



BRAINTREE PLAN FOR GROWTH

APRIL 2017-2022

INTRODUCTION

The Braintree District Plan for Growth is a refreshed Economic Prospectus. It sets out what has been achieved since the original document's publication in 2013; what we have learned about the Braintree District economy since then; what the future plans to support growth are and, how the Council is seeking to help deliver them between 2017-2022. Annual delivery plans and further five-year plans will be published in the future.

The Council is fully aware that it cannot deliver growth on its own. To this end, this Plan for Growth is intended to be delivered in partnership with other public sector organisations and, crucially, the private sector.

The refreshed Prospectus is based upon new economic data which continues to inform and sometimes shift our priorities and measure our performance against targets.

The Council continues to focus on its Corporate Strategy priority of Infrastructure and Economic Development and to invest its resources to deliver as well as seek to attract external funding. The Plan for Growth remains the key component of our delivery of 9,000 jobs by 2026.



COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE – LOCATION



The Braintree District has one significant competitive advantage – its location. Lying between the regional growth centres of Chelmsford and Colchester; Cambridge as a global technology research and development centre; and the international transport hubs of Stansted Airport and the Haven Ports, the district enjoys a superb location to attract and grow businesses. London is 45 minutes away by rail; and the A120 and A12 trunk roads cross the district giving access to the Haven and Thames ports; Stansted and Southend airports; and, the M11, London and the M25.

This locational advantage is complemented by a high quality natural and historic environment and a supportive and entrepreneurial business environment where employment land is competitively priced. The Council and its partners are serious about enabling investment and helping businesses establish and grow.

This competitive advantage provides Braintree District with a 'head start' compared with other places seeking to grow the economy and provides a positive context for overcoming the challenges and barriers to growth highlighted within this Prospectus. Working with our private and public sector partners, the Council needs to create the conditions for the effective delivery of interventions if it is to deliver on its job growth targets and ensure growth in the district is sustainable and complimentary to this prime location.

Braintree District is bordered by what a recent Localis report, "The Making of an Industrial Strategy", called 'stuck' and 'stifled' Local Authority areas. Babergh, in terms of its economic demographics has been identified as 'stuck' in its ability to grow whereas Colchester's growth, it is argued, has become 'stifled' due to its geographic constraints. The impact of our neighbouring authorities being identified in these ways is potentially beneficial insofar as at some point there could be business overspill from Colchester, if the appropriate infrastructure is in place, but is also potentially negative as there is a constrained economy to the north. The district is currently neither 'stuck' nor 'stifled' and this Plan for Growth is aimed at sustainable growth to ensure it does not become so.

INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

In January 2017, Central Government published its "Building Our Industrial Strategy Green Paper" which seeks to enhance UK economic growth through a focus on productivity and innovation, providing support to those functions which encourage both skills and infrastructure as well as support to the commercialisation of innovation.

Braintree District Council submitted a response to the Green Paper highlighting how the proposed Garden Communities, and the intention to exploit new technology to support communities living within them to be resilient and self-reliant, helps the Government to deliver its Industrial Strategy. The Council has made the case that, in order for the new communities to be delivered and successful, significant investment is required from the public sector in infrastructure, skills and economic growth. The Council has committed to work in partnership with Central Government, other public sector bodies and the private sector to encourage sustainable, productive economic growth within the district. However, Government funding schemes outlined within the Green Paper, such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund and National Challenge Fund, need to be as targeted to areas such as Braintree District as they are to, for example, the Northern Powerhouse and the Midland's Engine for Growth.

**delivery of
9,000 jobs
by 2026**



BRAINTREE'S ECONOMIC PROFILE

Braintree District's economic performance since 2013 has continued in a positive trajectory. It has, like much of Essex, performed relatively well during the economic recovery though, as with the rest of Essex, this recovery is fragile and there are systemic issues that will need to be addressed in the coming years if the full growth potential is to be realised.



Overall Economic Statistics for Braintree ¹

	2013	2017	2022
GVA (millions £s)	2,222.2	2,723.3	2,935.9
Working Age Population	93,000	94,400	96,400
Unemployment (000's)	2,300	1,100	1,100
Net Out -commuting	-16%	-13.9%	-15.5%

The District's Gross Value Added (GVA) is £2.7bn, representing 10% of the Essex County Council area's total GVA. This represents an increase for Braintree of £390m since 2013. The working age population has increased by 1,000 since 2013 at 94,400 whilst jobs have increased by almost 7,000. The unemployment rate for Braintree has fallen by 1,200 since 2013 leaving the District with low unemployment levels at 1.1%. In employment terms, the overall net out commuting rate for residents is -13.9%. This has fallen from -16% in 2013 though it is projected to rise again to -15.5% by 2022 with no intervention to reverse the trend. These figures for 2017 show that Braintree businesses are providing more employment opportunities than there are unemployed people to work in them, a positive trend. It is fair to say, however, that in terms of productivity these are not necessarily high-skilled, high-quality employment opportunities. The main rise in employment has been seen in Construction and Professional Services (defined as occupations requiring special training the arts or sciences and include the services of lawyers, accountants, architects and engineers).

¹ East of England Forecasting Model

PRODUCTIVITY

In the "Building Our Industrial Strategy Green Paper" the ambition is to improve the UK economy equitably through improved productivity levels. The UK's global position in terms of productivity (producing more value for each hour of people's time and thereby increasing their earning power) is significantly behind France, Germany and the US with workers in those countries producing more in four days than workers in the UK do in five. The Green Paper highlights the imbalance within the UK economy in terms of productivity levels and, as part of this analysis, ranks the East of England as fourth in the UK in terms of productivity. What this statistic hides is the fact that Essex ranks second from bottom out of the six counties in the 'old' East of England region:

Productivity as per Labour Productivity (County-level) ³

County	2013	2017	2022
Bedfordshire	£50,200	£53,900	£57,150
Cambridgeshire	£50,300	£52,300	£55,670
Greater Essex	£46,700	£49,140	£52,440
Hertfordshire	£51,350	£53,880	£56,920
County	2013	2017	2022
Bedfordshire	£50,200	£53,900	£57,150
Cambridgeshire	£50,300	£52,300	£55,670
Essex	£46,700	£49,140	£52,440
Hertfordshire	£51,350	£53,880	£56,920

Productivity in the Braintree District is lower than the Greater Essex average. As of 2017, at £41,200 Labour Productivity, Braintree is ranked 6th in Greater Essex which shows the relatively low-skilled employment and job opportunities within the district. This compares with the highest productivity level in Greater Essex, in Braintree's neighbouring district, Uttlesford, which has £52,100 Labour Productivity. The common link with these high productivity levels seen in neighbouring districts and counties is the high-tech business dominance of Cambridge which has spread to neighbouring areas and the impact of life sciences, principally Uttlesford and Stevenage in Hertfordshire. There will also be an impact from London, which in itself has high-tech excellence amongst other sectors, though the spread of influence does not seem to impact on all of its neighbouring districts, including Braintree which does export its workforce to London.

Productivity as per Labour Productivity (District level) ⁴

District	2013	2017	2022
Braintree	£38,700	£41,200	£44,500
Cambridge	£41,600	£43,000	£45,600
Stevenage	£46,800	£49,500	£53,400
Uttlesford	£50,100	£52,100	£56,400

² Building Our Industrial Strategy, Green Paper January 2017

³ East of England Forecasting Model

⁴ East of England Forecasting Model

BARRIERS TO GROWTH

Braintree's economy is broadly made up of Micro businesses (0-9 employees) with 89.5% of the total business base. Small and Medium Enterprises (10-249 employees) make up 10% of the economy with businesses employing over 250 staff making up around 0.3% of the business base. This is broadly in line with the East of England average.

The district has, as can be identified from the productivity levels highlighted in the previous table, a low skills attainment average. In terms of NVQ1 and NVQ2 levels, Braintree is generally on a par with the East of England and UK averages but there is a drop from NVQ3 onwards, with Braintree lagging behind the regional and UK averages. This correlates to the percentage of people employed in Managers, Directors and Senior Official roles than the East of England and UK average as well as residents employed in the Professional Occupations.

Skills Attainment Levels ⁵

	Braintree	East of England	UK
NVQ1	88.7%	84.9%	84.9%
NVQ2	71.8%	71.5%	73.6%
NVQ3	45.2%	53.5%	57.4%
NVQ4	27.4%	33.6%	37.1%
Senior Roles	6.4%	10.3%	10.4%
Professional Occupations	12.3%	19.0%	19.9%

Braintree does buck trends in the following employment categories:

Braintree Skills Strengths ⁶

	Braintree	East of England	UK
Associated Professional and Technical	18.4%	14.7%	14.1%
Skilled Trades	15.6%	11.3%	10.5%
Process Plant & Machine Operatives	9.9%	6.5%	6.4%

The data does not interrogate these categories in enough detail to show whether or not these are skilled employment opportunities in growth sectors or declining sectors which could affect the future stability of the Braintree economy if the latter. The data is, however, reflective of the skills required in one of the largest sectors of the Braintree economy, the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering sector which employs nearly 7,500 staff. ⁷

The median salary for Braintree residents is almost £600 per week which could be reflective of the levels of out-commuting, probably to London, as the median wage of employees within the district is £514, lower than the Essex and UK average (£520 and £529 respectively). ⁸

Whilst, as can be seen, the Braintree economy is prosperous and growing, there continue to be challenges and barriers to growth.

⁵ Greater Essex Employment & Skills Board research
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⁸ East of England Forecasting Model

The district economy will, barring any further major external economic shocks, potentially continue to grow at an average rate without significant public sector investment. It will not, though, reach its full potential without intervention by the public sector.

Ageing Population

Braintree District does face barriers to growth which require public and private sector intervention to overcome. One such barrier is an ageing population which will, in future years, inhibit growth due to a decreased workforce. By 2025, it is anticipated that the over 65's age group will increase by 30% and represent almost a quarter of the Braintree District population. This ageing population will place a greater demand on health, social care and housing needs. Whilst, by 2025, the working age population (identified as age 16-64) will see a moderate 3% decrease, the demands of housing from an increased overall population will create a greater demand for employment in the district. In order to meet the demands of an ageing population and provide for the workforce required to generate economic growth, there is a need to create additional, adequate, housing.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

In order to meet the demands of businesses and new housing, improvements to the District's infrastructure is a necessity. The A120 is only dualled from Stansted to Braintree and the A12 is above capacity with both suffering serious peak hour congestion; the rail connection from Braintree to the East Coast mainline at Witham is single track, limiting the frequency of service.

The rural parts of the district in particular lack access to superfast broadband – essential if we are to foster innovative Micro businesses and SME's.

Skills

A further requirement of economic growth is a skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers. As has been highlighted, Braintree district communities do not enjoy particularly high skills levels, particularly over NVQ2 Level which is evident in the economy and its productivity levels. Very often, high skills attainment is linked with prosperous households whereas on average, children from areas of deprivation tend to have low levels of skills attainment.

At Key Stage 2, Braintree District exceeds the Essex and East of England average attainment level slightly. Generally, the trend of disadvantage and low attainment is true for the Braintree District, though there are exceptions. The district does not, however, perform as well in County or Regional averages for GCSE attainment. The district has closed the percentage gap in recent years but only two of the nine secondary schools saw a higher percentage of pupils achieving A*-C GCSE's than the average attainment levels seen for Essex and the East of England. There is, however, no clear correlation between disadvantage and low GCSE attainment levels. Indeed, the worst performing school has the lowest level of pupils who were deemed to be disadvantaged. This lower level of skills attainment, as has been seen above, leads to relatively low productivity levels and employment in senior management and professional occupations which could be a deterrent for businesses locating to the district. The existing businesses in Braintree District could also struggle to grow through the lack of a skilled workforce and could, therefore, choose to move out of the area. We need to better understand the low attainment levels to work with our partners in overcoming it.

Skills Attainment ⁹

	Braintree	East of England	UK
Key Stage 2	82%	81%	79%
	Braintree	Essex	East of England
GCSE	52.3%	58.4%	58.2%

Economic Sectors

We need to stimulate our businesses to grow, particularly in key economic sectors. We know that the strongest sectors of the Braintree economy are Construction; IT, Digital and Creative; Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Health and Social Care; and, Logistics. We need to understand more about these businesses to ensure that public sector support for them is targeted to best meet their needs. By growing them, we know that the supporting sectors of Professional Services; Retail; and, Accommodation and Food will also grow and generate further employment and growth.

Town Centre and Rural Regeneration

In order to support increased housing and employment opportunities, we need to continue Town Centre and Rural Regeneration to strengthen the role of our key towns and villages in providing services and the cultural and social heart of the district. This would also be supported by a coherent Tourism offer that will, in addition, provide employment and support the positive image of the district.

Employment Sites

A further inhibitor to growth is the lack of grow-on office space for businesses and general employment premises and sites that are at the point of being delivered. The result of this lack is that businesses already in the district either do not grow in order to remain within their manageable spaces, or leave the district to grow elsewhere. This also represents a significant barrier to attracting businesses from outside the area to locate in Braintree.



⁹ Greater Essex Employment & Skills Board Research

ACHIEVING GROWTH

Braintree District Council and its public and private sector partners want to realise the ambitious plans for growth, particularly to increase the economy. The most fundamental route to achieve this is for more businesses to operate sustainably in the district to employ people and create a supply chain that, in turn, employs more people still. The delivery of infrastructure improvement requires an economic impact to secure funding and the development of housing requires an end user who is generally in employment and therefore in a position to afford the property for developers to deliver.

This employment creation can be delivered through assisting the existing business base to grow and expand within the district and to attract businesses from outside the district, in.

Indigenous Growth

The growth of businesses already located within the district is one of the most sustainable and preferable ways to grow the economy in the first instance. In order to do this, as well as access to a ready market, businesses need:

- A skilled workforce
- Suitable premises

Businesses within the district are, as outlined above, therefore currently constrained as there is a lack of a highly-skilled workforce and suitable grow-on space to accommodate growth.

Inward Investment

The principal requirement for companies when considering whether to relocate or expand in another area to their current domicile is whether or not they can do business in that area and therefore improve the balance sheet of the

company. In order to satisfy that question, the evidence required, in no particular order, is:

- Skilled workforce
- Appropriate business premises
- Adequate/good infrastructure
- Good quality housing stock availability
- Lifestyle opportunities

As can be seen from the barriers to growth highlighted above, currently the Braintree District cannot answer many of these key questions adequately. There is a real opportunity to capture certain businesses from London and Cambridge so action has to be taken to genuinely deliver the above evidence requirements in order to ensure this is realised for the benefit of sustainable economic growth. We cannot, therefore, create a comprehensive inward investment proposition without addressing the problems highlighted.

Growth in itself, however, is not enough for a strong and sustainable economy. It needs to be a targeted growth, in key sectors, that improves levels of productivity. In order to realise such growth, therefore, there is a need for the public and private sectors to intervene, particularly in the following areas:

- Encouraging businesses in growth sectors to flourish in the district through targeted business support programmes
- Creating a high-skilled workforce that is fit-for-purpose for the requirements of business
- Creation of employment sites and a range of office accommodation that are fit-for-purpose for business needs
- Upgrading of key infrastructure and connectivity (road, rail and broadband)
- Delivery of identified residential sites

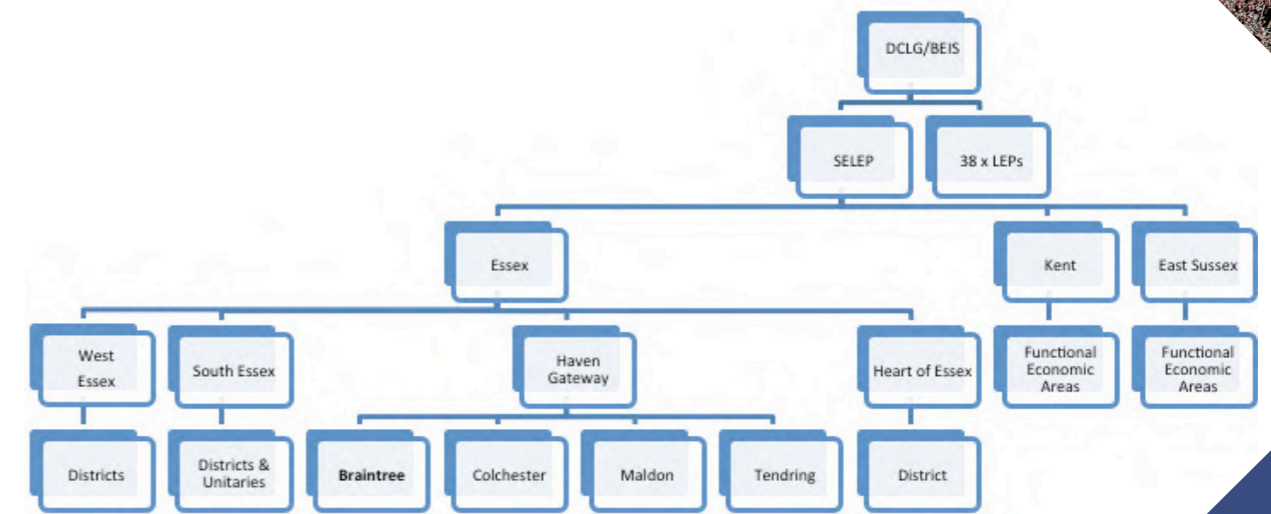
FUNDING THE GROWTH

The Council has great ambition for the district and its growth but the delivery of these ambitions is currently constrained for a number of reasons. The interventions required to overcome these constraints require funding for delivery which will be from a combination of public and private sector sources. The context of which the Council will set out through its District Investment Strategy that will deliver infrastructure improvements for existing and future residents, committing £28m to its delivery. The District Investment Strategy will provide:



- Partnership working to improve health provision in the district, improving primary health facilities across the district in Witham, Sible Hedingham and as part of a new regeneration scheme in Braintree Town Centre; an investment by the Council of circa £11m. We will continue to work with health partners on any further opportunities that arise in the future.
- Improvements to our three Town Centres, with the Council already having committed £1.2m to capital improvements.
- Identification and delivery of improvements to our most congested roads through working in partnership with Essex County Council and Highways England to relieve congestion at Galley's Corner on the A120 and improve access to Braintree Town Centre through a slip road onto Millennium Way, committing £2.5m to help deliver this.
- Increased opportunity for new business growth and employment investment which could fund support for business growth through, for example, business start-up and grow-on facilities and generate inward investment by bringing forward strategic employment sites and new commercial units. This includes investing £500k into new incubation and growth facilities in Witham and £960k into grow-on units in Braintree.

It is anticipated that additional funds will be secured from Essex County Council to deliver the growth priorities as well as bids submitted to, for example, Central Government via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). We will achieve this by working with the Haven Gateway Partnership in supporting its Whitehall and Westminster Engagement Strategy to effectively raise our profile and lobby Central Government for funds and highlight the importance of the functional economic area. In this respect, the partnership structure within which Braintree District Council sits is as follows:



In addition, it is expected that the private sector development that the Growth Plan will unlock will generate around £300m of investment providing a greater than 10:1 return on the Council's investment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our number one economic priority is to grow GVA beyond the projected level of £2.9bn by 2022 to £3.5bn and improve our projected productivity as measured by GVA per capita level of £18,200 by 2022 to £19,500. In order to achieve this, a number of strategic priorities need to be delivered within the life of this Growth Plan, namely Infrastructure, Skills and Business Support:

- Improve road and rail connectivity and public transport
- Provide superfast broadband across all parts of the district and ultrafast for new business sites
- Bring forward strategic employment sites, providing a range of premises for businesses.
- Target support to businesses in our growing and emerging sectors with innovation potential
- Work closely with businesses and providers to increase educational attainment



DELIVERY

An underpinning theme of the activity within this Prospectus is one of lobbying to ensure that Braintree District is at the centre of investment from the wider public sector, especially Essex County Council, SELEP and Central Government. We will actively promote Braintree District to these potential funders as well as create the evidence base to construct the business cases required to secure investment. In order to achieve this, we will work in partnership with bodies such as the Haven Gateway Partnership as well as Essex County Council and SELEP.

A further underpinning theme of this Prospectus is partnership working with the private sector. The Council will deliver against this Prospectus in the best way for business as it is business that will ultimately deliver the growth and prosperity for the district. This means that we will particularly work through business networks and partnerships to secure support and engagement for our activity.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This success of activity will be measured on an annual basis, though the ultimate success of the Plan for Growth will take some years to fully impact the district's economy, through the establishment of agreed Key Performance Indicators, including:

- Monitoring GVA growth and productivity improvement
- Monitoring business growth in key sectors
- Monitoring skills attainment levels
- Monitoring the economic impact of tourism activity
- Submission of, and success of, funding bids

An annual review and evaluation report will be published.

FIVE-YEAR DELIVERY PLANS

PRIORITY 1 Infrastructure & Connectivity

Road

- Work with the Haven Gateway Partnership and Essex County Council to submit the preferred route option to Highways England for the new A120 by November 2017
- Work with the Haven Gateway Partnership to lobby Central Government for inclusion within RIS2 of the new A120 between Braintree and the new A12 Expressway by December 2018
- Work with the Haven Gateway Partnership, Essex County Council, District partners and Highways England to secure the start of delivery of the new A12 Expressway
- Work with Essex County Council to lobby Central Government for improvements for local roads, e.g. A120 Millennium Way slip roads, securing funding by March 2017 and delivering the identified scheme by 2020/21
- Work with Essex County Council to undertake improvements to signage in and around Braintree

Broadband

- Work with Essex County Council and Superfast Essex for superfast broadband on how improvements and they will be delivered across all residential properties in the District from January 2018

- Work with Haven Gateway Partnership to lobby Central Government for at least superfast broadband with 100% coverage across all existing business premises by January 2019
- Working with developers, ensure that ultrafast broadband is installed in all new developments

Rail

- Work with the Haven Gateway Partnership to lobby Network Rail for improved tracks and links
- Work with Essex County Council and Network Rail to undertake a GRIP Study to establish outcomes to provide two trains an hour to Braintree
- Work with the Haven Gateway Partnership to lobby Abellio for improved rail services
- Work with Abellio to improve station car parking numbers and general condition

Employment Sites and Premises

- Work with developers to bring appropriate sites forward, including Eastlink 120 starting on site in late 2019
- Invest, with partners, in incubation and start up space including the opening of grow-on space at the Braintree Enterprise Centre by early 2018 and completing the Witham Enterprise Centre in late 2020
- Working with businesses, identify the potential of securing additional Business Improvement Districts for our industrial and business estates across the District by 2022

Regeneration in our Town Centres

- Work with businesses and Essex County Council partners to identify and deliver a suite of activities to increase footfall and spend in the Town Centres, starting June 2017.
- Deliver the Manor Street regeneration scheme by summer 2020.
- Work towards achieving a Business Improvement District for one of our Town Centres by 2022.

Housing

- Create a Housing Delivery Company to secure the provision of appropriate and adequate mixed tenure housing for the District
- Work with landowners and developers to bring forward appropriate sites identified for housing development, securing required infrastructure developments to support them such as Panfield Lane with an onsite commencement in mid-2019
- Provide key worker housing to support the recruitment and retention of staff in areas such as health and teaching

Public Transport

- Continue to work with partners to improve express links between Stansted Airport, Braintree, Witham and the rail network
- Work with developers to secure sustainable transport solutions for communities accessing employment opportunities on the new sites

PRIORITY 2 Business Support

- Continue to work with the BEST Growth Hub along with other business support organisations to increase levels of targeted business support in order to generate more new business start-ups and business success rates to increase growth in our key sectors
- Establish a programme of business support; business advice, access to finance, access to markets for our economic sectors and promoting this to gain awareness and take up of available support
- Work with Higher Education Institutions to encourage innovation within businesses to help them grow
- Raise the profile of the Braintree District as a place to do business
- Identify the opportunities for Tourism within the district and how the Council can best support its sustainable growth
- Work with partners to secure external funding opportunities to support businesses to grow

PRIORITY 3 Skills Development

- Work with schools and Essex County Council towards improvements in attainment levels at all Key Stages
- Work with education providers and Essex County Council towards improvements in attainment levels for 16-24 year olds generally
- Work with businesses to help them communicate their skills needs to education providers and help those providers ensure the needs are met
- Work with businesses to help exploit best use of the Apprenticeship Levy
- Work with partners to secure external funding opportunities to support skills attainment



ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2017-18:

PRIORITY 1 Infrastructure & Connectivity

Road Infrastructure

- Secure funding to carry out junction improvements and an additional road to alleviate the congestion around the Springwood Drive Industrial Estate to improve conditions for businesses on the estate and attract additional businesses to it
- Secure funding with Essex County Council and Highways England, to alleviate peak hour congestion around Galley's Corner via the creation of new slip roads joining Millennium Way to the A120
- Support Essex County Council to secure a preferred route for the improved A120 between Braintree and the A12, ensure it is included within the Government's Road Investment Strategy 2020-2025

Broadband

- Work with Essex County Council to monitor delivery of Phase 2 and 3 of the Superfast Essex programme to ensure maximal coverage in the Braintree District by 2019
- Work with Essex County Council and Superfast Essex to explore appropriate and achievable options for achieving superfast broadband coverage across all

remaining areas of the Braintree District at the end of Phase 3 of the programme

- To work with the Haven Gateway Partnership to lobby for additional funding from the BDUK programme to look at options for ultrafast provision to major employment and business sites

Rail

- Complete the GRIP 2 Study and agree measures with Essex County Council and Network Rail to improve the frequency and reliability of trains between Braintree and London

Employment Sites and Premises

- Invest our own resources (£500k) and secure match-funding from external sources to deliver a Witham Enterprise Centre, providing "incubator" business units to encourage new, knowledge-based, start-up businesses and SME's
- Complete the construction of four new grow-on units at Braintree Enterprise Centre by early-2018
- Engage with market experts to establish the requirement for further grow-on space in the District and seek opportunities to deliver grow-on space accordingly
- Establish a commercial agents' forum by June 2017 to understand demand for commercial space and, where appropriate, create business cases for investment

Regeneration of our key towns

- Secure detailed planning consent for the delivery of the Manor Street Regeneration project by the early 2018, start construction in 2018 and deliver the new scheme by summer 2020
- Create the Plan for Braintree, informed by the Braintree Vision, by March 2018 that incorporates guide documents such as an Events Plan, Funding Strategy, Public Realm Strategy and Governance Strategy
- Deliver improvements to Witham and Halstead Town Centres in accordance with Highways Authority guidance and permissions
- Establish, by September 2017, the plan for the District Council's engagement in Witham and Halstead
- Deliver new signage and wayfinding for the Town Centres by March 2018

PRIORITY 2 Business Support

- Establish a programme of business support, business advice, access to finance, access to markets for our key economic growth sectors, promoting this to gain awareness and take-up of the support by September 2017

- Identify Key Performance Indicators to measure the success of our interventions to ensure our resources are always appropriately targeted by September 2017
- Seek to secure external funding wherever possible to match-fund our own resources and secure the best possible outcome
- Undertake a Place Branding exercise, in partnership with the private sector, and deliver the recommendations collectively
- Work with Higher Education providers to secure support for businesses with innovation potential to ensure it is maximised to best effect, seeking to match business needs with Higher Education strengths through, for example, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships
- Strengthen the Council's business engagement activity by providing, either directly or through key partners, quarterly business network opportunities addressing areas of direct interest to businesses
- Establish a Communications Plan to ensure that information is cascaded to businesses as effectively as possible
- Liaise with Ignite and the BEST Growth Hub to ensure Braintree businesses in key economic sectors are receiving the optimum levels of support
- Continue to deliver the Industrial Estates Improvement Programme, finalizing this by March 2018
- Deliver a Tourism Strategy by September 2017 and detailed Action Plan for delivery

PRIORITY 3 Skills Development

- Establish an internal working group by June 2017 to ensure that all skills activity is coordinated
- Work with internal colleagues and Essex County Council to deliver the Early Years Programme to ensure our young people have the best possible start into education
- Work with Essex County Council and the local schools to secure an Education Improvement Partnership by December 2017 to address weaknesses, particularly with regard to GCSE attainment levels
- Work with Sixth Form Colleges and other Further Education providers along with schools to broker stronger engagement between them and businesses to provide a workforce that meets employers' needs through curriculum development, work placements and awareness-raising activity of career opportunities and skills requirements
- Better understand the skills requirements of the key economic sectors for the Districts, seeking to raise awareness of this amongst the education providers
- Work with the third sector to encourage participation, particularly amongst our deprived communities, in work-based education programmes that enable re training or access to work programmes for the long-term unemployed post-19
- In September 2017, launch the Braintree District Education and Skills Board
- Identify external funding opportunities to better deliver skills programmes with partners

