Minutes
Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board
9th February 2009

Present

Jim Addison  Colchester Institute
Brenda Baker  Braintree Chamber of Trade
Lynn Ballard  ExDRA
Councillor Mrs Jo Beavis  Braintree District Council and Braintree Business Board
(until 7.05pm)
Sue Carlile  Smith Law Partnership
Councillor John Collar  Braintree District Council
Tony Comber  Braintree Enterprise Centre
Brian Cutmore (Chairman)  Business Council
Paul Evans  Peke Services Ltd
Councillor Mrs Margaret Galione  Braintree District Council
Dave Gronland  Micromech
Liz Hand  Jobcentre Plus
Councillor Nigel Harley  Braintree District Council
Tony Hayward  Braintree Association of Local Councils
Keith Hughes  Business Link
Councillor David Mann  Braintree District Council
Mark Sexton  Essex Education Business Partnership
Councillor Tim Wilkinson  Braintree District Council

Apologies for absence were received from Lyndsay Baxter, Ian Cass, Stephen Kirby, Hazel
Picknell-Stride, Ashley Riley and Steve Thacker.

The Chairman was pleased to welcome to the meeting Mr J Addison, the Director of
Development and Operations at Colchester Institute.

15  MINUTES

DECISION:  That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development and
Transportation Partnership Board held on 13th October 2008 be approved as a
correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16  MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.
17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**INFORMATION:** There were no interests declared.

18 **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

**INFORMATION:** The Chairman, Mr Cutmore, provided an update on the proposed merger of Braintree College with Colchester Institute. Mr Cutmore reported that the Secretary of State’s decision on the merger was still awaited.

Further discussion took place on this matter under item 8 of the Agenda (Minute 21 refers).

19 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**INFORMATION:** Mr R Everard, Head of Enterprise, Culture & Leisure, presented a report on the proposed Terms of Reference of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board. The Partnership Board had been formed following the merger of the Economic Development Partnership Board and the Transport Partnership Board.

In discussing the Terms of Reference, it was noted that Mrs Linda Riley (Voluntary Sector Training) would represent the Partnership Board on the Third Sector Partnership Board.

It was suggested that the Braintree Association of Local Councils and Braintree Enterprise Centre should be added to the list of organisations from which members of the Board are appointed. It was agreed also that the Braintree Association of Local Councils should be permitted to appoint a substitute if their usual representative is unable to attend a meeting. With regard to representation from the ‘Welfare to Work Provider (Seetec)’, it was noted that Seetec was currently under contract to Jobcentre Plus to provide such services, but that there were also other providers. In the circumstances, it was suggested that Jobcentre Plus should invite Seetec to appoint a representative to attend meetings of the Partnership Board and that a representative of any other provider of welfare to work services should be invited to appoint a representative also.

**DECISION:** That the draft Terms of Reference of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board be approved, subject to the amendments outlined above.

20 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**INFORMATION:** Consideration was given to the final draft of the Braintree District Council Economic Development Strategy (2009-2013).

The Essex Development and Regeneration Agency (ExDRA) had been commissioned to prepare the Strategy and it was presented to Members of the Partnership Board by Mrs Lynn Ballard, Director of Partnership Engagement at ExDRA. Copies of Appendix 1 to the Strategy (Action Plan 2009/2011) and Appendix 4 (Stakeholder and Community Engagement Process) were circulated at the meeting. It was proposed that the Strategy should be referred to the District Council’s Leadership Group and
three Local Committees during February and March 2009. In the circumstances, it was requested that any comments which Members of the Board may have on the Strategy and Action Plan be referred to Mr R Everard, Head of Enterprise, Culture and Leisure, by the end of the week.

In discussing the Strategy, attention was drawn to a reference made on page 12 which suggested support for a second runway at Stansted airport. This was contrary to the District Council’s current stance which was to oppose the second runway. It was noted that the comment was one of many others which had been made at a Workshop of private and public sector representatives held on 7th November 2008 and that it was not intended to represent the District Council’s view. Furthermore, the comment had not been included within the Action Plan. It was suggested that wording should be incorporated within the Strategy to state that views had been expressed during the Workshop indicating support for the second runway, but that the District Council’s stance remained unchanged.

In concluding their discussion on the Strategy, thanks were extended to everyone who had had an input, and, in particular, to Lynn Ballard and her Team for the efficient way in which they had compiled the Strategy.

**DECISION:** That the final draft of the Braintree District Council Economic Development Strategy (2009-2013) be endorsed.

21 **PROPOSED MERGER OF BRAINTREE COLLEGE AND COLCHESTER INSTITUTE**

Mr J Addison, Director of Development and Operations at Colchester Institute, gave a presentation on the proposed merger of Braintree College with Colchester Institute and the impact which this would have on the provision of education within the Braintree District.

Mr Addison explained that Colchester Institute was the preferred partner for merger with Braintree College. Mr Addison stated that the requisite merger process had been followed and it was hoped that the Government’s decision on the application would be announced soon, with a view to the merger being implemented with effect from 1st August 2009.

Mr Addison referred to the importance of workforce development and employment and providing students with vocational skills. Mr Addison stated that Colchester Institute was a vocational college with each course being linked to employment. It was proposed that this arrangement should be replicated at Braintree College enabling students to train locally rather than having to travel to Colchester as many of them currently did. It was reported that ‘sixth form’ education would, in future, be provided at Notley High School, Braintree. Mr Addison explained that one of the reasons for the merger was its financial strength. Mr Addison stated also that Colchester Institute was successful and it was the aim to achieve outstanding status within the next two years. Mr Addison stated that the strategy of Colchester Institute and its satellite colleges was important in economic development terms and he indicated that work would also take place with local schools in developing educational provision for 14-19 year old students.
In response to questions from Members of the Partnership Board, Mr Addison indicated that the College would provide courses leading to a vocational qualification and that adult learners seeking different courses would be directed to other providers such as Braintree District Community College. Mr Addison stated that it would not be possible to replicate all courses offered by the Institute at Braintree College, or to train all students locally and that there may be a need for students who were following a particular course to travel to a training facility elsewhere. An example of this was the engineering facility which had been developed at Stanway. Mr Addison confirmed that NVQ courses would continue to be provided at the College and these would be developed. Reference was made to the difficulty which some young people who lived in villages had in finding transport to travel to college. Mr Addison stated that Colchester Institute operated a subsidised transport policy and it was hoped that this could be replicated at Braintree College. It was possible that training provision could be established locally, for example in a village, but this would be dependent on the subject and the demand.

The Chairman thanked Mr Addison for his presentation and for attending the meeting.

22 GROWTH AREA FUNDING

INFORMATION: Members of the Partnership Board considered and noted a progress report on ‘Growth Area’ funding. This funding had been awarded by the Government jointly to Chelmsford Borough Council and Braintree District Council for the period 2008 – 2011 with the purpose of supporting the delivery of new housing, employment and associated infrastructure.

It was reported that Chelmsford and Braintree Councils had agreed how the Growth Area funding should be apportioned between the two authorities which meant that £4,676,102.10 capital and £231,876.80 revenue funding would be available for the Braintree District between 2008 and 2011. The Programme Board which had been established by the District Council to determine priorities for expenditure of this finance and to oversee and monitor delivery, had agreed a number of projects and these were set out in the report.

23 SUB REGIONAL REVIEW

INFORMATION: Mr R Everard, Head of Enterprise, Culture and Leisure, referred to recent papers issued by and discussions with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) regarding areas of growth and the establishment of sub regional economic partnerships.

Mr Everard stated that he would be attending a meeting with EEDA on 12th February 2009 to discuss possible options for a growth area based on the Heart of Essex (to include the Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford and Maldon areas). It was anticipated that more information would also be available at the meeting on the proposed sub regional economic partnership.
LOCAL AUTHORITY BUSINESS GROWTH INCENTIVE SCHEME (LABGI)

INFORMATION: Ms S Carpenter of Witham Industrial Watch (WIW) was not present at the meeting. However, it was reported that the application submitted by WIW for a grant of £15,000 from the LABGI scheme had been successful. This would enable WIW to seek Business Improvement District (BID) status. A vote on the establishment of a BID would take place locally in July 2009.

BRAINTREE DISTRICT SKILLS PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP

INFORMATION: Mr S Thacker of the Learning and Skills Council was not present at the meeting. However, consideration was given to the Action Plan and Notes of the Braintree District Skills Partnership Task Group’s meeting held on 18th November 2008. It was noted that all matters were on target.

LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

INFORMATION: The Chairman advised that he had no issues to report from the Local Strategic Partnership and that the next meeting of the Partnership’s Executive Group would take place on 10th February 2009.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

INFORMATION: It was noted that future meetings of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board would be arranged as part of the District Council’s annual timetable of meetings for 2009/10. Details of these dates would be circulated when agreed.

(NOTE: The Partnership Board’s meetings have now been arranged for 27th April 2009, 13th July 2009, 19th October 2009 and 25th January 2010. Each meeting will be held at Causeway House, Braintree starting at 6.00pm).

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Business Forum. It was reported that the next Business Forum would be held on Wednesday, 25th February 2009 at The Essex Golf and Country Club, Earls Colne. Invitations were available.

Economic Outlook. Mr R Everard, Head of Enterprise, Culture and Leisure, reported that an informative document produced by the East of England Development Agency on the economic outlook for the East of England was available. Mr Everard reported also that figures on the local labour market produced by Jobcentre Plus showed that there had been 52% more job seeker claimants in January 2009 compared to January 2008.

Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board Paperwork. It was requested that the Partnership Board’s Agendas and Minutes be circulated electronically in future.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.30pm.

B A CUTMORE (Chairman)