

**Local Development Framework Sub-Committee
19th June 2012**



<p>Report on Proposed Additional Braintree Urban Area Sites for Inclusion in the Site Allocation and Development Management Plan</p>	<p>Agenda No: 6</p>
<p>Corporate Priority: Housing and transport meet local needs Report presented by: Eleanor Dash and Alan Massow Report prepared by: Eleanor Dash, Kathy Carpenter and Alan Massow</p>	
<p>Background Papers: LDF Panel Meeting Report and Minutes 6th February 2012, Notes of Braintree Ward Members Meeting 28.5.12. Braintree and Bocking Riverside Walk proposals for a town-wide recreational resource Nov 2011, amended Jan 2012. Planning Statement on Land between London Road, A120 and Pod's Brook Road Braintree 30.5.12.</p>	<p>Public: Yes</p>
<p>Options: To agree or not to agree to the recommendations set out in this report. To request additional information.</p>	<p>Key Decision: NO</p>
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This report sets out the housing requirement for Braintree urban area, the amount of land allocated to date and specifies the further amount required to be allocated. It discounts Edith Borthwick School as a potential housing allocation. It considers potential housing sites proposed at land adjacent to Fairacres, Church Lane, land east of Broad Road and land between London Road, Pods Brook Road and the A120.</p>	
<p>Decision:</p> <p>The report recommends that land between London Road, Pods Brook Road and the A120 should be allocated for housing and recreational uses within a revised town development boundary and that the other potential sites should not be allocated for development.</p>	
<p>Purpose of Decision:</p> <p>To allocate sufficient additional housing land within Braintree urban area to meet the needs for housing identified in the Core Strategy up to 2026.</p>	

Corporate implications	
Financial:	Costs of preparing the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan.
Legal:	The Site allocations and Development Management Plan will be the basis for future planning decisions.
Equalities/Diversity	The Council must allocate sufficient housing to meet the needs of the community.
Customer Impact:	Ensuring that there is an adequate supply of housing and infrastructure.
Environment and Climate Change:	Impact upon the proposed development sites.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Through consultation on the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan.
Risks:	That the Council will not provide enough housing for all sections of the community in line with national guidance set out in the NPPF.
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1. Housing Land Supply

1.1 The Core Strategy Policy CS1 Housing Provision and Delivery states that between 2009 and 2026 Braintree urban area requires a minimum housing provision of 1300 dwellings, plus the 600 dwellings allocated at the strategic growth location west of Panfield Lane. A total of 563 dwellings were built within Braintree urban area between 2009 and April 2012.

1.2 Of the outstanding residual housing requirement of 1337 for the period 2012 to 2026, the LDF Sub Committee approved draft allocations on 6.2.12 totalling 314 dwellings, sites with planning permission total 432 dwellings and the Core Strategy growth location totals 600 dwellings. This leaves a small surplus of 9 dwellings over the requirement of 1900 dwellings in Braintree urban area, as shown in the following table.

**Braintree Housing : supply identified to date
(Provisional April 2012 figures and taking into account draft housing allocations
agreed as at April 2012)**

	Core Strategy Requirement 2009-26	Built 2009-11	Built 2011-12 draft	Built 2009-12 draft	Residual to build 2012-26 draft	Outstanding with permission at 2012 draft	Growth Location	Draft Allocation agreed to date	Balance to find
Bocking Blackwater		2	23	25		17		12	
Bocking North		99	17	116		28		31	
Bocking South		35	4	39		37		19	
Braintree Central		98	41	139		132		123	
Braintree East		13	9	22		6		129	
Braintree South		148	56	204		206		0	
Great Notley		4	0	4		6		0	
Stilemans Wood Crossing		5	9	14		0		0	
Total	1900	404	159	563	1337	432	600	314	-9

1.3 However, several large sites which have been allocated within the Braintree urban area are likely to be slow in coming forward for development. These include the following draft housing allocations approved by the LDF Sub Committee:-

Braintree Football Club	50 dwellings (Only available after club has relocated)
Braintree Tennis Club	35 dwellings (Only available after club has relocated)
Kalestead Works	14 dwellings (Works currently operational)
Kwik Fit	20 dwellings (Business currently operational)
Total	119 dwellings

1.4 It would be advisable therefore for the LDF Sub Committee to allocate land for at least a 100 further dwellings, to ensure that sufficient sites are available in the Braintree urban area. Members of the LDF Sub Committee had agreed on 6.2.12 that all housing sites in Braintree and Bocking put forward by landowners/developers, and not specifically BRC7E (Land between London Road, A120 and Pod's Brook Road, Braintree), BON7 (Land at Highfield Stile Farm, Braintree) and BON9 (Land at Straits Mill, Convent Lane, Braintree), as recommended in the report, should be investigated to assess their suitability for development.

2. Potential Additional Housing Sites

2.1 In accordance with this request, the previous report on this agenda considered the site proposed by Abbeyfield: BON5 land at Polly's Field off Church Lane, Bocking.

2.2 This report assesses the suitability of the following sites in the Braintree urban area:-

- The Edith Borthwick School, Bocking
- Land adjacent to Fairacres, 76 Church Lane BOS2
- Land East of Broad Road, Bocking BON7 and BON9
- Land between London Road, Pods Brook Road and the A120 BRC7E

Member Views

2.3 Local Ward Members for the Braintree urban area were consulted on the suitability of these potential further housing sites at a meeting held on the 28th May 2012. Feedback from this meeting is set out in the report.

3. Edith Borthwick School

3.1 Government funding has recently been awarded to the Edith Borthwick Special School, currently located adjacent to Bocking Church Street Primary School, which will enable them to move to new premises in Braintree. However, Essex County Council officers have stated that the relocation of the Edith Borthwick School will not provide any potential land for housing as their current site will be required for the future expansion of Bocking Church Street Primary School.

4. Land adjacent to Fairacres, 76 Church Lane (BOS2)

Site representations put forward by landowners/developers:

Sites	Details
BOS2	Land adjacent to Fairacres, 76 Church Lane, Bocking (0.61ha) - Proposed Residential Development

- **Braintree (Bocking South) – Map 6 – Location Plan.**
- **Braintree (Bocking South) – Map 7 – Aerial Photograph.**

See Appendix 1.

Ward Member Views:

4.1 Inclusion of this site would not lead to a logical line of development and would result in piecemeal development. Concerns whether development of this site would move the development boundary into the flood plain. Inclusion of BOS2 was not supported by Ward Members.

Officer Comments

4.2 BOS2 – This site off Church Lane is 0.9ha in size and has been proposed for residential development. It is currently a field with a number of trees along

the site frontage, which are protected by a group tree preservation order (TPO). This would constrain development on the site frontage. None of the site lies within an area at risk of flooding. The trees and hedgerow on this site frontage make an important contribution to the landscape character of Church Lane. Development along this part of Church Lane is confined to frontage development, not development in depth. The loss of this group of trees and development in depth would be detrimental to the rural character of the Blackwater Valley.

4.3 In terms of planning history, an appeal for residential development (78/00977) was dismissed on the grounds that material harm would be caused to the existing division between the existing residential area and the attractive landscape of the valley as well as being detrimental to the rural nature of Church Lane.

4.4 There is an existing access to the site, however it is a narrow single track and it would be difficult to improve sufficiently for a wide enough access and suitable visibility splay without compromising the group TPO along the front of the site.

Recommendation

It is recommended that land adjacent to Fairacres, 76 Church Lane, Bocking BOS2 is not identified for residential development and the development boundary remains unaltered in this location.

5. Land East of Broad Road, Bocking BON7 and BON9

Site representations put forward by landowners/developers:

Sites	Details
BON7	Land east of Broad Road and north of Convent Lane in the area of Highfields Stile Farm. Proposed for 150 new homes plus proposed riverside walk on land north of the River Blackwater. Promoted by Crest Strategic. Current use grassland. All vehicular access would be on to Broad Road, with a pedestrian cycle access on to Convent Lane.
BON9	Land at Straits Mill, Convent Lane, Braintree (12.68ha) Residential

- **Map 8 – Site ownership East of Broad Road**
- **BON7 – Map 9 Aerial Photograph**
- **BON 7 – Map 10 Concept Layout**

Please see Appendix 1 for maps and Appendix 2 for site photographs of BON7.

Braintree Ward Members Views

5.1 BON7 and 9 not suitable as sites for Site Allocations Plan. Opposed to access from Broad Road. Much local opposition. Only acceptable as part of a long-term future strategic site between Broad Road and A131 provided had an access from the A131, subject to approval of ECC Highways. (Questioned whether allocation of 31 dwellings west of Broad Road still required.)

Officer Comments

5.2 Sites BON 7 and BON 9 do not comprise a logical extension to the edge of Braintree. Development of BON7 alone could be adversely affected by industrial uses at BON9. Vehicular access from Broad Road for a further 150 dwellings would add to the existing congestion. A larger strategic development in the future, including a river walk recreation area, extending to the A131 would be a more logical extension to the urban area, but this amount of housing is not required at present and would not be compatible with the Core Strategy.

Recommendation

It is recommended that land east of Broad Road BON7 and 9 is not identified for residential development and the development boundary remains unaltered in this location.

6. Land between London Road, Pods Brook Road and the A120 BRC7E

Site representations put forward by landowners/developers:

Sites	Details
BRC7E	Land between London Road, A120 and Pod's Brook Road, Braintree (9.3ha) Rectangular shaped site made up of 4 small to medium sized fields currently under arable cultivation, enclosed by hedgerows. 4ha of site proposed for residential development. Housing layout to reflect river walk to north and noise issues close to adjoining roads to west and south of the site. Adjoins farmsteads and residential properties on London Road. Proposed to include extension to river walk.

- **Braintree – Map 11 Site Location.**
- **Braintree – Map12 Aerial Photograph.**
- **Braintree – Map 13 Concept Layout Plan.**
- **Braintree – Map14 Draft Allocation Plan.**

Please see Appendix 1 for Maps and Appendix 2 for photographs.

Ward Member Views:

6.1 BRC7E – The site has close links to the town centre and is on a bus route. Good solution to any housing shortfall. Logical boundary extension. Question was raised about access from Pod's Brook Road. Overall Members considered it to be an ideal location and a good site.

Officer Comments

6.2 BRC7E was promoted as part of a wider strategic allocation (the Flich Way Settlement) for inclusion in the Core Strategy. That strategic site was not selected as a growth location, with the Council preferring a mixed use growth location off Panfield Lane/Springwood Drive. However, this smaller non-strategic proposal between London Road, Pods Brook Road and the A120 is considered to be acceptable, as it is a sustainable location, near to employment provision at Skyline and with good links to the town centre and community facilities. The site would benefit from the bus route on London

Road and could connect to the cycle-route at Tortoiseshell Way, which links to the railway station and town centre. It is also within walking distance of Marshalls Park and local schools and close to health provision. The site is 9.3 ha in size, of which approximately 1.2ha of land could be allocated for formal recreation and 1.5 ha for informal recreation and a cycleway. The remaining 6.6ha would be for housing and associated infrastructure. This could accommodate approximately 150 dwellings.

6.3 Planning history – The site was previously proposed as a site to be included in the Local Plan Review (adopted 2005) and was rejected at that time, as it was designated as part of the green wedge separating Braintree and Great Notley. Since that time, development has been allowed at the Tortoiseshell Way estate and the retirement village on the opposite side of London Road. It is considered that this allocation would be a logical extension of Braintree and that the A120 still represents a clear separation between the edge of Braintree and Great Notley.

6.4 Site constraints include tree preservation orders and existing hedgerows and noise from the A120 trunk road and Pods Brook Road. None of the site is at risk of flooding. There is a historic landfill site in centre of the site, which can be dealt with through appropriate mitigation.

6.5 Access would be from London Road and it is anticipated that a roundabout at the junction of Tortoiseshell Way and London Road could be provided. Essex County Council highways officers preferred access to the site would be from London Road and they have raised no objection in principle.

Deficit of open space in Braintree (Table 1)

6.6 As part of the allocation, it is proposed to identify 1.2ha of land for formal recreation, 1.5ha of land for informal recreation as well as a cycleway. This is in order to help address the existing deficit in outdoor sports provision within the urban area of Braintree as shown in the table below (Open Space Survey – Table1, Quantity Analysis of Open Space).

Area	Total Population	Green Corridors		Outdoor Sports Provision				
		Area (Ha)	Ha Per 1000 population	Area (Ha)	Ha per 1000 population	Proposed Standard	Current Surplus or Deficit	Surplus or deficit in ha
Total Urban Braintree	46820	26.82	0.57	68.46	1.46	2	-0.54	-25.18

6.7 The existing development boundary could be extended to include this site as shown on Map 14. There is an area of open area of land on the opposite site of London Road (owned by the Council) would could be identified as informal recreation as shown on Map 14 in order to clarify the use of this land.

6.8 At this stage it is proposed to identify BRC7E as a mixture of residential and formal recreation with informal recreation and a cycleway along its

northern boundary. Once further investigation takes place then a more precise extent for the formal recreation could be identified.

Recommendations

To allocate BRC7E for residential development, formal recreation, informal recreation and cycleway, as shown on Map 14.

To alter the development boundary as shown on Map 14.

To identify an area of informal recreation at London Road/Tortoiseshell Way.