



## **‘One District – One Vision’**

### **A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2025**

**(The ‘Sustainable Community Strategy’ and  
‘Core Strategy’)**

*A draft for consultation*

## **Commitment to this Strategy**

This document has been prepared by the Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership and Braintree District Council.

They hereby agree to adhere to its principles, aspire to its Vision, abide by its content and work together to achieve its objectives.

### **Braintree District Council**

Graham Butland – Leader of the Council

Allan Reid – Chief Executive

### **Essex County Council**

### **Essex Police**

### **Mid-Essex Primary Care Trust**

Sheila Bremner – Chief Executive

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## PART 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THIS DOCUMENT

#### The purpose of this document

This document seeks your opinion on proposals for the future of the Braintree District until 2025. It covers issues which affect many aspects of our lives – from where we live, to where we work and how we enjoy ourselves and our lives.

There is a glossary at the back which explains some of the phrases used which you may not be familiar with.

When adopted by all the partners, the document will play a key role in guiding their future plans and the decisions they make.

We have already consulted widely across the whole District to gauge peoples' views and priorities and we have carried out many technical studies and much research which have informed the proposals in this document.

Its aim is to bring the results of the previous consultation, studies and research together into a series of proposals for further consultation.

This document therefore:

- Provides a vision of how the Braintree District will change between now and 2025
- Sets out the social, economic and environmental priorities for people and communities in the District for the time between now and 2025 (we call these the '**Community Priorities**')
- Shows locations where housing, employment and other types of development could take place in the District between now and 2025 (we call these the '**Growth Locations**'), how we will ensure that there is adequate infrastructure (transport, community facilities and other services) to support the Growth Locations and how the environment will be protected notwithstanding the demands and requirements for growth
- Sets out the policies which will underpin the development and make sure that it takes place in the best possible and most sustainable way (we call these the '**Core Planning Policies**').

## What does 'Sustainable' mean?

It means:

- making sure that the things which we enjoy and which are important to us about the qualities of our lives can be kept for our children and their children to enjoy (i.e. that they are 'sustained')
- making sure that in making our quality of life better, we don't do it at the expense of other things
- balancing the need for new development with protecting the natural and built-environment which makes the Braintree District such an attractive place in which to grow up, live and work (ie. ensuring that only 'sustainable development' takes place in the District)

A definition of sustainable development was drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. It is defined as:

***“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”***

The principles of sustainability and sustainable development underpin the entire contents of this document.

## **Who has prepared the Document**

The document has been prepared jointly by Braintree District Council (BDC) and the Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The LSP has been responsible for developing the Community Priorities.

BDC is the Local Planning Authority and has been responsible for assessing the Growth Locations and the associated Core Planning Policies.

## Why the Document has been produced

The Document has to be produced for the following reasons:

### ***National Policies***

To ensure that our policies take into account – and contribute to – the achievement of higher-level policies and priorities which are set by the Government and apply across the whole country.

### ***Regional Policies:***

So that it can be clearly seen how the District is going to respond to the requirements and challenges in the East of England Plan which has been drawn up by the East of England Regional Assembly and was approved by the Government in May 2008.

The East of England Plan sets out the overall planning strategies for the whole of the eastern region of England up to 2021.

It says that the Braintree District **must**:

- Provide for a minimum of 4,340 houses to be built in the District between 2006 and 2021 (about 290 a year)
- Provide for another 385 houses per year to be built in the District after 2021
- Secure more affordable housing in the District. It says that a target of 35% affordable housing should be delivered
- Contribute towards the 56,000 jobs to be delivered in the “Rest of Essex” (which is defined in the Plan as Braintree, Chelmsford, Uttlesford and Maldon)
- Make sure that development in the District does not have unacceptable impacts on the important internationally recognised wildlife areas of the Colne and Blackwater estuaries.

These requirements have to be broadly taken into account in the proposals set out in this document.

The problem of large-scale out-commuting in the District was recognised in the preparation of the East of England Plan and it was felt that a further large housing allocation for Braintree District would add to this problem. The lower housing allocation was intended to provide the opportunity for additional employment development in the District.

The East of England Plan requirements are regarded as a minimum. Additional housing can be considered if it can be delivered without breaching environmental and infrastructure constraints by:

- Increasing density
- Encouraging opportunities on previously developed sites
- Making best use of policies to provide exception sites for affordable housing in rural areas.

***Legislation:***

This document has to comply with the requirements of various pieces of legislation. In particular:

- The Local Government Act and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which places a duty on Braintree District Council together with the Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership to assess the Community Priorities; and produce a ‘Sustainable Community Strategy’ for a local area
- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England ) Regulations 2004 and 2008 which places a duty on Braintree District Council as the local planning authority to prepare a ‘Local Development Framework’ (LDF).

The LDF covers the development of the District and is made up of a number of different documents which all deal with different aspects of the planning system and which have to go through a number of different stages before they are adopted. A list of these documents is set out at Figure 4.

The most important of them is the ‘Core Strategy’ which is covered by this document and describes in broad detail the proposals for the Growth Locations and the Core Planning Policies.

This document fulfils the requirements to produce both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy.

Usually they are published separately but we have brought them together into one overall framework for the future of the District which we hope will be more logical and easier for everyone to understand. It will help us to show more clearly what the proposals are and why they have been made.

We are calling this framework ‘One District – One Vision – A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2025’.

## How the Proposals in this Document have been assessed

As a reminder:

- The **Community Priorities** in this document are the social, economic and environmental priorities for people and communities in the District for the time between now and 2025
- The **Growth Locations** proposed in this document are locations where housing, employment and other types of development could take place in the District between now and 2025
- The **Core Planning Policies** in this document are the policies which will underpin the development and the infrastructure which is needed to make sure that it takes place in the best possible way.

### How the Community Priorities have been assessed

The Community Priorities have all been assessed as a result of thorough research, analysis and consultation as follows:

- Robust consultation on the 'Issues and Options' Report which was published in May 2007 and which set out a wide range of possible options for long term development of the District and the associated socio-economic and infrastructure issues. This consultation took place across the whole of the Braintree District during 2007.
- The consultation was carried out by reference to the 'Braintree District Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI). It showed clearly how the consultation was to be carried out, with whom and when.
- Further details of the consultation and the outcomes are attached in the Technical Supplement to this document.
- Consultation carried out in the District in 2007 by Essex County Council which informed the priorities and targets in the Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- Research into socio-economic issues in the District and associated data collection and analysis including the results of a Strategic Joint Needs Assessment carried out by the Mid Essex Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Essex County Council, and the Health Profile of the Braintree District.
- Issues known to be of importance to the main public sector service providers in the District.

- Issues known to be of importance to the elected members of Braintree District Council, Essex County Council and Town and Parish Councils in the District
- Other issues which affect the District – directly or indirectly – which are set out in the plans and programmes of other organisations – details of which are set out in Appendix 1.

### **How the Core Strategy and Core Planning Policies have been assessed**

These have been developed as a result of:

- the same process as for the Community Priorities
- an assessment of the possible impact on the environment of those options
- a series of in-depth technical studies to advise where there may be areas of concern and possible approaches to dealing with problems
- looking at national and regional policies to see how they affect the District

It is important to note that this document does not identify **specific** sites for development in the District nor does it set out detailed policies for planning related decisions. This sort of detail will be covered in separate documents called the Allocations Document and the Development Control Policies Document, which form part of the LDF and will be produced at a later stage.

## **What happens after the Consultation Stage?**

Details about how you can let your views be known about the content of this document are set out clearly on the next few pages.

The consultation period will run from 31<sup>st</sup> October to the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

When the consultation period is over, we will look carefully at the comments and views we have received and decide what changes, if any, should be made to the document.

When the appropriate changes have been made, the Community Priorities will then be considered, agreed and signed off by BDC and the LSP.

However, the Core Strategy element of this document (ie the part which covers the planning and development aspects) is then subject to a more formal process of examination before it is adopted.

### **'Examination' of the document**

Once the further changes to the Growth Location and Core Planning Policy content have been made to the document, it will again be open to consultation. We anticipate that this second consultation stage will be in early summer next year (2009).

Any further changes will be made and it will then be submitted to a Government inspector for "examination". The "examination" is a special type of public inquiry and is meant to judge if the document is "sound" or "fit for purpose".

The 'examination' phase also again includes a final opportunity to give your views to the inspector. The Inspector can then require changes to the document which are binding on the Council.

The Council must then adopt the document it as its policy. It is anticipated that this will happen during 2010.

## **Making Sure it all Happens!**

Details about how this Strategy, the Community Priorities, the Spatial Policy Statement and the Core Planning Policies will be delivered are set out in Part 6 of this document.

An Annual Monitoring Report will be published each year to show how things are progressing and how the priority outcomes are being achieved.

## How to let us know your views

We need your views on the proposals in this document and we want to make sure that everyone who wants to do so has the opportunity to get involved in this important debate.

There are a number of different ways that you can feed back to us.

- Go **on line** to [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk) and follow the link on the front page of our web site. You will be able to comment on any particular part of the document.
- by writing to:

**Braintree District Council**

**FREEPOST**

**Causeway House**

**Bocking End**

**Braintree**

**Essex**

**CM7 9HB**

or by dropping your written comments off at one of our main offices:

**Braintree – Causeway House**

**Halstead – the Centre**

**Witham – the Library**

- by **e-mailing** us at: [csc@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:csc@braintree.gov.uk). (It would help us a lot if you could insert the words 'Community and Development Strategy Consultation' in the 'subject' box of your e mail)
- by attending one of the **public consultation events** which will be held in the larger settlements.
- by contacting your local **District Councillor** and feeding your views in writing through to him or her.
- by completing the **separate survey** which forms part of the Summary Leaflet and just putting it in the post or delivering it by hand to any of our local offices.

If you would like any further information about the Community Priorities please contact Sara Moutard on 01376 551414.

If you would like any further information about the Growth Locations or the Core Planning Policies please contact Eleanor Dash or Dave Cookson on 01376 551414.

**All responses should be received by the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2008**

## PART 2

### A PORTRAIT OF THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT

This part of the document summarises some of the key facts, statistics and details about the Braintree District and puts the proposals in the rest of the document into perspective.

- The Braintree District covers an area of 612 square kilometres
- It is the second largest district (by area) in Essex
- It has the fourth highest population of Districts in Essex. The mid-year estimate for 2007 was 140,900
- The population of the Braintree District is set to increase over the next 5 years. The percentage difference in the 65 and over age group is predicted to increase by 14%
- Nearly half the population live in the rural areas and just under half in the three main towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead
- There are over 3,000 listed buildings and 39 conservation areas
- The unemployment rate in the District was 1.9% in 2006/07- well below the national average.
- 28% of the working age population have no qualifications
- 43% of people of working age travel outside the district to work (2001)
- 82% of residents own at least 1 car (2001)
- Most crime is reducing
- House prices are slightly lower than the Essex average but are mainly higher than the regional average (December 2006)

#### Our place in the region

The Braintree District is at the heart of rural Essex. It lies between the Cambridge, Colchester, Chelmsford group of rapidly growing key regional centres, and is close to the fast-expanding Stansted Airport. London is only 45 minutes away by road or rail from parts of the District so there is a significant "London effect".

This location, with its attractive countryside, historic towns and villages has made the Braintree District a popular place to live and provides the opportunity for realising a prosperous future with a high quality of life.

## Deprivation in the District

The Braintree District is generally affluent and deprivation levels are slightly lower than Essex as a whole. However there are pockets of isolated and deprived communities with quite large inequalities between different areas. For example unemployment rates range from 2% to 5% across the District and the District has a number of areas where around 6%-7% of the population are living in fuel poverty, with households needing to spend more than 10% of income on fuel to maintain satisfactory heating.

The pockets of deprivation are around two of the District's three urban centres. These are the north and east areas of Braintree Town, and South Halstead. Although these areas are not seriously deprived in national terms they experience greater deprivation than the majority of areas in the District and services need to be targeted to support those with the greater need in order to reduce the inequality gaps.

## Our People

The total estimated population for Braintree as at mid 2007 is 140,900. The proportion of population aged over 65 currently stands at 15% with the proportion of the population aged under 15 is 19%. The age groups of 55-64 who will be the next generation of retirees is at 13%.

The population of Braintree is set to increase over the next 5 years. The percentage difference in the 65 and over age group is predicted to increase by 14% and a further 2% of the population being aged 85 and over. The proportion aged 15 and under is going to decrease by 5% compared to the mid 2006 population estimates and there will also be a reduction in the 55-64 year olds by 4%.

## Health

There is a considerable variation within life expectancy at ward level within the Braintree District. The ward with the highest life expectancy is that of Great Notley & Braintree West (84.6 years) compare to the ward with the lowest life expectancy of Cressing and Stisted (75.6 years).

- Death rates are falling steadily, but again vary widely across the district
- Circulatory diseases and cancers remain the main causes of death of the under 75s
- The leading cause of emergency admission to hospital is chest pain, while for planned admission it is for cataract surgery.
- Braintree District has the lowest hospital admission rate for cancer in the county
- 11% of the adult population are recorded as having high blood pressure, but it is likely that the same number again have not been diagnosed yet.
- Uptake of breast and cervical screening in Braintree is higher than the Essex average.

Whilst our population enjoy higher than average life expectancy, there is still a great deal of scope for improvement in health and well being. For example smoking and obesity are still widely prevalent, and only a minority of the population meets physical activity guidelines. These all pose a risk to the population's health.

### **Our Environment**

The Braintree District contains much high quality landscape, green urban spaces, over 3,000 listed buildings and 39 conservation areas.

This local environmental quality contributes much to the overall character of this part of Essex and indeed to the region as a whole.

Balancing future development with the protection and enhancement of these environments will be a critical task for the future plans for the District.

### **Our Impact on Climate Change**

The ecological footprint is a useful way of measuring a population's effect on the environment. The Ecological Footprint measures how much nature we have, how much nature we use and who uses what.

The Ecological Footprint for the world is 2.2 global hectares per person but the UK average is 5.4 global hectares per person. This is 65% higher than our ecological budget (the sustainable amount we can use). The Ecological Footprint for the Braintree District as at 2002 was just below 5.5 global hectares per person (Stockholm Environment Institute).

In 2004 Essex produced a total of 10,131 kilo tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, which equates to 8.5 tonnes per capita. This is almost 1 tonne per person per year less than the UK average (9.2 per capita). The Braintree District produced an average of 7.49 tonnes per capita which is almost 1.75 tonnes per person per year less than the UK average and is due to relatively low levels of emission from industrial and commercial sources.

### **Our Communities and Services**

Everyone needs the same services whether living in a town or a village. These include public transport and housing, access to shops, banks or a post office, good quality healthcare, advice services, leisure and education.

Providing these services in the towns is usually more cost effective as they are then closer to where most people live. The Plan must also make sure that the services we need are provided at the right place and the right time, especially where the main growth will be located.

Many services in our villages are however in decline, so supporting these will also be a prime task for the Strategy.

## **Our Safety**

Essex has a crime rate of 46 per 1,000 people. This is higher than the rate in the Braintree District which is 37 per 1,000 people. Both are significantly lower than the England and Wales average of 61 per 1,000 people during 2006/07.

The number of people who are killed or seriously injured on roads in the Braintree District was 71.12 per 100,000 people in 2007 – higher than the Essex average of 65.97 and the regional and national averages.

## **Our Housing**

Although house building rates have been high in recent years, prices in the District are much higher than the regional average.

Affordability is a serious issue for many people even with the current reduction in prices. The delivery of “affordable” housing has therefore emerged as a major issue in the District and much higher levels will be needed in the future to meet projected need.

The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy has significantly reduced the future housing requirements for the Braintree District from current levels so enough new housing should be delivered over the plan period despite the current downturn.

In 2007/08 Braintree District Council had 421 households approach it as homeless and a duty was accepted by the Council to assist 283 of those cases.

## **Our Transport**

### ***Rail***

Hatfield Peverel, Witham and Kelvedon have stations on the London to Colchester mainline and there is a high frequency of services from Witham. Braintree, Braintree Freeport, Cressing and White Notley are served by a single track branch line. This limits the frequency of service and reduces its potential to promote more journeys by rail. Investigations are being undertaken into ways of increasing the frequency of service on the line. The north-east of the District is served by the Sudbury branch line with a station at Bures in this District.

### ***Bus services***

Bus services in and between the main towns are adequate during the day on weekdays but conventional services are limited or non-existent over much of the rural areas. Only a limited number of services operate in the evenings and on Sundays.

However the District Council works with Essex County Council and voluntary groups to support a number of rural Community Transport and Bus schemes for

the more remote parts of the District and for those whose circumstances make it difficult for them to access conventional public transport.

### ***Footpaths and cycle-ways***

In the towns these tend to be fragmented or lacking, but are being improved. The Flitch Way is a well used part of the National Cycle Network.

### ***Roads***

The District sits astride the two strategic roads of the A120 and A12.

The A120 has recently been upgraded from Braintree to the M11 but the Braintree-Marks Tey stretch remains unimproved, although there are long term upgrading proposals. Galleys Corner Roundabout at Braintree is a particular local bottleneck where congestion regularly occurs.

The A12 has a significant impact on Witham, Hatfield Peverel and Kelvedon however only local improvements between Witham and Hatfield Peverel, rather than full scale upgrading, are proposed during the plan period.

## **Our Education and Skills**

In Essex less than a quarter (14.8%) of its residents have a level 4 or above qualification which is below the England percent of 19.9%. The Braintree District fairs worse than this with only 14.6% achieving this level.

28.0% of the working age population in the Braintree District have no qualifications. This compares with the figure for Essex which stands at 29.3%.

## **Our Economy**

Overall, the District is relatively prosperous, with a low unemployment rate. However many people still choose to travel to work elsewhere and live in the District.

There has been a shift away from manufacturing and agriculture and an increase in service industries with a predominance of low-skilled, low-paid jobs. The growth in out-commuting exemplifies this trend.

Education, skills training, the generation of higher value local jobs, and a reversal, or at least reduction, of out-commuting are keys to a robust economic future.

### ***Key employment locations***

The main towns are the centres for most local jobs and provide a wide range of sites for business development. However more sites are needed to cater for future growth, whilst a few could usefully be redeveloped.

Braintree in particular offers a good potential location for a high quality business development.

### ***The town and village centres***

Braintree has the largest town centre in the District and this together with Freeport development is a major attractor for people living outside the District.

Witham and Halstead are smaller market towns which serve their more local areas.

All the main town centres offer a good range of shops, jobs and services but each would benefit from some regeneration. These schemes are currently the Council's top priority.

The larger villages have much smaller centres, but again some would benefit from regeneration.

### ***Leisure and tourism***

Although tourism only amounts to about 4% of jobs, it does contribute almost £40m to the local economy. It also makes a significant contribution to the preservation of our historic heritage and environment, which are major attractions for visitors.

### ***The rural economy***

The rural economy is rapidly changing, as agricultural and manufacturing jobs have contracted. Rural communities now rely more heavily on commuting for most job opportunities.

Tourism and leisure do contribute, but jobs tend to be seasonal and lower paid. Small business centres have recently been developed catering for businesses based on modern technology and working from home is also becoming much more common for the same reasons.

Overall therefore, although the rural economy is changing rapidly it may to some extent be becoming more sustainable with the use of modern technology and the diversification of farms and older industrial sites.

## PART 3

### THE VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT 2008 – 2025

The overall Vision and Aims for the Braintree District for the period between now and 2025 are set out in the statement below and were agreed by the Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2008.

#### ***'One District – One Vision'***

##### **The Vision for the Braintree District**

***'To improve, promote and support the well-being of people and communities in the Braintree District – ensuring that local needs are met and are balanced against our duty to protect the District's special environmental qualities – now and for future generations'***

##### **The Aims**

- \* ***To create a clean and green environment***
- \* ***To achieve a prosperous local economy***
- \* ***To enable everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle***

Braintree District Council, as the Local Planning Authority – is proposing an associated vision for future planning and development in the District. This is called the 'spatial vision'.

#### ***A Spatial Vision for the Braintree District***

***To shape and develop the future of the Braintree District, with our partners and residents, by maintaining, improving and protecting our historic towns, villages and attractive countryside, and by harnessing economic innovation to create self-supporting, sustainable communities which are accessible, safe, healthy, prosperous and desirable places in which to live and work***

## **The Key Objectives in delivering the Visions**

The following twelve key objectives have been developed which reflect and underpin the overall Vision for the Braintree District and its spatial interpretation as set out above.

These key objectives form the basis for, and underpin, the policies set out in this Strategy – particularly the Core Planning Policies - and will be used by those making decisions about the District in the coming years:

The key objectives are:

1. To ensure that all development is sustainable, enabling people to satisfy their basic needs as far as possible within the District, and continue to enjoy a high quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations
2. To secure developments that make the minimum use of scarce natural resources, both in construction and everyday use
3. To accord with national and regional requirements policies and in particular, accommodate the future housing and employment growth requirements of the East of England Plan
4. To support thriving and sustainable communities by locating development, especially housing, where it will enable people to access jobs and key services such as education, training, healthcare, recreation and other facilities
5. To maintain and develop our vibrant and prosperous main towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, by encouraging new development and regeneration schemes that support their function as major service centres with a range of good quality jobs, businesses, shops and services that meet the needs of local people and the wider sub-region
6. To reduce the need for travel, and make it safer and easier for the community to travel to jobs and key services by improving sustainable forms of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling
7. To meet the housing needs of all sections of the community by providing an adequate amount, range and quality of accommodation, in particular affordable housing, and that required for people with special needs
8. To support and provide for the required growth and diversity of the District's economy both at the main towns and in rural areas, in ways which are compatible with environmental objectives, deliver increased prosperity for the whole community, and encourage people to live and work locally
9. To promote and secure high quality, environmentally friendly design in all aspects of new developments, in order to create sustainable, attractive, safe and healthy places in which to live, work and play

10. To protect and enhance the unique historic character and identity of the District, by ensuring that new developments are appropriate in terms of scale, location and character to their local environment, and that our built heritage is not irretrievably lost or damaged
11. To protect the countryside and improve and manage the diversity of wildlife and habitats, and protect and improve open spaces within our towns and villages
12. To provide accessible and varied opportunities for leisure and recreational activities in order to promote healthy lifestyles and social inclusion.

## **The Three Guiding Principles**

The expression 'sustainable' has already been mentioned in this document and a definition is included in Part 1.

The promotion and delivery of a sustainable future for the District is at the heart of this Strategy. It is the reason why we are suggesting these Three Guiding Principles which will underpin all the policies and actions in this Strategy and from which all other plans and actions for the future will flow.

The Three Guiding Principles are:

- 1. Promoting and delivering a sustainable future**
- 2. The protection and enhancement of the District's natural and built environments**
- 3. Delivering the development we need**

Each of them is discussed in more detail on the following pages together with the proposed associated wording which underpins them.

**THE FIRST GUIDING PRINCIPLE  
'PROMOTING AND DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE'**

Our proposal for the wording of this Principle is as follows:

**Guiding Principle 1 - Promoting And Delivering A Sustainable Future  
(Guiding Principle 1 (GP 1))**

'The Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership and Braintree District Council will seek to ensure that all development will contribute to (or at least not be harmful to) the promotion and delivery of sustainable development throughout the District and, where appropriate, support regional, national, and international strategies.

In particular the following will be promoted or secured:

- the ongoing support of rural communities so that they can remain viable and have at least the basic level of day to day services required
- the creation of locally distinctive, sustainable, safe, healthy, vibrant and successful communities
- the provision of jobs, services, facilities and infrastructure to meet defined future needs of the District
- development that minimises the use of scarce resources and the causes and impacts of climate change
- the best use of land for all types of development, so that the optimum use is made of suitable sites, especially those within Braintree, Witham and Halstead and the key service villages'

**We think that this Principle is important because:**

- It is generally accepted that the way that development has been located and designed in the past cannot continue in the face of climate change and the depletion of natural resources
- Putting most new development in the towns and larger villages helps to make sure that services and facilities are accessible to most people without the need to use the car, our valuable heritage and countryside are protected from unnecessary development and that the best use is made of urban land.
- Braintree District Council and its partners in the Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership will all work towards the same overall sustainability goals and will include sustainability issues in their strategies and plans. All of the key partners will contribute to this approach – for example by promoting healthy lifestyles, addressing social exclusion, targeting deprived areas and in delivering the concept of sustainability through their own day to day decisions on managing their facilities and operations.

- Other agencies and organisations, large and small, public and private, will be involved and all should be directed towards the same overall goals.

**We think this Principle should:**

- promote and secure sustainable forms of development which are sited in the most suitable locations
- protect, and where possible, improve the environment
- deliver the types of development to provide for the needs of the community, including housing, jobs, recreation and services
- contribute towards community well-being and social inclusion
- promote sustainable lifestyles

**Possible alternatives and the reasons why they have not been chosen:**

The promotion of sustainable development is a national regional and local priority. Sustainability requirements must therefore be included in the Strategy and be delivered locally.

- A first alternative approach could be to amend the wording by loosening the wording from “SEEK TO SECURE” to a “REQUIREMENT” for the principles set out to be met.

This would be more prescriptive, and to an extent less flexible. However, it would also emphasise the Council's and its partner's commitment to this critical part of the Strategy.

- A second alternative would be not to include this principle on the grounds that it simply repeats national and regional policies. However it is felt that the principles are so fundamental to this Strategy that they should be spelled out clearly at the outset. They also set out a clear commitment from all partners to promote the concept of sustainability and deliver sustainable development in their own plans and strategies

**THE SECOND GUIDING PRINCIPLE  
'THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE  
DISTRICT'**

Our proposal for the wording of this Principle is as follows:

**Guiding Principle 2 – The Protection and Enhancement of the Environment in the District  
(Guiding Principle 2 (GP 2))**

- ❑ **'The high quality of the natural and built environment of the District will be protected and enhanced, and new developments will create attractive, high quality places.**
- ❑ **Historic features and important natural habitats will be preserved and enhanced**
- ❑ **The environment of the District will be planned and managed to support a high quality of life of residents and in particular to support and encourage healthy lifestyles.'**

**We think this Principle is important because:**

- promoting sustainable development means recognising (a) the importance of protecting the high quality of our countryside and the historic importance of many of our towns and villages and (b) our rich natural heritage
- The protection of our environment was consistently highlighted as a clear priority in all of the consultation that was carried out
- There is a need to strike a balance between providing for the development of housing, jobs and services and protecting and enhancing the environment
- An important way of achieving this balance is to make sure that all new development reaches the highest standards of design and layout. This will be particularly important in or near to our historic villages or on the edges of the towns where development could affect sensitive landscapes
- It is important to make sure that we protect and create open spaces to add to peoples' quality of life by providing formal and natural places in which to play and relax

**We think that this Principle must:**

- provide protection for the best of our countryside, landscapes and historic environments
- make sure the important natural habitats of the District are protected

- secure the highest standards of new development

**Possible alternatives and the reasons why they have not been chosen:**

The protection of the environment is at the heart of national planning policy and central to the promotion of sustainable development. The high quality of our own environment makes this principle of prime importance to our future community and planning strategies.

We think that there is no realistic alternative to the broad thrust of this principle, especially given the importance of the rural areas and our historic towns and villages to the character and future of our district.

However it will be possible to consider some changes to the wording to clarify or tighten it.

**THE THIRD GUIDING PRINCIPLE  
'DELIVERING THE DEVELOPMENT WE NEED'**

Our proposal for the wording of this Principle is as follows:

**Guiding Principle 3 – Delivering the Development we need  
(Guiding Principle 3 (GP3))**

- **Development will be promoted that contributes towards the requirements of the East of England Plan, especially with regard to:**
  - **The delivery of 5,880 dwellings up to 2025 with a target of at least 35% being affordable**
  - **The promotion of local employment and appropriate economic development to contribute towards the 56,000 jobs in the 'rest of Essex'**
  - **The regeneration of key sites in the main towns and key service villages**
  
- **Development will be promoted and delivered that will secure the required services, facilities and infrastructure needed to support the growth in housing and the local economy**

**We think this is Principle is important because:**

- The East of England Plan says we should:
  - Provide for a minimum of 4,340 houses to be built in the District between 2006 and 2021 (about 290 a year)
  - Provide for another 385 houses per year to be built in the District after 2021
  - Make sure there is more affordable housing in the District. It says that a target of 35% affordable housing should be delivered
  - Contribute towards the creation of 56,000 jobs in the "Rest of Essex " (which includes Braintree, Chelmsford, Uttlesford and Maldon)
- To go with these houses and jobs, there will need to be a wide range of services and facilities provided and upgraded, such as shopping, local transport improvements, leisure, health and education.
- Our economy needs to be broadened to reduce commuting, and offer greater opportunities for local jobs in all parts of the District, but especially close to the proposed Growth Locations

- The District Council is keen to promote the regeneration of key sites in the main town centres and key service villages, to offer more local jobs, create better services and improve the environment.

**We think this Principle should:**

- Set out the need to meet the requirements of the East of England Plan
- Emphasise BDC's and the LSP's commitment to deliver more affordable housing, local jobs, a more diverse economy, the services and facilities that are needed, and the regeneration of important sites.
- Stress the need for development to be delivered in a sustainable way

**Possible alternatives and the reasons why they have not been chosen:**

The District has to plan for at least the level of growth set out in the East of England Plan, improve on its delivery of affordable housing and seek to promote the regeneration of key sites.

The delivery of the necessary services and facilities must be part of this growth.

We think that there are no realistic alternatives to this principle but minor changes to the wording could be considered.

## **Delivering the Vision**

The rest of this document sets out the draft proposals and choices which, if adopted and implemented, will ensure that we can effectively work towards realising the Vision and achieving the Objectives set out in this Part of the document.

It sets out the draft Community Priorities, details of the proposed Growth Locations and the draft Core Planning Policies in more detail together with details of potentially realistic and practical alternative options and the reasons why we are not suggesting some of those options.

## PART 4

### PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT

This part of the document focuses on our proposals for where the majority of new development will take place in the District between now and 2025 and what type of development it will be.

It includes:

- How the proposals have been arrived at
- Our overall proposals for where development should take place in the District (short-term and longer-term)
- Development and growth in the District in more detail
- Possible alternative Growth Location options and the reasons why they have not been chosen
- The proposed Growth Locations in Braintree and Witham – whereabouts will they be?
- The amount and type of growth proposed in the Growth Locations
- Possible alternatives to the amount and type of growth proposed

## How these proposals have been arrived at

### **The Guidance in the East of England Plan and how we are responding to it**

The East of England Plan gives clear guidance as to how development and growth should be distributed across the eastern region.

The guidance is particularly relevant to the Braintree District in relation to what it says about Market Towns, Key Service Centres and other smaller villages. The towns and villages in Braintree District meet the descriptions of the nature and roles of market towns, key service centres, and other villages as set out in the East of England Plan so we believe the general approach is right for us.

Our Strategy should follow this guidance unless there are good reasons for not doing so.

The East of England Plan requires us to provide a total of 5,880 new dwellings between 2006 and 2025.

Between 2006 and 2008, 1,281 new dwellings were built therefore leaving a requirement for 4,599 between 2008 and 2025.

We already have sites identified to meet most of the District's requirements.

In total our Urban Capacity Study identified potential land for some 4,813 dwellings however it is likely that not all of this will be built, so we need to identify additional sites.

Our estimate is that we will need to identify sites for an additional 1,600 dwellings to ensure that there is a continuous supply of building land. This estimate is based on more detailed information and calculations about the District's housing supply which are included in the Technical Supplement.

We are proposing that the requirement for the additional 1,600 dwelling be met by:

- Providing about 200 new dwellings in total on proposed mixed-use regeneration sites in Silver End and Sible Hedingham
- Developing the Growth Locations at Braintree and Witham to provide about 1,400 new dwellings in total.

Whilst our priority is to develop brownfield sites before the Growth Locations, earlier release of areas within the Growth Locations may be appropriate if it secures key objectives of this Strategy, such as the delivery of affordable housing, the release of employment land or the provision of key infrastructure.

## The 'Hierarchy of Place' in the Braintree District

We are therefore proposing to define the places in the District in order of size, function and importance as set out below. This "hierarchy" will guide where and what development will take place:

- **Main Towns (these are called "Market Towns" in the East of England Plan)**

The main towns in the Braintree District are:

- Braintree,
- Witham
- Halstead

We think that the Main Towns should be in that order of importance, to reflect their size, location and opportunities for future development.

- **Key Service Villages (these are called "Key Service Centres" in the East of England Plan)**

The Key Service Villages in the Braintree District are:

- Coggeshall
- Earls Colne
- Hatfield Peverel
- Kelvedon
- Sible Hedingham and
- Silver End

We are suggesting no order of importance for these villages

- **Other Villages**

These are all the other villages in the District which are not Key Service Villages and that are currently defined by a "village envelope".

- **The Rural Areas**

All remaining villages or hamlets are too small or isolated to be defined for any future development. They should be considered to be in the rural areas for the purposes of future development.

The rural areas are the remaining villages and hamlets without development boundaries – and the countryside.

Development will be restricted to that which needs to be there and will not damage the environment.

**Possible alternatives and the reasons why they have not been chosen:**

The East of England Plan sets out a clear framework for the places in the region.

The towns and villages in the Braintree District fit this framework well. We think that there is no reasonable reason to deviate from it in our Strategy. However there may be case for looking at the Key Service Villages to see whether there may be more or fewer of them.

One or two, such as Steeple Bumpstead have most of the required level of services but are relatively isolated.

There may also be a case for removing a village from the Key Service Village list in the “cluster” around the south of the District.

It may also be possible to reconsider the definition of Other Villages. This may result in some being added and some deleted.

## **Our Proposals for where Development should take Place in the District (short-term and long-term)**

### **Developing in the short term (the next 10 years)**

Much of the development that we need to provide for housing, jobs and services can be accommodated in the existing built up areas of the towns and villages in the short term:

- ***The Main Towns (short-term)***

Our evidence shows clearly that there are enough suitable sites already defined or approved in the three Main Towns for housing (about 4,000 sites in total) and that there is enough employment and some services (shopping, leisure, education etc.) to meet the needs of the District for at least the next ten years at current building rates.

This period could well be extended if the market downturn continues.

- ***The Key Service Villages (short-term)***

There are about 800 housing sites available in the Key Service Villages and these will make a significant contribution to the overall housing provision for the District over a similar period.

They will also help to support key services in those villages. There are also some key employment sites that will be available for redevelopment in the near future.

- ***The Other Villages (short-term)***

There will be opportunities for suitable development in the Other Villages that provide affordable housing, local jobs and contribute towards keeping local services viable.

- ***The Rural Areas (short-term)***

National and regional policies severely restrict new development but there may be rare occasions where it may be justified to serve a particular need.

### **Developing in the Longer Term (up to 2025)**

- ***Building on Greenfield Land***

In the longer term (up to 2025) we will need to plan to meet the East of England Plan requirements for more housing, employment and services than can be accommodated in the existing Main Towns or Key Service Villages.

We are suggesting that this is done by locating development on some 'greenfield land' (ie. land which has not been developed or built on before) but focussing that development on the edges of urban areas.

We are calling these places '**Growth Locations**'.

- ***When would these Growth Locations be developed?***

We expect that these developments will mostly be developed later in the plan period – as and when the sites in the towns are used up. This would also give time for us to plan for the infrastructure needed to support them.

However, there may a case for bringing some forward earlier if that would help to deliver important social benefits such as jobs, affordable housing, schools etc.

- ***What type of Development will be included in the Growth Locations?***

Where the new locations are being proposed for housing they should be mixed developments (ie. They include the services and facilities that will be needed by those living there together with, if possible, sites or areas where new local jobs can be provided).

They must also be planned to meet the highest environmental and sustainability standards.

### **Where should these Growth Locations be?**

Each of the three Main Towns has different potential for this type of growth.

- **Braintree**

Its central location in the District, good transport links, key role as the largest Main Town and service centre for the District with a surrounding landscape that would allow for significant potential for sustainable development and growth.

***We are therefore proposing Growth Locations at Braintree***

- **Witham**

Witham is a thriving town with good transport links and excellent local employment. The surrounding landscape has the potential to accommodate some sustainable growth.

***We are therefore proposing Growth Locations at Witham***

- **Halstead**

Although Halstead has many of the day to day services and facilities and access to local jobs that residents need, its growth potential is severely limited by sensitive landscape, lack of public transport and relative isolation in the north of the District.

***We are not therefore proposing any Growth Locations at Halstead.***

**We therefore think that:**

- Most new development should be concentrated in the main towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, but the Growth Locations should be at Braintree and Witham only.
- Apart from the identified Growth Locations, the open countryside between the Main Towns, Key Service Villages and Other Villages should be kept undeveloped.
- More limited development to serve the local area, or deal with specific local issues such as the regeneration of important sites, can be located in the Key Service Villages
- Limited development, which can be justified by local need, or to support local services, should be located in the Other Villages
- Development would only be acceptable in hamlets and the countryside where it would have clear local economic benefits, support needed services and promote local environmental quality.

Our preferred overall Spatial Policy Statement for the Braintree District for the period up to 2025 is therefore set out below:

<b>THE PREFERRED “SPATIAL POLICY STATEMENT” FOR THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ <b>‘To preserve and enhance the character of the rural heartland of the Braintree District, its countryside and villages, by supporting development that is needed to make settlements and the rural economy more sustainable and protect and enhance the environment.</b></li><li>□ <b>To concentrate the majority of new development and services in the Main Towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, at new Growth Locations at Braintree and Witham and in the Key Service Villages’.</b></li></ul>

## **Development and Growth in the District in more detail**

This part sets out the proposed key objectives for the future of each of the three Main Towns, the Key Service Villages and Other Villages.

### **Braintree**

Braintree will reinforce its role as the main town of the District by accommodating significant development and regeneration within the town and new housing, employment and services at growth locations around the periphery of the town. In particular:

- The potential for about another 2,100 dwellings in the urban area will be realised, subject to resolving flooding issues on some sites.
- The town centre will be upgraded by the regeneration of key sites to include shopping, public transport improvements and other services and environmental improvements.
- Growth Locations will be developed for a mix of housing, employment and services and facilities with due regard for its landscape impact, local access for traffic and to services, and waste water disposal.
- A new Business/Innovation park will be developed to complement the Skyline development near to the A120.
- The existing employment areas will mostly be retained, upgraded and/or expanded.
- A limited number of employment premises and sites which do not meet modern day business needs will be redeveloped for alternative uses.
- Opportunities should be taken to deal with local traffic problems, especially in relation to the A120, in the shorter term, perhaps linked to the growth locations.
- In the long term, the improvements to the Braintree-Marks Tey section of the A120 will be supported.

### **Witham**

Witham will accommodate significant development and regeneration within the town and new housing, employment and services at Growth Locations around the periphery of the town. In particular:

- The urban capacity for up to 1,300 new dwellings in its existing boundaries will be developed.

- Appropriate urban extension growth will be located to the north and south-west of the town
- The Newlands Centre area will be upgraded
- The Maltings Lane development to the south west of the town centre will be completed
- A large local employment area that has good transport links will be expanded
- Health facilities are limited and will be improved
- Schools will benefit from expansion and/or rationalisation (including the potential for Academy status) and there is a new primary school included in the Maltings Lane development

### **Halstead**

Halstead will remain as the major service centre for the north of the District, but will contain growth within its existing urban area.

- The urban capacity potential of over 500 new dwellings will be realised
- The expansion of existing employment locations and community services will be supported
- Town centre regeneration on land to the east of the High Street will be promoted and supported.

### **The Key Service Villages**

The Key Service Villages will be allowed to develop and evolve so they can continue to perform a useful role as local service centres for the surrounding rural areas and small villages, especially in the remoter parts of the District. In particular:

- Appropriate development in these villages will be supported and promoted, including the regeneration of specific and other partnership initiatives, to help secure their continued sustainability, make sure that jobs and services are kept and if possible improved, and their historic character enhanced
- Appropriate market housing to help support these services will be developed on suitable sites in the villages
- Affordable housing to serve local needs will be supported

## **The Other Villages**

Development within the Other Villages will be of a scale and type to cater for purely local needs.

Developments which deliver affordable housing, appropriate local employment and improvements to local services will be appropriate subject to their local impacts.

## **The Countryside**

The special character and attractiveness of the countryside will be protected, preserved and enhanced.

- Development will be severely restricted, unless it is necessary to support agriculture or other important parts of the rural economy and will be acceptable in the countryside.
- Environmental enhancement initiatives, including broadening public access and protecting / improving biodiversity will be supported and encouraged.

<b>Possible alternative Growth Location options and the reasons why they have not been proposed</b>
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There are a number of alternatives to the proposals set out above and they are considered in more detail below.

**Alternative Option 1: Focus all new greenfield growth at either Braintree or Witham instead of both.**

***Reasons for not proposing this Option:***

Although the amount of new development needed across the District is not large, focusing it all at one place could place undue strain on local services and other infrastructure.

Also both towns would benefit from injections of new development, including employment, town centre regeneration, and services that can serve the whole district to make it more sustainable.

**Alternative Option 2: Allow for some greenfield growth at Halstead**

***Reasons for not proposing this Option:***

The main constraints to greenfield growth in Halstead are its relatively isolated location and its high quality landscape setting.

Also the current levels of services are not as high as in Braintree and Witham.

There is also capacity in the town area to allow for significant growth of housing, employment, and regeneration.

**Alternative Option 3: Designate more or fewer Key Service Villages (KSV's)**

***Reasons for not proposing this Option:***

The Key Service Villages have been designated based on the guidance in the East Of England Plan. Other villages have almost as many facilities but are in isolated locations and may not be able to accommodate much development.

There is however a "cluster" of Key Service Villages in the south of the District so it may be possible not to define all of them as Key Service Villages. The potential for development in that village would accordingly be reduced.

We think that the balance of Key Service Villages is about right, but alternatives can be considered

**Alternative Option 4: Allow for a broader spread of development between the main towns and key service villages**

***Reasons for not proposing this Option:***

It would be difficult to achieve the overall sustainable development of the District if major growth were to be spread further away from the main towns.

However the Key Service Villages do provide many useful local services, so it would not be sensible to prevent development that would support or improve those services. But large amounts of housing would offset those improvements and would simply encourage more commuting.

Finally many villages are in sensitive countryside which would make fitting major new development in more difficult and have unacceptable impacts.

### **Alternative Option 5: Allow development to be spread overall across all of the villages**

#### ***Reasons for not proposing this Option:***

The same issues apply as for Key Service Villages, especially in relation to the provision of local services.

Spreading market housing thinly across the small villages would make them even less sustainable than at present.

This Strategy does allow for improvements to local employment, services and for affordable housing in the smaller villages where local need can be identified

### **Alternative Option 6: Allow no development in the other villages**

#### ***Reasons for not proposing this Option***

This approach would restrict the ability to meet defined local needs, especially in relation to employment, services and local affordable housing, which could add to the sustainability of those communities.

### **Alternative Option 7: Promote new settlements**

#### ***Reasons for not proposing this Option***

A 'new settlement' means a large-scale development, usually of 5,000 houses or more, which is separate from the Main Towns and Key Service Villages.

The government is currently promoting a series of these new settlements in the form of "Eco-Towns" but these are aimed primarily at 'growth points' or large brownfield sites where there are clear opportunities and requirements for major growth or regeneration and for them to be at least partly sustainable.

Two 'Eco-Town' bids local to the Braintree District were submitted to Government by private companies during 2008. They were partly within the Braintree District at Boxted Wood (mostly in Uttlesford) and Marks Tey (partly in Colchester).

The Government has now chosen its preferred locations for the new "Eco-towns", but neither of these locations was chosen.

Also submitted to the Council for consideration (but not as an Eco-Town) was a proposal for large scale development at Andrewsfield which adjoins the Boxted Wood site.

The rejection of the local Eco-Town locations by the government and the other two affected Councils – and the fact that the required growth targets in the East of England Plan can be met by easily developed and sustainable growth locations - reinforces the view that they and the Andrewsfield proposal should not be progressed.

The scale of growth proposed in the Braintree District will mainly be met on brownfield sites within the Main Towns and Key Service Villages. The overall scale of development required is not large enough to justify the development of new settlements

Finally a new settlement would make it much more difficult to provide for the necessary affordable housing and services that are needed to support the existing village communities in the District.

## **The Growth Locations in Braintree and Witham – whereabouts will they be?**

We have already proposed that the Growth Locations will be at Braintree and Witham. The purpose of this part of the document is to look in more detail at where approximately those locations will actually be.

We have tested out a number of possible broad locations around the towns which could be suitable for new growth.

To do this we looked at the following factors:

- **Landscape capacity** – The level to which landscape around the towns can absorb new development
- **Flood Risk** – Whether sites are in Flood Zones and at risk of flooding
- **Conservation** -the possible impacts on nature conservation and listed buildings
- **Transport and access**- future traffic impacts, public transport provision, and the ease of access to services and the town centres by footpaths and cycleways
- **Community and social needs** -how needs such as health, education etc can be met
- **‘Coalescence’ with nearby villages** – Whether the development would result in Braintree or Witham merging with nearby villages resulting in the loss of the individual identities of villages concerned.

Most locations score well on some factors and not on others, so we had to take an overall balanced view to decide on those to be put forward.

### **Growth Locations we have rejected**

Potential areas around Braintree and Witham have been rejected as Growth Locations for a number of reasons. These are:

- They are isolated or distant from the main urban areas so they are not as sustainable in terms of access to service and facilities for new residents. This is particularly true for the land outside the Braintree by-pass and land to the north-west of Witham and to the south of the A12 at Witham.
- There are large areas of sensitive landscape to the north and north-east of Braintree
- Access to the Braintree by-pass to the north, south and north-east of Braintree would be unacceptable to Essex County Council and the and the Highways Agency, and development to the south-east may prejudice the long term upgrading of the A120

On balance therefore, we think the most favourable locations for future growth are as follows:

#### **THE PROPOSED GROWTH LOCATIONS**

- **Land to the north-west of Braintree – off Panfield Lane**
- **Land to the west of the A131 at Great Notley**
- **Land to the south-west of Witham - off Hatfield Road**
- **Land to the north-east of Witham - off Forest Road in the parish of Rivenhall**
- **Land to the north-east of Witham (adjacent to Eastways / Waterside Park)**

Each of them are shown on the accompanying Plans.

They are all discussed in more detail in the next part of this document.

## The amount and type of growth proposed in the Growth Locations

Development in the Growth Locations will either be ‘mixed-use’ or ‘single-use’.

‘Mixed-use’ means that, because of the nature of the area, it should be used for a variety of purposes including housing, employment, community facilities and other development which may be needed to support the infrastructure

‘Single-use’ means that, because of the nature of the area, it should only be used for one purpose (ie employment)

### **Mixed-use locations**

We are proposing that development in the following Growth Locations should be mixed-use:

- Braintree – land to the north-west - off Panfield Lane
- Witham – land to the south-west - off Hatfield Road
- Witham – land to the north-east - off Forest Road in the Parish of Rivenhall

These locations are best related to the existing town areas so they lend themselves to the delivery of a sustainable mix of uses. However, each area will be different as they will cater for differing local needs and have different factors which will affect how they can be developed.

The Table below shows the approximate number of dwellings that we think are suitable for the mixed-use areas plus other uses which may be included.

<b>Proposed Growth Location</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Other potential uses</b>
Land to the north-west of Braintree – off Panfield Lane	500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment (15 hectares)</li> <li>• New Braintree College</li> <li>• New football stadium</li> <li>• Community facilities (including local shops)</li> <li>• Open space</li> </ul>
Land to the south-west of Witham - off Hatfield Road	600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community facilities (including local shops)</li> </ul>
Land to the north-east of Witham - off Forest Road in the parish of Rivenhall	300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community facilities (including local shops)</li> <li>• Open space</li> </ul>

### **Single-use locations**

The locations to the west of the A131 at Great Notley (12.5 hectares) and north-east of Witham (6 hectares) are proposed for employment use only.

This is because they are either not well related to the main urban areas for access to services or they are already closely linked to employment areas.

## Possible alternatives to the amount and type of growth proposed

### Growth Locations - Alternative Options - Housing

The Council could:

- Seek to provide more dwellings, provided they were in sustainable locations, were in accordance with the East of England Plan and that the required infrastructure could be provided. Additional provision would require further assessments of the proposed locations.
- Seek to provide for a lower level of provision, based on the current slowdown in the housing market and not needing to develop Growth Locations until after 2016 - or until there is a need to release land to meet the Government's requirement for a five year supply.
- Consider alternative growth locations, or the redistribution of growth, in Braintree or Witham. However we feel that the suggested locations offer the best balance of accessibility both for transport and to local services, with a minimum impact on the local environment.

### Growth Locations - Alternative Options - Employment

The Council could:

- Seek to provide for a higher annual level of employment development. An additional 4 hectares per year would require 76 hectares of employment land over the plan period. This would have highway implications at Braintree and Witham and would require further highway assessments for the proposed new locations. There may also be issues with the delivery of more land in terms of market needs.
- Seek to provide for a lower annual level of employment development by, for example, reducing the provision to 57 hectares (a minimum of 3 hectares per year through the plan period). This could be achieved by either:
  - reducing the Braintree provision by 9 hectares, or
  - by removing the proposed additional provision of 6 hectares north of Witham at Rivenhall and reducing the Braintree provision by 3 hectares.
- Promote an alternative location for the new business park north of the A120 at Braintree. Delivery may be more difficult due to complex land ownerships and there would be substantial landscape impacts, especially when viewed from the A120.

It would also reduce the undeveloped gap of land between Braintree and Great Notley.

## **PART 5**

### **THE PRIORITY THEMES FOR THE DISTRICT**

The Four Priority Themes are:

1. Promoting accessibility for all
2. Creating a clean and green environment
3. Achieving a prosperous local economy
4. Enabling everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle

These are all discussed in more detail in the rest of this document.

Each theme sets out:

- the proposed Community Priorities
- the associated planning issues and
- the proposed Core Planning Policies

**PRIORITY THEME 1**  
**PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL**

This part of the document sets out the proposed Community Priorities and the proposed Core Planning Policies in relation to the theme of 'promoting accessibility for all'.

It shows why they are important, how they have been arrived at, what will be done to address them and how we will measure what is being done.

**THE COMMUNITY PRIORITIES**

**Why this theme is important from a community perspective**

The result of the "Issues and Options" consultation was that 'Improving public transport' came first in the list of priorities.

The Braintree District representatives on the Essex Citizen's Panel said that public transport was one of the most important things in making somewhere a good place to live and that it was one of the things that most needed improving in the District

Public Transport has consistently appeared as high priorities in District-wide consultations over the past 10 years

**The proposed Community Priorities for this theme are therefore (in no order of priority):**

<b>Promoting Accessibility for All The proposed Community Priorities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>To ensure that key road and transport infrastructure and public transport improvements will have been made and that improvements will have been made to existing congestion hot-spot area</b></li></ul>

**THE CORE PLANNING POLICIES**

**Why this theme is important from a planning perspective**

Promoting and securing accessibility and an efficient transport network are one of the key features of achieving sustainable development.

Most people in the District now have access to a car, but many, often including those with the greatest need to access services and facilities (such the disabled and children), still need to use public transport to get around.

Putting most new development at the Main Towns and Key Service Villages and supporting local services in the smaller villages will help reduce car use and encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling which will also help promote healthy lifestyles.

This Strategy should give a powerful lead on those issues by stating how and where development will be located to make it most accessible to everyone, to promote the most sustainable forms of transport and set clear priorities for future transport delivery.

### **What are the main Accessibility and Transport issues for the District?**

- 82% of people own a car and most travel to work in one.
- At the same time, the reliance on the car needs to be reduced where possible, if we are to promote and deliver sustainability, reduce commuting, tackle the impacts of climate change, reduce congestion and help make us healthier
- At the same time 18% of people in the Braintree District do not have access to a car and rely on public transport (mostly provided by the private sector) or prefer to walk, cycle or are disabled. Almost 30 villages have less than one bus per week to their local centre, so many people rely on public or community transport or family and friends to get about and access the services they need.
- Braintree District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, has little direct control over the main transport networks because they are managed by the County Council, the Highways Agency and Network Rail.
- To support our economy, the main road network – and in particular the A12 and A120 – needs to be improved, and the Braintree branch line should be upgraded. However, any improvements will require either government funding and/or substantial private sector investment and are likely to be long term.
- Local road networks also need to be maintained and improved at key points to encourage more efficient local public transport, improve air quality, and reduce local congestion.
- If car use is to be reduced, congestion and pollution reduced, and healthy lifestyles encouraged, good high quality walking, cycling and local bus links need to be made between all parts of the towns and new developments.
- The design of streets and buildings is important, especially in our town centres and housing areas, in helping those who cannot get around easily.

**We think that:**

- The use of the car for local trips needs to be minimised as far as practicable, to reduce congestion, pollution, and promote healthier living
- Development should be located and designed to promote walking, cycling, and public transport above the car, and should also promote good standards of access for everyone.
- The main trunk road network and rail network should continue to be improved over the longer term for economic reasons.
- Realistic and viable alternatives to the car need to be promoted for long trips and commuting.
- Public transport in the rural areas needs to be improved, whilst recognising that the use of the car will still be necessary for many people.

**Our Proposed Core Planning Policies in relation to Promoting Accessibility for All  
(Proposed Core Planning Policy CS1)**

**Development, especially housing, employment, services and facilities will be:**

- **Focussed in accordance with the Spatial Policy Statement so it is fully accessible by a variety of modes of transport, in particular public transport, and to all abilities**
- **Located so as to reduce reliance on the private car to access local services and development which would or could significantly increase such use will be resisted.**
- **Designed to secure the minimisation of environmental impacts of travel, to conserve energy and reduce air pollution by limiting the growth in traffic and encourage alternatives to car use.**

**The following improvements to accessibility and the transport network will be promoted and/or secured.**

- **The maintenance and enhancement of the public transport network, and in particular access to and use of rail services serving the District.**
- **The promotion of community based alternatives to public transport, especially in the rural areas, by such initiatives as car pools, car sharing and voluntary mini bus services**
- **The greater use of sustainable transport and healthy lifestyles, including walking and cycling - by making those modes more integrated, accessible, safer and more attractive to use**
- **Necessary improvements to the national and regional road network where they would reduce safety problems, facilitate environmental enhancement, and support economic development.**
- **The provision of the appropriate levels of car parking required to service the main towns and key service villages, and the promotion of walking and cycling within these centres**

**Alternative Options which can be considered**

The proposed Core Planning Policy follows national and regional policy in promoting accessibility to secure sustainable development

The following could also be considered but would all be contrary to national and / or regional policies:

- Pursue a “business as usual” strategy in respect of the continued growth in car usage and such issues as parking policies. This would not contribute towards the overall sustainability objectives of this Strategy
- Make public transport, walking and cycling less of a priority. This would reduce the opportunities to promote healthy lifestyles and would give less support to our rural communities.
- Locate developments where they are less easy to access by public transport, walking etc. This would conflict with our proposed overall Spatial Policy Statement
- Not support improvements to the main trunk road and rail networks. This could also have an undesirable impact on the District’s economy.
- Include more detailed or specific wording to deal with issues in different parts of the District, or more detailed matters such as car parking standards and site layouts. More detailed policies, for example on the design of layouts and car parking standards, etc should be covered in later plans as should any issue of a purely local nature.

## PRIORITY THEME 2

### CREATING A CLEAN AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT

This Chapter sets out the proposed Community Priorities and the proposed Core Planning Policies in relation to the theme of 'creating a clean and green environment in the Braintree District'.

It shows why they are important, how they have been arrived at, what will be done to address them and how we will measure what is being done.

The evidence base for this theme is set out in the Technical Supplement to this document.

#### THE COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

##### Why this theme is important from a community perspective

We know the environment is important from a community perspective because of:

- The results of the 'evidence base' for the theme – details of which are set out in the Technical Supplement to this document.
- The results of our "Issues and Options" consultation. The main results were that:
  - The Braintree District representatives on the Essex Citizen's Panel said that the environment was the most important place in making somewhere a good place to live
  - 'Clean streets' came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the list of 'what makes the District a nice place to live' in the Best Value Survey of Braintree District residents in 2006
  - Increasing energy efficiency came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the list of priorities in the Issues and Options consultation exercises
  - The environment and standards of cleanliness in the District have consistently appeared as high priorities in District-wide consultation over the past 10 years

**The proposed Community Priorities for this theme are therefore (in no order of priority):**

#### Creating a clean and green environment in the Braintree District The proposed Community Priorities

- **To reduce the amount of waste being land-filled**
- **To ensure high standards of cleanliness**
- **To maintain the appearance of the District**
- **To protect and enhance its biodiversity**
- **To reduce our carbon footprints**

## **What we will do to address the priorities**

We will deliver the projects and actions in the Action Plan Supplement and continue to provide appropriate services to a high standard across the District.

## **How we will measure what we are doing**

We will know how well we are doing by setting robust targets in relation to the performance indicators which are set out in the 'One District, One Vision – Making it Happen - Action Plan Supplement' and measuring performance against those targets on an ongoing basis.

Regular monitoring reports will be presented to the Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership and reported publicly in a variety of different ways.

## **THE CORE PLANNING POLICIES**

### **Why this theme is important from a planning perspective**

The Braintree District is one of the most attractive and historic parts of Essex. The vast majority is rural, with high quality landscape, many green spaces, over 3,000 listed buildings and 39 conservation areas.

This local environmental quality contributes much to this part of Essex and to the region as a whole.

Balancing future development needs with the protection of these sensitive and often fragile environments will be a critical part of the task of promoting and achieving sustainable development and a high quality of life for everyone who lives in and visits the district.

The evidence base for this theme is included in the Technical Supplement

### **What are the Key Environmental Issues and Challenges For Our District?**

In light of the evidence base and the main points highlighted above, we think that the key issues and challenges for the Braintree District are:

- To make sure our extensive high quality countryside, wildlife habitats (including those of European importance outside the District), agricultural land, historic towns, villages and buildings are protected and enhanced for future generations
- To use the development needs of the District to enhance the environmental quality of our towns and villages, by creating attractive places, developments and green spaces, which will be valued and respected.

- To promote and secure the use of alternative energy sources, sustainable construction and urban drainage and water and minimise waste and pollution from all developments.
- To minimise flood risk, especially in relation to new housing developments.

**We think that:**

- Our extensive countryside, wildlife habitats, historic towns, villages and buildings should be protected and enhanced for future generations
- There is a need for all types of future developments to create attractive places which will be valued and respected
- Developments should be located away from flood risk areas or measures taken to reduce risk if required
- The promotion of alternative energy, sustainable construction, sustainable urban drainage and water and waste minimization should be supported as far as is practicable

In light of all of the above, we feel that the wording of the proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to the **natural** environment should be:

**Our Proposed Core Planning Policies in relation to the Natural Environment  
(Proposed Core Planning Policy CS2)**

**Our natural environment policy will be to:**

- **Protect, enhance and manage the quality and diversity of the natural environment and habitats of the District, especially those designated for their nature conservation value on the Proposals Map**
- **Avoid the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land**
- **Minimise the impacts of development on sites of European importance and meet the local recreational needs of the community by identifying, protecting, enhancing and managing the natural and informal open spaces across the District**
- **Ensure that developments (including the use of land) do not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment of the District and beyond from:**
  - **Air, noise, light and other types of pollution**
  - **Excessive use of water and other resources**
  - **The generation of waste**

In light of all of the above, we feel that the wording of the proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to the built environment should be:

#### **Our Proposed Core Planning Policies in relation to the Built Environment (Proposed Core Planning Policy CS3)**

**Our built environment policy will be to promote and secure the highest possible standards of design and layout in all new development, so as to:**

- **Respect and respond to the local context, especially in the District's historic villages, urban conservation areas and areas of highest landscape sensitivity**
- **Create environments which are safe and accessible to everyone, and which will contribute towards the quality of life in all towns and villages**
- **Secure the maximum possible use of:**
  - **renewable energy,**
  - **recycled and/or energy efficient building materials and design,**
  - **waste recycling facilities**
- **Be capable of meeting the changing future of occupiers, especially in housing developments**
- **Promote the sympathetic re-use of buildings, particularly where they make a positive contribution to the special character of the local environment, and can contribute to the delivery of sustainable development and regeneration'**

#### **Alternative Options which can be considered**

The creation and protection of high quality and safe environments are required by national and regional policies, so there are considered to be no realistic options to the main thrust of these policies.

However additional options for inclusion can be considered. Some options are set out below:

- **An option for the wording to take account of regeneration initiatives in the main towns and villages**  
The possible wording for this could be for example 'Promote and secure the highest standards of new development, especially where they would regenerate and upgrade the existing character of towns and villages'.
- **An option to make the Core Planning Policies more or less prescriptive**

National and regional policies cover many environmental matters and could be felt to be adequate. However the importance of our natural environment and local landscapes, built heritage and the District's desire to lead in sustainable development techniques, suggest that these matters should be given special local policy support and emphasis – possibly even being more prescriptive about the planning requirements.

This may particularly be the case in areas such as sustainable design and construction where market forces may not address them adequately.

## PRIORITY THEME 3

### ACHIEVING A PROSPEROUS LOCAL ECONOMY IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT

This Chapter sets out the proposed Community Priorities and the proposed Core Planning Policies in relation to the theme of ‘achieving a prosperous local economy in the Braintree District’.

It shows why they are important, how they have been arrived at, what will be done to address them and how we will measure what is being done.

The evidence base for this theme is set out in the Technical Supplement to this document.

#### THE COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

##### Why this theme is important from a community perspective

We know this theme is important from a community perspective because of:

- The results of the ‘evidence base’ for the theme – particularly in relation to the skills base in the District, out-commuting and the lack of high-skilled employment opportunities.
- The results of the “Issues and Options” consultation were that improving training opportunities (7<sup>th</sup>), providing local employment opportunities (8<sup>th</sup>) and improving educational facilities and skills levels (10<sup>th</sup>) all featured in the top ten priorities for the District in the Issues and Options consultation exercises
- Transport, skills issues and employment opportunities have also consistently appeared as high priorities in District-wide consultations over the past 10 years

**The proposed Community Priorities for this theme are therefore (in no order of priority):**

<b>Achieving a prosperous local economy in the Braintree District The proposed Community Priorities</b>	
•	<b>To increase opportunities for long-term inward business investment in the District</b>
•	<b>To increase basic skills levels and vocational training opportunities in the District</b>

## **What we will do to address the priorities**

We will deliver the projects and actions in the attached Action Plan Supplement and continue to provide appropriate services to a high standard across the District.

## **How we will measure what we are doing**

We will know how well we are doing by setting robust targets in relation to the indicators which are set out in the 'One District, One Vision – Making it Happen - Action Plan Supplement' and measuring performance against those targets on an ongoing basis.

Regular monitoring reports will be presented to the Braintree District Local Strategic Partnership and reported publicly in a variety of different ways.

## **THE CORE PLANNING POLICIES**

### **Why this theme is important from a planning perspective**

Maintaining a strong local economy is vital to the future well being of all who live in the District.

Local jobs are more sustainable and allow more of the money generated to be put back into the District's services and facilities.

Although the District is relatively prosperous, changes to the job market have left some people with little job choice and many still commute long distances. Also there are pockets of deprivation – some of which feature in the top 25% of deprived areas in the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Our four proposed key Core Planning Policy areas in relation to this theme are:

1. Developing the economy
2. Distribution of employment
2. The rural economy
3. Town centres and regeneration

Each of them is covered on the following pages.

## **1. Developing the economy**

This deals with the future development of the economy of the District. It sets out how this Strategy will meet national and regional policies and how the economy of the District itself will be supported.

### **What are the key economic issues and challenges for the District?**

- How to maintain our low unemployment rate but also reduce the growth in unsustainable out-commuting. There is a need to broaden the opportunities for a range of businesses, especially in the “knowledge based” and tourism sectors, and develop new land for employment. This may include the development of a new business / innovation and enterprise park adjacent to the A120 near Braintree.
- To deliver development that will contribute to the overall provision of 56,000 new jobs in the “rest of Essex” as set out in the East of England Plan. Our evidence suggests that we will aim to:
  - provide for up to 14,000 new jobs,
  - plan for a total of 66 hectares of employment land up to 2025
  - make sure we have enough for seven years development at any one time.
- To secure the regeneration of major sites in the Main Town centres and in some of the Key Service Villages as a key element of the Economic Development Strategy
- To retain and improve most of our existing employment areas but recognise that a small number may be more suitable for other uses. It is anticipated that the current review of the District’s Economic Development Strategy will identify key challenges in terms of sustainable job growth, skills training, workforce development, and also confirm that some employment sites are no longer “fit for purpose”.
- Braintree is a very rural district and there is a need to provide more local job opportunities for those living in the small towns and villages if there is to be a move towards more sustainable employment.
- To make sure that delivering job growth is balanced with protecting the environment.
- How to recognise and accommodate the growing trend for businesses to be started as “working from home”, especially in the rural areas
- How to maximise the potential for redevelopment and regeneration of the town centres and some key service villages.

## **We think that:**

- we need to plan to deliver up to 14,000 new jobs in the District between now and 2025 across a broad range of the economy (this is covered in more detail in the following Section of this document)
- the regeneration of sites in the main town centres and in some of the Key Service Villages should be a key element and priority of the Economic Development Strategy
- most existing employment sites and allocated employment land need to be safeguarded, but some employment premises which are no longer fit for purpose could be allocated for a range or mix of other uses, such as residential, leisure and community services and facilities.
- there is a need to develop a specialist business / innovation park between now and 2025
- we need to encourage new businesses to start up and flourish from home if at all possible, especially in the villages.

### **The Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to the Development of the Economy of the Braintree District (Proposed Core Planning Policy CS4)**

**The economy of the District will be developed and managed so as to :**

- **Broaden the opportunities for business and secure the delivery of employment land in the District by:**
  - **seeking to redress the historic imbalance between housing and employment development,**
  - **maintaining high levels of local employment,**
  - **establishing a flexible and broadly skilled workforce and**
  - **taking measures to reduce out-commuting**
- **Protect and enhance key existing tourist and visitor facilities and infrastructure, whilst also promoting suitable new tourist development in appropriate locations, in order to increase the range, quality and type of facilities available**
- **Promote sustainable economic development by encouraging appropriate home working.**
- **The diversification and strengthening of the rural economy will be promoted by supporting a range of appropriate employment opportunities subject to the criteria in Core Planning Policy CS2 – The Natural Environment**

## **Alternative Options which can be considered**

There are potentially three alternative policy approaches which may meet national and regional policies.

- 1 The Council could provide for a lower annual level of employment development by, for example, reducing the provision to 57 hectares (a minimum of 3hectares per year through the plan period). This could impact on the proposed locations at Braintree at Witham. However this would not help in achieving a more effective balance of houses to jobs nor help reduce out-commuting. Also it would not help to deliver the main objective of the Core Planning Policy which is to broaden the local economic base.
- 2 It could seek to provide for a much higher level of job growth than is proposed. However it may be unrealistic for the plan for Braintree District to try to match the level of growth set out in the East of England Plan for Chelmsford and Colchester. It may also have unacceptable impacts on our environment and local transport networks.
- 3 Changes to the emphasis or detail of parts of the Core Planning Policy could be considered.

## **2. Distribution of Employment**

A recently completed Employment Land Review (ELR) of the District concluded that sites in current or recent employment use should be retained unless the site or location is unsuitable for modern standards of development or that it would be a bad neighbour to adjacent sites.

The ELR recommended that:

- provision should be made for an additional 3 to 5 hectares of employment land per year throughout the plan period
- there should be an allocation of specific sites sufficient for 7 years development (ie 21 to 35 hectares) at all times
- that consideration should be given to the designation of a new business park close to the A120, in the vicinity of Braintree, to provide for new demand generated by airport related and other expansion at Stansted.

A report commissioned by the Council by Cambridge Econometrics set out three different scenarios for the District's future which concluded that the future number of jobs required in the District between 2005 and 2025 could range from 11,000 to 14,000.

The District Council aims to ensure that there is enough land provided for employment to:

- broaden the opportunities for business
- secure the delivery of up to 14,000 jobs
- provide opportunities for local employment which could reduce the level of out-commuting.

In 2007 there were 32.5 hectares of vacant employment land in the District already allocated for employment development in the following locations:

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Vacant / Allocated Employment Land Area (Hectares)</b>
Braintree	3.0
Great Notley	7.8
Witham	14.5
Halstead	3.6
Sturmer	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.5</b>

The provision of a minimum of 3 hectares of employment land throughout the plan period (as recommended in the ELR), would require a total of 57 hectares of employment land to be allocated, of which 32.5 hectares has already been identified (as shown in the Table above).

However, the District Council intends to ensure that there is some flexibility in the provision of employment land (in case some sites are slow in coming forward) by

providing 66 hectares of employment land over the plan period (ie the 32.5 hectares already identified plus an additional provision of 33.5 hectares in other locations).

The new allocations of 33.5 hectares of employment land will be made up of a 12.5 hectare Business Park (restricted to B1 and B2 uses) and 21 hectares of general employment uses. It is proposed that these should be located in the main settlements of Braintree and Witham, to be accessible by public transport and to try to achieve a more effective balance between the workforce and jobs.

An employment growth area is not proposed at Halstead because of its smaller population and community facilities, the high quality landscape constraining development around the town and the lack of good public transport links.

The District Council will monitor the take up of sites and phase the delivery of new sites to meet the need for a seven year supply (21 hectares) to be available at all times.

**We think that:**

- we need to plan to deliver up to 14,000 new jobs in the District between now and 2025 across a broad range of the economy
- this Strategy should plan for the development of a total of 66 hectares of employment land over the plan period
- most existing employment sites and allocated employment land need to be safeguarded, but some employment premises which are no longer fit for purpose could be allocated for a range or mix of other uses, such as residential, leisure and community services and facilities
- there is a need to develop a specialist business/innovation park between now and 2025
- To promote a sustainable economy for the District, it is important that employment land is located as conveniently as possible to where people live and to transport networks.
- Most employment land is currently at the main towns which achieves this aim.
- Major new employment land should also be located at the main towns of Braintree and Witham, where the Growth Locations are proposed and where there is the best access to the main highway network.

**The Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to the distribution of employment  
(Proposed Core Planning Policy CS5)**

**The Council and its partners will provide for the development of a minimum of an additional 33.5 hectares of land for employment development, which will be phased to ensure a continuous seven year supply.**

**The distribution of land and type of additional allocations of employment land between 2007 and 2025 are proposed at the Growth Locations as follows:**

<b>Growth Location</b>	<b>Type of Employment</b>	<b>Size (Hectares)</b>
<b>Braintree – land to the north-west off Panfield Lane</b>	<b>General employment</b>	<b>15.0</b>
<b>Braintree – land to the west of the A131 at Great Notley</b>	<b>Business Park B1-B2</b>	<b>12.5</b>
<b>Witham – land to the north-east off Eastways ( within Rivenhall)</b>	<b>General employment</b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>33.5</b>

**These Growth Locations are identified on the Key Diagram.**

**Possible alternatives and the reasons why they have not been chosen:**

- The location of new employment land is an integral part of the overall Spatial Policy for the District, including the Growth Locations, which is intended to deliver the most sustainable forms of development. Significantly different locations would be contrary to this strategy and would lead to a miss-match of jobs and housing.
- An alternative location for the new business park could however be north of the A120 in Braintree. This has the disadvantage of being in more than one land ownership, which might mean delivery is problematic. It would also reduce the strategic gap between Braintree and Great Notley.
- The District Council could seek to provide for a higher annual level of employment development. Land requirements based upon an annual provision of 4 hectares would require 76 hectares of employment land over the plan period. However, discussions with Essex County Council and the Highways Agency on highway impact have identified constraints to higher levels of employment development at Braintree and Witham. Additional provision would require further highway assessments in the proposed new locations.

- The District Council could seek to provide for a lower annual level of employment development by, for example, reducing the provision to 57 hectares (a minimum of 3 hectares per year through the plan period). The new provision could be reduced by either reducing the Braintree provision by 9 hectares, or by removing the proposed additional provision of 6 hectares north of Witham at Rivenhall and reducing the Braintree provision by 3 hectares.

### **3. The Rural Economy**

90% of the Braintree District is rural. We are therefore proposing a specific Core Planning Policy covering the rural economy.

The evidence base for this theme is attached in the Technical Supplement.

#### **What the main issues are for the District under this theme**

- How to secure a sound sustainable future for the rural economy whilst protecting the countryside environment.
- How to promote tourism in our historic villages and unspoilt countryside without damaging those attractions and features that we are seeking to promote.
- How to promote appropriate regeneration of suitable sites in the villages.
- How to manage appropriate rural employment on sites in the open countryside.
- How to promote appropriate home working.
- How to minimise the use of the car for rural employment.

#### **We think that:**

- There is a need to plan more positively for the rural economy and the provision of local jobs
- Whilst the countryside is sensitive, it is possible to accommodate many types of small business that will provide local jobs
- It may be necessary to accept that whilst access to many locations will be difficult other than by car, there are other sustainability factors that may be more important.
- There are opportunities on some key regeneration sites to redevelop for a mix of uses that would bring community, and environmental benefits as well as keeping some local jobs
- We should encourage appropriate forms of home working to promote local jobs.

**The Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to the Rural Economy of the Braintree District  
(Proposed Core Planning Policy CS6)**

**The rural economy will be supported by encouraging and facilitating developments which would give priority to:**

- **the appropriate re-use of suitable previously developed land or buildings where these are in appropriate locations for employment uses:**
- **Can be shown to help towards the promotion and viability of local farming enterprises, the diversification of agriculture and recreation uses appropriate to a countryside location**
- **Do not encourage unsustainable forms of travel, especially by large numbers of people, or would cause unacceptable impacts on the highway network**
- **Would respect and reinforce local character, and have acceptable impacts on the local and wider countryside environment.**

**Alternative Options which can be considered**

Two alternatives options could potentially be considered.

1. It would be possible to propose either a more strict or a less strict policy but either approach would risk being contrary to national and regional policies in terms of the potential impacts on the countryside environment, and the difficulties of achieving sustainable development especially in travel terms.
2. Specific policies for the rural economy could have been included in the Core Planning Policy in relation to the Promotion and Development of the Economy of the Braintree District as set out above. However, the importance and extent of the rural areas in the District suggest that a separate Core Planning Policy should be the preferred approach.

## **4. Town Centres and Regeneration**

This theme deals with the potential for economic, town centre and village regeneration in the District.

It sets out the broad and overarching priorities for employment and regeneration in the District and identifies where such priorities should be focussed.

### **The Priorities for Town Centres and Regeneration**

In assessing the priorities for employment and regeneration in the District, the regeneration of the Market Towns and Key Service Village centres is considered to be the highest priority, followed by securing the future of existing employment sites and allocations at the main towns, and the development of an Innovation and Enterprise Park at Braintree.

These priorities should deliver the most needed development and make significant contributions to the sustainability of the District over the life of the Plan.

These priorities are in line with Braintree District Council's stated strategy for regeneration.

We are suggesting that regeneration initiatives should be based around the following areas:

- Braintree Town Centre - the area east of the Town Hall Centre between Manor Street and Victoria Street
- Witham - the area around the Newlands Shopping Centre
- Halstead - the areas around The Centre, Weavers Court, and land to east of the High Street.
- Sible Hedingham - the Premdor site.
- Silver End - the former Crittall Works site.

**The Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to Town Centres and Regeneration  
(Proposed Core Planning Policy CS7)**

**Economic Development will be promoted and secured in accordance with the following broad priorities.**

- 1. The regeneration of key sites in the Main Town and Key Service Villages**
- 2. The safeguarding of existing employment sites**
- 3. The allocation and promotion of employment redevelopment areas**
- 4. The designation and development of new employment locations**
- 5. The allocation, promotion and development of a new innovation and enterprise park**
- 6. The promotion of mixed use developments**

**These priorities will be promoted and developed in accordance with the principles set out in this Strategy, and further detailed proposals and policies are set out in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Documents.**

**Supplementary Planning Documents may also be produced to set out the requirements for some sites in more detail.**

**Alternative Options that can be considered**

Our evidence suggests that the priorities set out above will best deliver the development we need to support the future economy of the District.

Alternative priorities may be to promote the development of the Innovation / Business Park ahead of town centre regeneration, or to promote the redevelopment of unsuitable employment sites ahead of other priorities.

However we think that that the overall advantages of securing the regeneration of key sites in the main towns and villages will have the most beneficial overall results. Also, the development of an Innovation / Business park will take some time to bring to fruition, so making that top priority might prejudice the regeneration initiatives by redirecting valuable and scarce resources.

Should proposals come forward for development in the allocated Employment areas, or for the redevelopment of Employment Redevelopment sites, they can be decided on their merits at the time without affecting the overall priorities set out.

There may also be as case for setting out more detailed polices for these priorities in the Strategy rather than leaving them to the later plans. However we think that this would only add bulk to the document and such details are better dealt with in either the Site Allocations or Development Control Documents to be produced later.

## PRIORITY THEME 4

### ENABLING EVERYONE IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT TO ENJOY A SAFE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

This part of the document sets out the proposed Community Priorities and the proposed Core Planning Policies in relation to the theme of 'enabling everyone in the Braintree District to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle'.

This theme deals with making sure that everyone in the District has the best possible access to the services they need. It covers the following five issues:

- Housing
- Health
- Education
- Leisure
- Community Safety

It shows why each of those elements is important, how they have been arrived at, what will be done to address them and how we will measure what is being done.

The evidence base for this theme is set out in the Technical Supplement to this document.

#### THE COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

##### **Why this theme is important from a community perspective**

##### ***Health***

The Braintree District faces a number of challenges in terms of health inequalities, with a clear gap in life expectancy between its best and worst off wards. There are forecast shifts in the make-up of the population which will present challenges across public services.

Due to the ageing population there is predicted to be an increasing prevalence of certain conditions and diseases such as respiratory disease, dementia, depression, stroke and mobility problems. This will increase demand for care and support services. Currently the District has the highest rate of older people using adult social care services in Essex and has the second highest number of carers known to social care.

Whilst Braintree District's population enjoys higher than average life expectancy, there is still a great deal of scope for improvement in health and well being. For example smoking and obesity are still widely prevalent, and only a minority of the population meets physical activity guidelines. These all pose a risk to the population's health.

The recommendations in the Mid Essex PCT's Public Health Report for 2008 are intended to support this work. They are:

- A more detailed analysis of the inequalities in life expectancy between different parts of the Braintree District should be carried out and its implications assessed
- The high rate of social care utilisation, and reasons for variations between different wards in the district should be explored
- The Local Strategic Partnership should have a clear, evidence-based plan to improve health and well being and reduce health inequalities, focusing on key topics that will make a difference (e.g. obesity, smoking, sexual health, drug and alcohol misuse, road injuries and deaths, leisure activities and antisocial behaviour)
- Action should be targeted in specific localities and at population groups with high levels of need to address inequalities. In particular, all or part of the Gosfield and Greenstead Green, Bocking North, Bocking Blackwater, Braintree Central, Witham Chipping Hill and Central, Witham North and Witham South wards. Relevant population groups include carers, migrant workers, travellers and older people.
- A joint understanding of the implications of the growing number of older people should be developed, along with an agreed approach to ensuring their health and well-being.

## **THE CORE PLANNING POLICIES**

### **Why this theme is important from a planning perspective**

One of the key parts of securing a sustainable, safe and healthy future for our District is making sure that the housing, services and facilities are provided in the right place and time to serve our residents and future growth.

We have said that the majority of growth should be in the Main Towns and Key Service Villages, so that is where the housing, services and facilities should also be located.

New housing will continue to be delivered by the market, but the issue of affordability remains to be tackled.

We have chosen the Growth Locations so as to be as convenient as possible to existing services, but new housing may mean that these will need to be improved or new ones provided.

At this stage many of these decisions have yet to be taken so we are not suggesting many firm proposals. We will work with our partners who provide the services to decide what will be needed.

The two main areas which may require such action are education and health, but policing, social services and leisure will also need to be considered as these are often mentioned by residents as concerns.

Our two proposed Core Planning Policy areas in relation to this theme are:

1. Housing (including affordable housing, special needs housing and creating high quality places to live)
2. Services and facilities

Each of them is covered on the following pages.

## 1. Housing

This part of the document covers the following housing related issues:

- The key issues for the District
- Affordable Housing
- Special needs housing
- Creating high quality places to live

### **What are the Key issues for the District?**

Although the market is slowing down nationally, the Braintree District is still delivering a good supply of new housing. It is important to make sure that the right sort of housing accommodation is built, and that it has the best access to the services and facilities that its residents will need.

We are proposing that the bulk of this housing will be in the main towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead at the Growth Locations and in the Key Service Villages.

As well as planning for the total number of houses, and where they should be built, the Government says we should also plan for a range of house and tenures (owned/shared/rented) to cater for all who wish or need to live in the District.

Our Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), provides an up to date picture of what types of accommodation are needed and can be used to make sure that new developments offer a variety of accommodation to suit everyone's needs.

Braintree will be working with partners in the Haven Gateway to undertake a viability study of the sub-regional housing market.

### ***We think that:***

- The private housing sector will continue to deliver sufficient amounts of new dwellings in the District over the life of the plan to more than meet the current requirements set out in the East of England Plan
- That the regular reviews of the SHMA will provide a firm guide as to the types of housing that should be built in the future.

### **Affordable Housing**

The rapid rise in house prices over recent years has meant that a growing number of people cannot afford to enter the housing market.

Despite the current slowdown in the housing market, there is a growing problem of "affordability" nationally, so the East of England Plan says we have to put in place local policies to deliver a supply of "affordable housing" as part of their overall housing strategy.

The SHMA also confirms the need for much more affordable housing in the District.

### **Affordable housing targets**

The East of England Plan also sets out a target that at least 35% of new dwellings across the region must be affordable housing but it allows for local targets to be set where justified. There is a case for seeking a higher target in the District.

Our current policy for affordable housing provision is 30% of total dwellings in new developments of 15 dwellings or more, or sites of 0.5ha or more. Because we have many small housing sites in the District, there is no affordable housing currently being provided on a large number of sites.

We think therefore that the current 15 unit threshold should be significantly lowered. However, care must be taken not to discourage market development, especially in the current climate, as this could simply stop many sites being developed at all.

### **Options for a new affordable housing policy**

#### ***On-site provision***

We are putting forward a number of options at this stage for comment that represent different balances of thresholds that may be applied. These are:

- A threshold of 3 dwellings or 0.1ha with a percentage of 35% affordable
- A threshold of 5 dwellings or 0.2ha with a percentage of 40% affordable
- A threshold of 10 dwellings or 0.3ha with a percentage of 45% affordable

Our preference is for a threshold of 5 dwellings or 0.2ha with a percentage of 40% affordable. However, it will be necessary to undertake a viability assessment in order to ensure that sites can come forward for development.

The Growth Locations developments, which will be needed to supply housing later in the plan period, can be planned from the outset to deliver a higher proportion of affordable housing, so we will be seeking thresholds that will deliver that objective.

#### ***Alternative provision***

Where affordable housing is located is also important. Ideally it should be on the same site as the market housing, but this may not always be possible to achieve.

However whilst alternative sites can be considered acceptable, it is important that all practical on-site alternatives are fully explored before off-site provision is made. This “stepped” approach could include:

- The developer bidding for the required funding
- Alternative tenure splits
- Alternative mixes of units

## ***A tariff contribution from very small sites***

All these options relate to sites above 3 units as this is the lowest threshold where providing an affordable house on site is realistic and likely to be viable. However there are many sites that are below that size and it would be equitable for all housing developments to contribute to affordable housing in some way.

The use of a tariff to secure funding from all sites would help in delivering the maximum amount of affordable housing across the District. This may be a potentially useful approach in the villages where small sites make up the majority of developments.

The detail of such a tariff would require to be worked out, but it could take the form of a “one –off” payment per unit, or a sliding scale depending on the number of units being developed.

### **We think that:**

- The current policies for affordable housing need to be altered to provide for much higher amounts to be delivered over the plan period
- The threshold should be a combination of threshold/site area/percentage to deliver the most affordable housing over the plan period and that this should be a higher requirement for the new Growth Locations
- A “stepped” approach to delivery will give flexibility and help secure maximum provision on site
- The tenure split should normally be 70% rented and 30% intermediate tenure (although alternatives may be acceptable to achieve maximum delivery on site) and all units will be required to meet the space, sustainability and adaptability standards required by the Housing Corporation for rented homes.
- The option of a tariff to secure a contribution from all sites below the size threshold in the policy should be fully considered and assessed.
- A “toolkit” setting out the economic assumptions which will form the basis for all affordable housing negotiations would be of value and could significantly reduce the amount of time taken and the cost of such negotiations.

## **Special needs housing**

### ***Gypsies and Travellers***

At the time of drafting this document, an East of England study indicates a requirement for an additional 16 pitches within Braintree District before 2011 and a further 17 pitches between 2011 and 2025. This requirement has still to be approved by Government.

We need to include a policy for gypsy and traveller sites in this Strategy to deliver the requirements of the East of England Plan.

### ***Travelling Show People***

There is also a Government requirement to meet the needs of this group. A study to identify their needs is currently being undertaken across Essex.

### ***Other groups with special housing needs***

Groups of people who may be included in this category are the elderly, people with disabilities, some key workers and some types of families with children. They all need access to services and so should be living in places where these are, or will be, easily accessible.

People with disabilities and elderly people often have particular needs and even many recently built houses cannot accommodate wheelchairs, lifts etc. This is now recognised by Government as a legitimate planning issue, so it is proposing that the Lifetime Homes Standard will become mandatory for all new housing by 2011 and for all housing to meet the standard by 2103.

Although it is sometimes difficult to meet all the standards in all developments, the Council thinks it should be seeking to bring forward the standard as soon as possible in all new housing.

### **We think that:**

- All housing for all special groups can and should be located in areas where access can be easily obtained to key services and facilities
- All residential developments should be flexibly designed to enable them to be adapted for use by all ages and sectors of the community.

### **Creating high quality places to live**

The creation of high quality places to live is a key objective of national planning policy.

Good, practical design, both in the look of housing and its layout, looks attractive and encourages people to value the place they live, leading to less vandalism and crime. Also it will be critical to the overall quality of the environment in the future.

Density (ie. the number of dwellings on a site) can have a significant impact on the quality of new housing. Higher densities do not necessarily mean low quality, and in fact many of our older town areas and villages are built to very high densities.

Low densities mean that more land has to be used to deliver the housing we need, putting pressure on our valuable and attractive countryside. A balance has

to be struck between the two, so setting absolute density targets is not likely to be the best way of getting the best quality housing in all locations.

Good design also means making sure that housing is as accessible as possible to all the services, jobs and facilities that residents need.

**We think that:**

- Securing high quality housing design and layouts is an essential part of protecting the overall environment of the district, promoting social inclusion and securing sustainable communities.
- Density should depend on the character of the area and the types of development being proposed, but that practical issues of day to day living should be taken into account when schemes are designed and approved.

**The Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to Housing Provision and Delivery  
(Proposed Core Planning Policy CS8)**

**Provision will be made for dwellings between 2006 and 2025 in accordance with Policy H1 of the East of England Plan**

**These dwellings will be located in accordance with the Spatial Policy for the District:**

- **in the urban areas of Braintree, Witham and Halstead**
- **in the Key Service Villages**
- **in new mixed-use Growth Locations to be developed when required at Braintree and Witham**
- **In small scale developments in other defined settlements to cater for local needs affordable housing or as appropriate infilling**
- **As part of mixed use developments in the identified regeneration areas**

**All sites, apart from Exception Sites for affordable housing will be defined on the Site Allocations DPD Proposals map**

**In all these areas, provision will be made for a range of different dwelling types and sizes to meet the identified housing need for all sectors of the community**

**Affordable housing will be directly provided by the developer within housing schemes on the following basis:**

- **A threshold of 5 dwellings or 0.2 hectares with a percentage of 40% affordable. Where this requirement is shown not to be feasible, developers must examine fully all alternative ways to deliver the same amount of affordable housing on the site**
- **Exceptionally, off-site provision may be acceptable if on-site provision is shown to be unviable or otherwise impractical**
- **On sites below 5 dwellings a tariff will be charged to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing across the District.**

**Provision will be made for sites in suitable locations to cater for:**

- **gypsies and travellers and**
  - **travelling show people**
- which meet the currently defined local need of the District.**

**New housing will be designed so that:**

- **Densities will be appropriate to the character of the location / settlements concerned. Higher densities will be appropriate in the main town centres and those Key Service Villages where it would reflect and complement the character of that settlement**
- **High quality, practical and sustainable living environments will be created**
- **In the Growth Locations, local employment opportunities, open space and day to day services can be provided or secured nearby**
- **High-quality non-car access links are provided to the main local services and employment areas**
- **Affordable housing will be an integral part of the overall development and all dwellings can meet the challenging needs of occupiers**

## **Alternative Policy Approaches**

### ***The location of new housing***

The alternative spatial distribution scenarios for development across the district as a whole have been set out in the Spatial Policy.

The approach set out in the Housing Delivery Strategy Preferred Wording accords with both the Spatial Policy and national and regional policies.

### ***Affordable housing***

The criteria set out in the policy have been chosen to deliver the maximum amount of affordable housing during the plan period, given the characteristics of many sites and viability issues. However there are alternative balances that could be struck between capacity and % contribution that may make such provision more viable for developers in the shorter term. In the longer term however we feel that adjustments can be made to costs to take account of the new criteria.

### ***Making high quality places to live***

The creation of high quality places to live is a requirement of national and regional policy. Making the highest quality places to live should be a key part of our strategy. We think that there is no realistic alternative to this approach.

The requirement to make affordable housing meet higher space standards could be removed, but this would be contrary to the evidence that this is an issue for many residents.

## **2. Services and Facilities**

This part of the document looks at existing services and facilities and how the demands for new ones will be met.

### **Key Issues for the District**

- How to make sure that the services and facilities are developed to support growth in the Main Towns and Key Service Villages. Education, health, social services and policing are of most concern to residents.
- How existing services and facilities can be retained in the rural areas, where only 45 % of villages overall have a post office, 41% a village school and 23% a doctors surgery (2008 Rural Survey).
- How to protect and improve where necessary, the access to sporting and leisure facilities and open spaces across the District. The Councils new Green Spaces Strategy sets out proposals for this important area.
- How to make sure that the services and facilities are funded and secured so that they are delivered where and when needed.

This document can seek to achieve the above objectives in four main ways.

#### **1. *By defining locations for new or expanded services and facilities***

The Growth Locations will provide opportunities for the development or relocation of a number of services and facilities to serve both the District and the local area.

- **Land to the north-west of Braintree – off Panfield Lane**  
A new football stadium, college campus, open space, health centre
- **Land to the south-west of Witham - off Hatfield Road**  
Community facilities, open space
- **Land to the north-east of Witham - off Forest Road in the parish of Rivenhall**  
Open space

#### **2. *By promoting Partnerships for delivery:***

The main public service providers will be fully aware of the future development and community requirements of the District. They will work together to ensure that the right type and scale of services and facilities which will be needed are included in their own future development and funding plans.

#### **3. *By securing funding:***

Although the main public service providers have large budgets they cannot deliver everything that is needed themselves. The Strategy should therefore put in place policies that will secure funding from developers.

We set out our specific proposals for this in Part 6 of this document (Delivering the Strategy).

Some facilities such as private health care and fitness centres, golf courses, and town centre leisure venues are often provided by the private sector as purely business development ventures. This Strategy can offer support to such developments, provided they fit into the overall framework for the District.

#### ***4. By protecting existing services and facilities:***

There are many smaller and locally provided services and facilities that are valuable parts of the local community fabric and promote sustainable lifestyles across the District.

This Strategy can both support proposals for improvement or expansion of specific facilities, or resist proposals that would result in their being lost if no suitable alternatives are available.

However it must be recognised that not all facilities can be kept open especially if they become unviable through lack of trade or use or are simply not needed any more.

This Strategy can also positively encourage innovative approaches by organisations which can offer help and support to local services or businesses by making clear that it is an important priority to retain and / or improve them.

#### **We think that:**

- This Strategy should ensure that the new or expanded facilities and services which are needed to serve the growth of the District are provided in the right place and at the right time.
- It is important for the Strategy to protect existing services and facilities, especially in the villages, as far as is realistically possible.

## **The Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to Services and Facilities (Proposed Core Planning Policy CS9)**

**The Council will work with partners, service delivery organisations and the development industry, to ensure that the services and facilities required to provide for the future needs of the community (including health, education, policing, sport, the arts, and local community facilities) are delivered in a timely, efficient and effective manner.**

**Provision will be funded by:**

- **the delivery body concerned**
- **the community infrastructure levy or**
- **the Council's own standard charges through legal agreements**

**So as to be as widely available as possible, the provision of major services and facilities will be directed, as appropriate, towards the Main Towns, regeneration areas, Key Service Villages and Growth Locations as set out in the spatial policy**

**In the Other Villages and Rural Areas, services and facilities will be supported, developed and located to meet the defined needs of each settlement or the immediate local area.**

**The loss, or significant reduction of, existing services and facilities will be resisted unless:**

- **there is sufficient evidence that they are no longer viable or needed or**
- **satisfactory alternatives are available.**

### **Alternative policy approaches**

The Core Strategy is required to be a major vehicle for the delivery of the services needed by the community.

Whilst the emphasis and wording of the policy can be debated, especially in relation to the villages, rural areas, and the need to replace the loss of facilities, it is considered that there is no realistic alternative to the overall thrust of the policy as set out.

In particular, the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy will make the delivery of such services and facilities central to the planning system and to the achievement of sustainable communities. .

Not to secure such delivery would therefore be contrary to current national, regional, LSP policies, and this Council's own corporate strategies.

## PART 6

### DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

This Part of the document shows how the different elements of this Strategy and the associated Community Priorities and the Core Strategy Planning Policies will be successfully delivered.

It follows the structure of the rest of this document and therefore covers the following issues:

- Planning for future growth in the District
- Promoting accessibility for all
- Creating a clean and green environment
- Promoting the local economy
- Enabling everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle

#### Planning for future growth in the District

This covers delivery of the Spatial Policy and the Growth Locations.

All developments of any size will require planning permission from Braintree District Council so it will be relatively straightforward for the Council to make sure that the Strategy is followed.

Other more detailed planning documents will be prepared by the Council as part of the LDF development process and these will contain more detailed policies which will supplement the Core Planning Policies in this document.

Many of the developments that will be needed to make the strategy work in practice will be the responsibility of a wide range of bodies. These bodies will have to make sure that their own plans include the necessary projects to bring about the proper delivery of the Strategy.

Taking forward the Growth Locations will require a similar proactive effort from the Council, public and voluntary sector partners and developers to deliver the sort of sustainable development needed and required by national and regional policies. The objective of creating mixed developments that have strong links to the existing town centres, services, local jobs and leisure facilities makes such joint initiatives essential.

At this stage it is not possible to set out the precise requirements for each area as this will be decided at the next stage of the LDF process. However it is likely that some or all of the following will be needed.

- Highway improvements (extended roads and new /improved junctions)
- New or extended public transport services
- Extended and new footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways.
- New or upgrading water, sewage gas and electricity supplies.

- Local shops, health care, education and community facilities including open space (the extension or upgrading of existing local facilities may be acceptable depending on the site and the type/amount of development.)
- Some local job opportunities (there may be suitable employment sites nearby that could offer local jobs depending on the location of the site)
- Possible use of compulsory purchase powers

An infrastructure delivery plan is being developed to set out the infrastructure required to support the growth of the District, the funding required and potential funding sources and the agency or organisation responsible for delivery.

### ***Key Supporting Documents***

East of England Plan  
 SMAA  
 SHLAA  
 Housing Trajectory and AMR  
 Development control and site allocations DPDs

## **Promoting Accessibility for All**

### ***Key Supporting Documents***

To include:  
 Local Transport Plan  
 BDC Access to Services Strategy  
 BDC Rural Policy and Action Statement

## **Creating a Clean and Green Environment**

Many of the policies in the Strategy to protect and enhance the environment will be achieved through the planning control process. For example, the quality of new development, the protection of listed buildings or the securing of alternative energy sources for development can all be secured through that process.

The District Council is responsible for waste collection, recycling and keeping the streets clean. The delivery of these aspects of the theme are covered in its Corporate Strategy and annual Corporate Action Plan.

It also has responsibility for many open spaces and has an associated Green Spaces Strategy and Action Plan which addresses delivery and improvement

In addition, partnership working is ongoing to monitor and address the impact of climate change in the District. This is being taken forward on a partnership basis through the Essex Local Area Agreement

## Promoting the Local Economy

Economic development is likely to be a significant issue for delivery. The allocation of land in itself may well not be sufficient to ensure that the right jobs are delivered at the right place at the right time. More proactive initiatives may well be needed by Braintree District Council and its partners to secure such developments in the longer term. This could include land assembly, pump-priming the required services for the land and robust marketing.

In the rural areas, a flexible approach will be indeed to ensure that local jobs continue to be available, without harming the environment or promoting developments that are not sustainable.

Delivery of the Community Priorities will be set out in the [Braintree District Economic Development Strategy](#)

### ***Key Supporting Documents***

East of England Plan  
EERA Economic Strategy  
Braintree District Economic Development Strategy  
Braintree District Rural Policy and Action Statement

## Enabling everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle

### **Housing**

Most housing will continue to be delivered by the housing industry through the private sector market, and by granting planning permission for new developments on suitable sites.

An important consequence of the slowdown in the housing market is that the amount of affordable housing that can be delivered may be significantly reduced. This is because it depends on its delivery on cross subsidy from the private sector.

Delivery of appropriate housing as set out in this Strategy will be achieved through the application of the Core Planning Policies and the associated planning policies which will be developed at a later stage in the LDF process.

The Core Planning Policies recognise that there may well be issue with this delivery, so it has put forward as wide a range of options to achieve it as possible.

### ***Key Supporting Documents***

Development Control Policies  
Site allocations Development Plan Documents

Braintree District Council's Housing Strategy  
Braintree District Council's Homelessness Strategy  
East of England Plan  
Braintree District Strategic Housing Market Assessment  
Braintree Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment  
Housing Trajectory and Annual Monitoring Report  
Essex Local Area Agreement

### ***Health***

Mid Essex PCT and Strategic Health Authority Delivery Plans  
Health, Housing and Well-being Partnership Plan (to be developed)  
Essex Local Area Agreement

### ***Education***

Essex County Council – Early Years and Education Plan  
Essex County Council's Children and Young People's Strategy

### ***Leisure and Recreation***

Essex Local Area Agreement  
BDC Leisure Development Strategy

### ***Community Safety***

Braintree District Crime and Disorder Annual Partnership Plan  
Essex Police – Three-Year Strategy and Action Plan

## **Funding and Resourcing the Strategy**

### **Developer Contributions**

Contributions from developers through planning agreements (either through funding or in kind) will be a primary means of delivering many aspects of the Strategy including affordable housing, open space, transport and education facilities (this is called 'planning gain').

Such funding has been growing over recent years and there are now significant calls on developer funding for an ever wider range of planning gain. However securing this funding can involve lengthy and costly and sometimes does not deliver the required objectives.

A more robust and certain method of securing funding from development is being actively considered. The Government is currently promoting the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Many Councils, including Chelmsford and Colchester are favouring a "Tariff" approach.

Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages but could equally well be applied. Although any funding from development is unlikely to be welcomed by developers, a system that is both certain and fair is most likely to find favour.

**Other Key partners (insert table showing involvement of each partner to each theme)**

Braintree District Council  
Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency  
Town and Parish Councils  
Greenfields Community Housing and other Registered Social Landlords  
Other public and voluntary sector bodies and agencies  
Private sector developers  
Learning and Skills Council  
Essex County Council  
Essex Police  
Mid Essex Primary Care Trust

## APPENDIX 2

### GLOSSARY AND DEFINITIONS

#### Acronyms used:

Initials	What they stand for
BDC	Braintree District Council
DPD	Development Plan Document
ECC	Essex County Council
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
KSV	Key Service Villages
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LDF	Local Development Framework
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LTP	Local Transport Plan 2006-2011
PCT	Mid Essex Primary Care Trust
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment

**Explanations of some of the terms used in this Strategy:**

<b>Term used</b>	<b>What it means</b>
Brownfield site	
Community Priority	
Core Strategy	
Development Plan Documents	
East of England Plan	
Employment Land Review	
Exception Sites	
Greenfield site	
Growth Locations	
Issues and Options Report	
Key Diagram	
Key Service Villages	The Key Service Villages in the Braintree District are: Coggeshall Earls Colne Hatfield Peverel Kelvedon Sible Hedingham and Silver End
Lifetime Homes Standard	
Main Towns	The Market Towns in the Braintree District are Braintree, Witham and Halstead
Mixed development	
Other Villages	
Core Planning Policy	
Proposals Map	
Rural Areas	
Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment	
Settlement Strategy	
Site Allocation Development Plan	
Spatial Policy	
Statement of Community Involvement	
Sub-Region	
Urban Capacity Study	
Spatial	