries – that now have a 29 tonnage weight. He continued to question the likelihood of a Braintree to Stansted rail link. Mr Stevenson advised that this had not been included in the G2 expansion proposals, and as a rail link would be a massive scheme, producing difficulties to plan and engineer, and rely on the airport or Government to fund in entirety it is considered unlikely.

- John Bendall referred to a Public Exhibition, including Parish Councils, in February 2010 by the Westway Consortium for development proposals at the Marks Tey/Braintree border. Peter Crofts clarified that this is a speculative proposal that is linked with the District Council’s Local Plan and a consultation process could emerge later in 2010.

Peter Crofts, Corporate Director (Braintree District Council) proposed that a special meeting or workshop of the Partnership Board be held in the summer to solely discuss the LTP.
The Chairman and members agreed to a workshop style format, and thanked Chris Stevenson and Hannah Neve for their presentation.

**DECISION:** That a workshop of the Partnership Board be jointly arranged during the summer 2010 to discuss the Local Transport Plan 3, including further information on the rural focus of the District.

51 **LOCAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT UPDATE**

**INFORMATION:** Russell Everard, Head of Enterprise and Culture, advised that the Government had circulated draft Strategy guidance, and approximately 250 businesses will be contacted during February and March 2010 to take part in a survey to gather information for an economic assessment. The views of colleagues in the local Chambers of Trade and the Federation of Small Businesses will also be invited. In response to a query whether the survey can be completed on-line and if it would be available via the Braintree District Council website, Mr Everard stated he would check both these issues.

52 **BUSINESS LINK CONTRACT AWARD**

**INFORMATION:** Keith Hughes of Business Link reminded the Partnership Board on the business contract re-tendering process (in October 2009) from the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) for business support provision in the East of England. Business Link are now in a position to report of their success to provide a Business Link Integrated Brokerage service by (i) a Business Link function, (ii) an International Trade Service, and (iii) an Inward Investment facility. This will result with ‘Train to Gain’, Business Link, and the ETI all being within one organisation. Mr Hughes advised this will become operative from 1st April 2010 and welcomed any enquiries in these areas.

53 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Zoe Myddelton, the Regeneration & Economic Development Officer, had updated the quarterly report for the September, October and November 2009 period, and Russell Everard presented this information, together with the current Economic Development Action Plan. Specific reference was made to a rise in Job Seekers Allowance not being realised, and the number of unemployed falling by 130. Challenges had been identified in the Action Plan to deliver in the Strategy in the following areas:

- young people who are not in employment, education or training (the NEET statistics) being higher in Braintree than in Essex or national data. A long term approach is required to address this.
- The number of over 50’s who are unemployed in Braintree being higher than comparative areas, and the importance of part time or change of career opportunities, and
- The number of long term unemployed (over 12 months) being at its highest since August 1998.

The District Council will, with its’ partners, look to address these areas although there are no ‘quick fix’ suggestions. Mr Everard stated he would ask for a report to see if there are changes to this data, and will also approach the Council’s partners and agencies to identify the support they may be providing to these categories.

Linda Riley of Voluntary Sector Training reported on information regarding short term funding for 16-17 years age group apprenticeships, and on seeking funding for the unemployed.
Jenny Coates of Adult Community Learning Essex provided detail of the 14-18 years age group and the difficulties for schools to share the information held under the Connexions facility. The County Council had made representation to the Information Commissioner on this, and how the situation is being exacerbated. It was noted that the Head teachers at schools in Hedingham, Halstead and Braintree are proposing a permission slip to be signed before the pupil leaves school, to enable them to share information with Connexions.

Tony Hayward, also on the topic of education, stated that information is not obtained from the employment base to inform young people of suitable qualifications and initiatives.

Councillor Mrs Beavis reported that further information on a rural study (Priority Three – Page 13 of report) will be made to a future meeting.

The Chairman proposed that a sub group be established to consider the three problem areas in the Action Plan, and Councillor Mrs Beavis, Tony Comber, Neil Coulton, Lesley Forster, Tony Hayward, Keith Hughes and Linda Riley expressed their interest in being involved.

**DECISION:** That a sub group be established comprising of the above members to consider the three problem areas identified on Page 11 of the report regarding the NEET category, unemployment of the over 50’s, and the long term unemployed.

**WITHAM INDUSTRIAL WATCH BID**

INFORMATION: Sally Carpenter reported that a new patisserie/bakery had opened on the industrial estate, and that the new Estates Manager David Cocker had been very busy. Security on gates and locks had been improved, and other Members had also been active.

**LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

INFORMATION: There was no report received on the Local Strategic Partnership.

**DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

INFORMATION: It was noted that the next meeting of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board would be held on 19th April 2010 at Causeway House, Braintree starting at 6.00pm. (Apologies received from Ian Cass) Brenda Baker requested that an item for the Braintree BID be included on the next agenda.

The dates for future Partnership Board meetings, all at 6.00pm at Causeway House are:
- 19th July 2010
- 18th October 2010
- 7th February 2011

The next meeting of the Business Council is on Monday 15th March 2010 at 6.00pm, at The Corner House, Braintree.

The meeting commenced at 6.05pm and closed at 7.40pm.

**COUNCILLOR M G GAGE**

(In the Chair)