

# **Braintree District Council**

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment Baseline Information Profile**

**2009 – 2010**

### **Executive Summary**

**Prepared For  
Braintree District Council  
by  
Essex County Council**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

*'Local authorities need to prepare and maintain an up-to-date information base on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of their area, to enable the preparation of sound Local Development Documents which can deliver sustainable development objectives' (PAS, 2009).*

The production of a sound evidence base is not just the requirement of PPS12, but also as part of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of plans and programmes. The requirement for SA and SEA emanates from a high level national and international commitment to sustainable development.

The European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment" (the 'SEA Directive') was adopted in June 2001 with a view to increase the level of protection for the environment, integrate environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes and to promote sustainable development. The Directive was transposed into English legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulation'), which came into force on 21 July 2004. It requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be carried out for all plans and programmes which are:

*'subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions'.*

The aim of the SEA is to identify potentially significant environmental effects created as a result of the implementation of the plan or programme on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between these factors.

Sustainability Appraisals examine the effects of proposed plans and programmes in a wider context, taking into account economic and social considerations together with environmental considerations required by the SEA Directive in order to promote sustainable development. SA is mandatory for all Development Plan Documents and Regional Spatial Strategies in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Planning Act 2008.

The County Council has entered into a Service Level Agreement with several local authorities in Essex to collect and maintain the baseline information to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive and to provide an up-to-date information base on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of their area. This report has been prepared for Braintree District Council by Essex County Council.

The information is collected in a series of three reports:

- The first is the Executive Summary. This draws together the conclusions from the more detailed baseline monitoring report. The summary is intended to give an overview of the baseline report, which can be then looked at in detail for specific information on specific topics.
- The second document is the Baseline Information Profile which itself is organised into the following topic areas, covered by the SEA Directive. Divided into two parts:

Part I of the report deals with the Natural Environment, and includes the topics of:

- Biodiversity, flora and fauna
- Landscape
- Air Quality
- Climatic Factors
- Water Quality
- Flooding
- Soils, Minerals and Waste

Part II of the report deals with the Built Environment, and the following topics:

- Cultural Heritage and Townscape
- Health
- Population and Social
- Economy
- Housing
- Transport

Each topic is presented in its own Chapter, with each chapter divided into 3 sections,

- Introduction
- Current Baseline Information, with sub-sections defined by the subject matter, including contextual and comparative information for broader geographic areas as appropriate and where possible
- Summary

The last document is the:

- Plans and Programmes Annexe which sets out the policy context for each of the topics and subjects presented in the baseline information profile. It sets out a comprehensive list of International, National, Regional, County wide and Local contextual information. A brief summary of each of the Plans and Programmes is provided together with a web link to the document itself.

This report has been compiled using an extensive set of information from a variety of sources. The information was correct at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Changes in the source information after that date may affect the continued accuracy of information contained in this report. Essex County Council takes no responsibility for the accuracy, reliability and correctness of any information produced by external sources which are outside of the control of the County Council.

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# **PART ONE: Natural Environment**

## 2 BIODIVERSITY, FLORA AND FAUNA

### 2.1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Summary

- The Essex Biodiversity Action Plan (EBAP) contains action plans for 25 species and 10 habitats throughout Essex. Within Braintree District, the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan lists:
  - Two plant Species
  - Five Mammal Species
  - Three Bird Species
  - Three Invertebrate Species
  - One other Vertebrate Species and
  - Six Habitats
- Between 1994 and 2007, the East of England population index for all native bird species increased by 3 per cent. There was a 13 per cent decrease in the number of species of farmland birds in the East of England, while for the number of woodland birds species there was a 1 per cent decrease in the index.
- There are no Ramsars (designated wetlands of international importance), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (strictly protected sites classified for rare or protected birds) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) (sites designated as high-quality conservation sites under the EC Habitats Directive) in Braintree. There are also no National Nature Reserves (NNRs); sites designated to protect sensitive features and manage pristine habitats, rare species and significant geology within the district, but long distance impacts should be considered for Appropriate Assessment (AA). AA is required of any plan or project, despite not necessarily being directly connected to a designated habitats (as per the Habitats Directive) site, which is however likely to have a significant effect upon a designation's quality and management.
- Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites and support plants and animals that find it more difficult to survive in the wider countryside. The unique and varied habitats of SSSIs have developed over hundreds of years through management practices, and need further active management to maintain and protect their conservation interest. There are four SSSIs within Braintree District.
- The success of SSSIs is monitored by Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets in order to assess performance, in which the SSSIs are put in to one of five categories, ranging from favourable to destroyed. A SSSI is deemed to be meeting the PSA target by Natural England, if 95% of the total area is classed as "Favourable" or "Unfavourable Recovering". In Braintree District there has been a 9.01% increase in the proportion of SSSIs meeting the PSA target. 56.47% of all SSSIs were meeting the target in 2005 compared to 61.56% in 2009.
- There has been an 18.51% decrease in the proportion of SSSIs in Braintree District which are in a state of 'unfavourably declining', from 40.79% in 2005 to 33.24% in 2009.
- Of the SSSIs in Braintree District, Belcher's and Broadfield Woods, together with Chalkney Wood are currently complying with the PSA target of 95% of all nationally important wildlife sites to be brought into a favourable condition by

2010. Bovingdon Hall Woods and Glemsford Pits are currently not complying with the PSA target and therefore the conditions of these sites need to be improved.

- Braintree District has a total of six Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally.
- Local Wildlife Sites (LoWSs) are areas of land with significant wildlife value. Braintree District contains 251 LoWSs.

## 3 LANDSCAPE

### 3.1 Landscape Summary

- Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are defined as areas of distinctive scenic attraction and of great landscape value resulting from a combination of features such as vegetation cover and landform. They are non statutory designations, selected by Essex County Council, which will eventually be replaced by Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) when adopted as part of the evidence base for individual authorities Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). There are seven Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) located within the district. These have been implemented to protect the visual quality of previously defined important areas.
- There have been a number of landscape character assessments carried out in Essex. 'The Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)' establishes a 'baseline' of the existing landscape character for the whole of the Essex and identifies 35 different Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Each area has a recognisable pattern of landscape characteristics, both physical and experiential, which combine to create a distinct sense of place. There are eight LCAs within the district as identified by The Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003). These have been further divided into twenty-two smaller local LCAs as a result of 'The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (2006)'.
- Of the twenty-two LCAs within the district, the Stour Valley is the most sensitive LCA to change and development while the Central Essex Farmlands LCA is the least sensitive.
- Braintree District has a total ancient woodland cover of 2.12% of its land area which is scattered throughout the district. When compared to the distribution in Essex, Braintree has an area of ancient woodland significantly greater than other districts.
- Historic parks and gardens are designated by English Heritage and defined as "a park or garden of special historic interest". There are eight Historic Parks and Gardens within Braintree District.
- Protected lanes have significant historic and landscape values. They generally originate from pre-historic track ways, which have been in continual, if lighter use since. The volume, weights and speed of traffic is often limited to preserve the special character. Roadside verges are important and if sensitively managed can increase the biodiversity of the verges themselves and the surrounding countryside through verges acting as corridors interlinking fragmented or isolated habitats. There are a number of protected lanes and special verges within the district's boundaries including several important verges which have been designated as Special Roadside Nature Reserves in order to protect the future of rare and uncommon flowers growing on them.

## 4 AIR QUALITY

### 4.1 Air Quality Summary

- Each local authority in the UK has been carrying out reviews and assessments of air quality within their administrative area since December 1997. The aim of reviewing and assessing this information is to ensure that future and current air quality objectives can be achieved by the deadlines set. If a local authority has an area with measurements of air pollution that are unlikely to meet the objectives, an Air Quality Management Area must be declared. There are 14 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across Essex although none of these are located in Braintree District. There are however 5 junctions across the district considered to be potentially significant in terms of air quality.
- Braintree District Council monitors Nitrogen Dioxide at two automatic air quality monitoring stations and passive diffusion tubes at 11 locations. Of the 11 passive diffusion NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring tubes located in the district, only one of these has shown any indication of World Health Organisation (WHO) NO<sub>2</sub> objective exceedence between 2002 and 2008. This tube is located by the A12 in Hatfield Peverel and reported a reading of 49.9µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2008.
- Braintree District Council does not undertake benzene monitoring in the district. However, monitoring is undertaken at the urban background site in Southend and these monitoring results are considered to be representative of the county area. Between 2002 and 2007, benzene concentrations were below the National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS) objective.

## 5 CLIMATIC FACTORS

### 5.1 Climatic Factors Summary

- The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) monitors the total energy consumption across all Essex districts and boroughs in Gigawatts per hour (GWh). At 3252.2GWh in 2006, Braintree District consumed more energy in total than the Essex district/borough average of 2770.6GWh. This is the 5th highest value across Essex, with Epping Forest District consuming the most energy at 4280.9GWh and Maldon the least at 1211.4GWh.
- The DECC breaks down energy consumption per district and borough into different fuel types and by sector. At 48.03% of total energy generated, petroleum products were the most commonly used energy generation product within Braintree District in 2006. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest proportion within Essex and exceeds the Essex average of 43.37%, as well as the averages for the East of England (45.1%) and the UK (34.11%).
- The highest proportional consumption in terms of sectors in Braintree District was transportation, totalling 1238.9GWh or 38.10% of total energy consumed. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest total in the county and above the Essex average of 957GWh.
- The DECC also monitors Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions per district and borough in kilotonnes (kt) across Essex. At 984.48kt, Braintree District emitted the 5<sup>th</sup> highest amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the county. Epping Forest emitted the highest at 1252.74kt whilst the lowest amount, 387.39kt, was recorded by Maldon. As a county, Essex emitted 9,837.93kt of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- The single largest proportion of carbon dioxide emitted in Braintree District was emitted through road transport. 399.21kt (40.55%) of emissions were from this source. The value of 40.55% is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the county, and above the Essex proportion of 36.65%.
- Land use change in Braintree District has been responsible for a decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, amounting to a reduction of 4.66kt, or 0.47%, of the total amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted. This is the second largest reduction in Essex, behind only Uttlesford District at -6.91kt or 0.77% of their total emissions. The county total is a reduction of 0.03%.
- Carbon Dioxide is also monitored per capita in tonnes (t) across Essex. At 6.99t per person, residents of Braintree District emit the 5<sup>th</sup> highest amount of CO<sub>2</sub> per person. At 12.4t per person, Uttlesford emit the highest value with Castle Point the lowest at 4.63t. Across Essex, the total is an average of 7.15t per person.
- Between 2005 and 2007, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted by residents has fallen year-on-year in Braintree, from 7.38t per person in 2005 to 6.99t per person in 2007. Within Essex there has also been a year-on-year reduction, from 7.6t in 2005 to 7.31t in 2007.

## 6 WATER QUALITY

### 6.1 Water Quality Summary

- The main water courses running through Braintree District are the rivers Blackwater, Colne, Brain, Pant, Stour and Ter.
- The Environment Agency (EA) has defined Source Protection Zones (SPZs) for groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs used for public drinking water supply. Braintree contains SPZs and major aquifers within the northern half of the district, together with scattered minor aquifers in the south of the district.
- The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for managing water resources in England and Wales. One of the ways that this is done is through licensing water abstraction. The EA developed Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) to:
  - inform the public on water resources and licensing practice;
  - provide a consistent approach to local water resources management;
  - help to balance the needs of water-users and the environment.

Following a national review of CAMS boundaries, water resources in the South Essex CAMS (excluding the Mardyke catchment) are now incorporated with the North Essex CAMS into the Combined Essex CAMS.

- The Combined Essex CAMS document sets out the issues for the whole of Essex. The document splits the county into Water Resource Management Units (WRMU), of which 2 relate to areas which include watercourses within Braintree District. There are WRMU1 and WRMU2.
- The integrated WRMU status for WRMU 1 was 'over-abstracted' and for WRMU 2 it was 'no water available' at February 2007.
- The Combined Essex CAMs Annual Update (March 2008) noted that the availability of water within the Roman River / Layer Brook catchment had changed, however the water availability and restrictions for the remainder of WRMU 1 have not changed since the publication of the CAMS in February 2007.
- Essex falls within the Anglian River Basin District. The Anglian River Basin District is subdivided into catchment areas and the Essex Rivers catchment area lies within the counties of Essex and Suffolk as well as a small part of Cambridgeshire.
- The Essex Rivers catchment area is further subdivided into water body catchment areas. The water bodies which are associated with Braintree District are: R1, Doomsey Brook; R4, Ter; R16, River Chelmer; R23, Blackwater Pant; R91, Brain, R102, Boreham Tributary; and R115, River Blackwater.
- The majority of water bodies within Braintree are given a 'moderate' current overall potential. However the River Blackwater and the River Chelmer are both given a 'poor' current status.

## 7 FLOODING

### 7.1 Flooding Summary

- The areas which are most susceptible to flooding in the district are mainly located next to the major waterways: the Blackwater, Stour and Colne.
- Between the 1st April 2008 and the 31st March 2009 the Environment Agency (EA) objected to eleven planning applications on flood risk grounds. Of these, seven were subsequently withdrawn. One application (08/00024/FUL) was refused on the grounds of flood risk on site.
- Three applications which received an objection from the Environment Agency were supplemented by the submission of additional material which removed the EA objection, and these applications were subsequently granted.
- The Mid Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which includes Braintree District was published in October 2007. The SFRA is a planning tool that enables the council to select and develop sustainable site allocations away from vulnerable flood risk areas.



## 8 SOILS, MINERALS AND WASTE

### 8.1 Soils, Minerals And Waste Summary

- The Agricultural Land Classification System, published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), now the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), provides a method for assessing the quality of farmland. It classifies land into 5 grades, from Grade 1 (the most productive and efficient) to Grade 3, followed by Grade 3a and Grade 3b. The majority of agricultural land within Essex can be broadly classified as Grade 2 in the north and Grade 3 to the south. This is related to the location of the Essex till, with better quality land located in the north-west of the county.
- Agricultural land in Braintree District is classified as Grades 2 and 3, with 65.8% (40,243 hectares) of agricultural land classified as Grade 2 and 29.9% (18,304 hectares) as Grade 3. Strips of Grade 3 soils follow the path of the rivers Brain, Ter, Blackwater and Colne as they flow through the district.
- Within Braintree District, 73,324.12 tonnes of waste was produced in 2008 - 2009. This is the fourth highest amount in the county, with Essex as a whole producing 718,865.59 tonnes across the 12 districts and boroughs.
- The total amount of waste sent to landfill in Braintree has decreased from 50,798.93 tonnes in 2000 – 2001 to 34,586.6 tonnes in 2008 – 2009. This equates to Braintree District sending 68.1% of its total landfilled waste in 1999 – 2000 to landfill in 2008 – 2009. The corresponding figure for Essex as a whole is 72.2%.
- 42.54% of Braintree District's household waste was recycled in 2008 – 2009. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest proportion in the county and is lower than the 42.79% recorded in 2007 – 2008 which was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest proportion. The Essex average is recorded as 37.64%, up from 34.52% in 2007 – 2008.
- For each dwelling within Braintree District, an average of 1.09 tonnes of waste was collected from the home. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest amount in the county. In 2008 - 2009, the total amount of district waste per resident was 0.15 tonnes above the Essex average of 0.94 tonnes.
- Of the 1.09 tonnes collected from each Braintree District dwelling, 0.69 tonnes went to landfill. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest amount in the county, showing no movement from the previous year. On average, Essex sent 0.59 tonnes to landfill
- 0.4 tonnes of waste per dwelling in Braintree District was recycled. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> highest performance of a district/borough in the county and equals the relative performance of the previous year. Braintree District is sending a larger amount of waste to recycling per dwelling than the Essex per dwelling average of 0.35 tonnes.
- 0.21 tonnes of waste per Braintree District dwelling was sent to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) in 2008 - 2009. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest amount in the county, and below the Essex average of 0.27 tonnes.
- 0.13 tonnes per dwelling of waste sent to a HWRC went on to be recycled. This is again the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest amount in the county, with no movement relative to the previous year, and is lower than the county average of 0.17 tonnes per dwelling.
- In Braintree District, 0.09 tonnes of HWRC waste per dwelling was sent to landfill. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest amount in the county and equal to the Essex average.

- The proportion of Braintree District household waste that was landfilled has fallen, from 91% in 2000 – 2001 to 57.46% in 2008 - 2009. Within Essex, the proportion has also reduced across this time period, from 88.55% to 62.36%.
- The proportion of Braintree District HWRC waste that was landfilled has fallen, from 47.37% in 2000 - 2001 to 40.1% in 2008 - 2009. Within Essex, the proportion has also reduced across this time period, from 46.82% to 34.94%.
- Against a NI191 (National Indicator 191 – residual household waste per head) target of 530kg, Braintree District reported a NI191 of 511kg. Regarding NI192 (National Indicator 192 – household waste recycled and composted), Braintree reported a score of 45.04% which is above the minimum target of 43%. Braintree therefore satisfied the requirements of NI191 and NI192.
- Within Braintree there was one minerals planning application and there were two waste planning applications within the 2008/09 monitoring year.

## **PART TWO: Built Environment**

## 9 CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE

### 9.1 Cultural Heritage and Townscape Summary

- Listed buildings are protected under the Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas Act (1990). They are structures of national or architectural importance. There are 3,190 listed buildings within Braintree District, the majority of which (2,939) are Grade II listed, followed by 181 Grade II\* listed and 66 Grade I listed.
- The Historic Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) contains details of buildings known to be 'at risk' through neglect and decay, or vulnerable of becoming so. The objective of the register is to outline the state of repair of these buildings with the intention of instigating action towards securing their long term conservation. As of this year there are 20 listed buildings on the 'at risk' register in Braintree District; a decrease from previous year totals of 23 in 2008 and 27 in 2007.
- Nine of the listed buildings at risk within the district are categorised as Priority A which means they are at immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric with no agreed solution for restoration.
- The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) contains approximately 3,252 archaeological records relating to Braintree District out of a total of 21,298 for the county.
- Scheduled Monuments (SMs) are sites of national importance and protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The purpose of designating SMs is to preserve the monument for the future and protect it from damage, destruction or any unnecessary interference. There are 40 Scheduled Monuments within the district.
- Conservation Areas are defined as historical town centres and buildings which have 'special architectural or historical interest, the character of which is desirable to preserve or enhance'. They are protected under the Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas Act (1990). There are 215 designated Conservation Areas within the county of Essex, 39 of which are within Braintree District.
- Bulmer, Cressing and Finchingfield Conservation Areas were amended in 2009. The boundary lines for all three were extended to include additional buildings and curtilage while Finchingfield Conservation Area also excluded a number of properties which were not in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area.

## 10 HEALTH

### 10.1 Health Summary

- The Directly Standardised Mortality Rate (DSMR) is used for calculating the number of mortalities that would occur in a standard population (per 100,000) if that standard population had the age specific mortality rates of a given area. In this case the European standard population is used. In 2007, 67.83 people per 100,000 could be expected to die from all circulatory diseases within the district. This compares to 74.40 in England, 63.01 in the East of England and 62.63 in Essex.
- In 2007 Braintree reported a Directly Standardised Mortality Rate (DSMR) of 108.12 for deaths relating to cancer in people aged under 75. This is a lower mortality rate than England (114.07), but higher than the East of England (106.53) and Essex (107.65).
- From January 2005 – December 2007, life expectancy increased to 78.6 years for males and 82.6 years for females. This is similar to the life expectancy for the East of England and remains above that reported nationally.
- The rate of teenage pregnancies in Braintree District is showing a rising trend, contrary to patterns seen regionally and nationally.
- Incapacity Benefit is paid to people who are assessed as being incapable of work due to mental disorders, diseases of the nervous system, disease of the respiratory or circulatory system, musculoskeletal disease, injury or poisoning and other. Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) claimants have to be aged between 16 and 65, been unable to work for at least 28 weeks and are unable to get Incapacity Benefit. Since April 2001 it has not been possible to make a new claim for SDA. There are a smaller percentage of people claiming these benefits in the district (2.93% of the total population) than the East of England (3.13%) and England (4.09%). Of these, 85.10% are Incapacity Benefit claimants in the district and 14.90% of district benefit claimants receive Severe Disablement Allowance.
- There has been a decrease in short term claimants (those who have claimed for less than 6 months) in Braintree between November 2002 (10.84%) and November 2008 (8.65%).
- Between November 2002 and November 2007, Braintree has shown an increase in benefit claimants who have claimed for a period of over 5 years of 3.84%. This is lower than the increases regionally and nationally, which were 6.18% and 7.91% respectively.
- At 21.1% and 15.8%, the proportion of male and female adults participating in sport in the district is below the Essex averages of 23.9% and 20%.
- Female sport participation has fallen from 21.0% in 2005-2006 to 15.8% in 2007-2008. This is contrary to the Essex average which has increased from 18.6% to 20.0%.
- Sport participation across all age groups (16-34, 35-54 and 55+) is below the Essex average. Participation from those with a limiting long term disability has fallen from 11.3% in 2005-2006 to 5.3% in 2007-2008.
- The proportion of residents within 20 minutes travelling time of 3 sporting facilities in Braintree District is at a 3 year low, currently standing at 43.68%. This is down from 53.37% reported in December 2006.

- 73.6% of male Braintree residents were satisfied or very satisfied with sports provision in their local area. This is above the Essex average of 68.2% and an increase of 2.6% from previous figures. In contrast, 64.8% of females were satisfied or very satisfied with sports provision in their local area, a decrease of 6.4% from previous figures and below the county average of 68.9%.
- 16 – 34 year olds within the district are less satisfied with sports provision in their local area than those aged 35 – 54 and both these demographics less satisfied than those aged 55+. Figures for all ages within the district are lower than the Essex county average.
- Those with a limiting disability in the district have become less satisfied with sports provision in their local area over the period 2005-2006 to 2007-2008, falling from 67.9% to 57.5%. This was above the Essex average of 66.1% in 2005-2006, but fell below the Essex average of 66.0% in 2007-2008.

## 11 POPULATION AND SOCIAL

### 11.1 Population and Social Summary

- The ONS publishes annual mid year population estimates and biannual projections. Consideration of these figures is important in many facets of sustainable planning because they indicate the number of people likely to be living in an area and provide a base for estimating activity levels. ONS 2008 mid year estimates show that population growth in Braintree between 2001 and 2008 at 7.25% is higher than that of the county and the East of England region at 6.38% and 6.08% respectively and also the national figure of 4.04%.
- Within Braintree, there are slightly higher percentages of the overall population of the ages 45-65 at 26.88% in 2008 than regionally (25.67%) and nationally (24.97%).
- ONS Population Projections (based on 2006 population estimates) show that the Braintree District population will increase by 14.38% to 165,400 in 2021. This percentage increase is considerably higher than the county average of 11.58%, the regional average at 12.09%, and the nationwide average of 9.38%.
- In December 2006 the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) commissioned population forecasts from the Population and Housing Research Group (PHRG) at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU). The forecasts illustrate the population consequences of the housing provisions (Policy H1) of the East of England Plan. These population forecasts show that Braintree's population would rise to 134,000, an increase of 1.28%. Essex's overall population is expected to rise by 6.47% to 1,718,900 and the regional population by 10.61% to 5,973,100.
- The ONS Population Projections indicate a higher district population in Braintree in 2021 than the EERA Population Forecasts across all ages.
- The number of those attending primary schools has decreased annually in the district over the period 2004-2008.
- The numbers attending secondary schools in the district have risen annually between 2004 and 2006 by 249 pupils but decreased by 169 pupils between 2006 and 2008.
- The number of those taking GCSEs and equivalent qualifications in the district had risen by 82 pupils between 2006/07-2007/08.
- The district is performing below the East of England region and nationally in the attainment of 5+ A\*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent level but is showing a percentage increase between 2006/07-2007/08.
- The number of pupils receiving no passes at GCSE and equivalent level is higher at 2.2% than the wider region at 1.6% and the country as a whole at 1.4%.
- The Home Office collects crime data across a range of recorded offences. These include:
  - Violence against the person offences recorded
  - Sexual offences recorded
  - Robbery offences recorded
  - Burglary dwelling offences recorded
  - Theft of a motor vehicle offences recorded
  - Theft from a motor vehicle offences recorded

Braintree District has seen a percentage reduction in crime figures across a number of these indicators with the exception of sexual offences and robbery offences, which have experienced increases of 9% and 3% respectively. This is not representative of England as a whole where all reported criminal activity has fallen from the previous year's figures.

- Theft of a motor vehicle offences has decreased the most from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008 than any other crime indicator within Braintree District at -27%. This is a better performance than in Essex as a whole and nationally, with reductions of 10% and 12% respectively.
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (IMD2007) records deprivation data across a range of indicators across the country and as a whole. Braintree District is the 8<sup>th</sup> worst ranked authority for overall deprivation out of 14 in the county.
- Braintree's IMD2007 average score rank, an average score across all indicators of deprivation, has steadily improved year on year, from 228 in 2000, to 237 in 2004 and 239 in 2007.
- Braintree district displays a mix of scores on the IMD2007 index, including deprivation figures for overall IMD, income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, the living environment and crime. The district is less deprived than the county average in 4 of the 8 categories and matches the county average in 2 categories.
- Areas of slight concern are apparent in the categories of Education, Skills and Training and Barriers to Housing and Services, where Braintree is more deprived than the county average.
- Within the IMD2007 there are several sub-domains that focus on more specific issues of deprivation. These are:
  - Child Poverty
  - Older People Poverty
  - Education Sub-Domain: Children & Young People
  - Education Sub-Domain: Working Age Skills
  - Barriers Sub-Domain: Geographical Barriers to Services
  - Barriers Sub-Domain: Wider Barriers to Housing
  - Environment Sub-Domain: 'Indoors'
  - Environment Sub-Domain: 'Outdoors'

The district performs well in the Environment outdoors sub-domain (concerning air quality and road traffic accidents involving injury to pedestrians and cyclists) at 10.05 which is below the county average of 12.68.

- The district performs poorly however in the Environment indoor sub-domain (concerning social and private housing in poor condition and houses without central heating) at 9.07 which is above the county average of 8.28.
- Further poor performance can be seen in the Geographical Barriers to Small Services Sub Domain (concerning road distances to GP premises, a general store or supermarket, a primary school and a Post Office) where the district performs below the mean county score and is the third worst district/borough in the county.



- The district also displays higher levels of deprivation than the county average in the Older People Poverty domain and the Education sub-domain: children and young people (concerning average points scores of pupils at Key Stage 2 -4, the proportion of young people not staying on in school or non-advanced further education above 16, the secondary school absence rate and the proportion of those aged under 21 not entering Higher Education). There is also higher levels of deprivation in the Education sub-domain: working age skills (concerning the proportion of working age adults (aged 25-54) in Braintree District with no or low qualifications) and the Barriers sub-domain: wider barriers to housing (concerning household overcrowding, homeless households applications and difficulty of access to owner occupation) at 0.02 compared to the county average of -0.20.

## 12 ECONOMY

### 12.1 Economy Summary

- Businesses which employ 0 – 4 people are the most prevalent in Braintree (72.9%), the East of England (70.8%) and England (69.2%).
- Both Braintree District and the East of England have higher proportions of local employment units in rural locations than in England. Within Braintree this proportion is 49.18% compared to a national value of 25.45%.
- The registration rate of new businesses per 10k population has been higher in Braintree than Essex between 2002 and 2007. The business formation rate in Braintree has increased from 65.5 to 73.6 over the period of study. Within Essex the rate increased from 57.2 to 64.5.
- Between 2002 – 2003 and 2006 - 2007, the proportion of small businesses experiencing growth has increased in both Braintree and Essex. Within Braintree the proportion increased from 9.12% to 13.02% whilst in Essex it increased from 9.06% to 12.62%.
- Factories and warehouses account for the majority of industrial floorspace in Braintree District, the East of England Region and nationally. The floorspace allocated to factories in the district, at 43.39%, is above that found in the East of England (32.87%) and England (34.23%).
- Braintree District currently accommodates 8.76 hectares (ha) of vacant land which is designated for employment. Of this, 1.19 hectares already have planning permissions, equating to 7.57 hectares of net vacant employment land.
- 'Job density' is the term given to represent the number of jobs available for a single person of working age over a given area. For example, a job density of 1 would represent the fact that there is a single job available for every person of working age. Between 2000 and 2007, job density in Braintree District increased from 0.65 to 0.74. This equals the previous highest value recorded in 2002. In 2007, the East of England reported a value of 0.81 whilst Great Britain reported the highest job density at 0.83.
- The highest proportion of people in Braintree District, the East of England and Great Britain work in the Services industry. The proportion is the lowest in Braintree at 76.3%, compared to 81.8% in the East of England and 83% in Great Britain.
- Managers and senior officials is the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) group which has the highest proportion of workers in Braintree District, the East of England region and Great Britain. In Braintree this proportion is 20%, above that of both the East of England (16.9%) and Great Britain (15.7%)
- At 79.4%, the proportion of economically active working age people in the district is below that reported in the East of England (81.3%) and Great Britain (78.8%).
- Between January 2004 and December 2008, the proportion of working age population in employment within the district has fallen from 77.6% to 73.8%.
- Between January 2004 and December 2008, the proportion of working age population who were economically inactive but wanted a job had increased from 3.3% to 5.7%. Both the East of England and Great Britain have also reported increased, from 4.2% to 4.8%, and 5.2% to 5.6% respectively.
- Between January 2006 and July 2009, the number of Job Centre Plus vacancies per 10k population has reduced from 122 in January 2006 to 45 in July 2009.

Over the same period of study, the East of England shows a reduction from 110 to 59 and Great Britain 129 to 56.

- Average gross weekly pay for people residing in Braintree District stood at £517.10 in 2008, an increase from the £403.20 in 2002. In 2008, the East of England recorded £498.70 and Great Britain £479.30.
- The average weekly wage on offer within Braintree District was below that in the East of England and Great Britain in 2008. The district value of £419.59 compares to £468.10 regionally and £479.10 nationally.
- The average wage offered within Braintree District in 2008, at £419.50, is below that found in 2007 where average wages were recorded at £442.40, with the 2008 value being the lowest since 2005.
- At £419.50, Braintree District offers the 39<sup>th</sup> highest wage of the 48 local authorities in the East of England. Harlow houses the highest paid jobs with an average weekly wage of £617.10 with North Norfolk the least at £356.50.
- A total of 2280m<sup>2</sup> of A1-A2 (shops and financial and professional services) floorspace was created over the period April 2008 to March 2009 and there were no losses. 1830m<sup>2</sup> of A1 – A2 completions were on previously developed land, representing 80.26% of total development.
- There are outstanding permissions equating to 7963m<sup>2</sup> of A1 – A2 floorspace. 4086m<sup>2</sup> (51.31%) of this is intended to be completed on previously developed land. At 45.53%, Witham Chipping Hill Ward and Central Ward report the highest proportion of outstanding planning permissions.
- There exists 45853m<sup>2</sup> gross of outstanding B1 (business, research and development and light industry) planning permissions, amounting to a net gain of 41717m<sup>2</sup>. The majority of these are concentrated in Witham South Ward, which accounts for 89.59% of outstanding net B1 implementations. 41109m<sup>2</sup> of the total gross value of 45853m<sup>2</sup> of B1 floorspace is to be completely on Greenfield land. This equates to 89.65%.
- Although 20521m<sup>2</sup> of B1 – B8 (business, general industrial and storage and distribution) planning permissions were implemented in April 2008 – 2009, this only translated into a net gain of 4873m<sup>2</sup>. Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall Ward reported the biggest gain at 3231m<sup>2</sup>.
- There are outstanding planning permissions for 174329m<sup>2</sup> of B1 – B8 floorspace which equates to 121708m<sup>2</sup> net. The majority of this net gain is in Bumpstead Ward (87384m<sup>2</sup>) and Great Notley & Braintree West Ward (33861m<sup>2</sup>).
- 135685m<sup>2</sup> of the gross total of B1 – B8 floorspace is to be completed on Greenfield land, equating to 77.83%. Bumpstead (87384m<sup>2</sup>) and Great Notley & Braintree West Ward (33861m<sup>2</sup>) will see the biggest loss in Greenfield land if all permissions are implemented.

## 13 HOUSING

### 13.1 Housing Summary

- In 2008/2009 there were 415 dwelling completions, which equated to 342 net additional dwellings (taking into account losses/demolitions). Both the net and gross values are the lowest within the time period studied.
- The annual numbers of net completed dwellings between 2001/02 and 2007/08 have remained higher than the set annual Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) target of 385. The RSS minimum target for Braintree District is 7,700 new dwellings by 2021.
- In 2008/2009, 322 units were completed on Previously Developed Land (PDL) in the district which is considerably lower than the previous year's value of 474 units. However, when considered proportionately to the total number of gross dwelling completions, the 322 dwellings completed on PDL in 2008/2009 accounted for 77.6% which is the highest proportion since 2004/2005.
- The proportion of dwelling completions which were affordable units in the district in 2008/2009 was 19.9%. This is lower than the two previous periods of 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, during which affordable dwelling completions accounted for 28.57% and 22.61% of the total number of net dwelling completions.
- In 2008, Braintree District had a comparatively lower mean dwelling price of £224,196 to the county and regional values of £236,656 and £225,967 respectively but greater than the national average of £220,310.
- Since 2002 mean dwelling prices in the district have continued to increase annually.
- Following a peak in property sales in 2006 the number of sales has declined with a significant decrease occurring between 2007 and 2008. In Braintree District this accounted for 1,860 fewer sales with only 1,696 property sales taking place in 2008.
- Owner occupied and private rented dwellings accounted for 83.3% of the total dwelling stock within Braintree District in 2008, while Local Authority (LA) dwellings represented 0.1% and Registered Social Landlords (RSL) dwellings represented 16.6%.
- Since 2005/2006 the number of homeless acceptances in priority need in Braintree District has increased annually from 269 people to 283 people in 2007/2008. In contrast, the numbers have fallen annually at regional and national levels.
- The majority of homeless acceptances in priority need in Braintree District in 2007/2008 were of white ethnicity.
- Of the 81 homeless households accommodated by the authority in Braintree District during 2007/2008, 64 were accommodated in local authority/ housing association dwellings and the remaining 17 stayed in hostels and women's refuges.
- In January 2009 there were a total of 46 caravans sited within the district, of which 40 were located on authorised sites and 6 on unauthorised sites.
- There are two Gypsy sites in Braintree District at Cressing and Ridgewell, which both contain only residential pitches. In January 2009 neither had exceeded their individual caravan capacities of 24.

## 14 TRANSPORT

### 14.1 Transport Summary

- The proportion of people owning a single car or van is smaller in Braintree than either the East of England or England at 41.74% of all households. The East of England recorded the highest proportion in this field at 44.10% with England reporting a value of 43.69%.
- 17.56% of Braintree District residents do not own a car or van. This is a smaller proportion than the 19.8% recorded in the East of England and 26.84% in England.
- The total number of passenger journeys made annually on all local buses in Essex increased from 39,470,000 to 43,280,000 between 2006 – 2007 and 2007 - 2008. This represents a 9.6% increase. The number of journeys recorded in 2007 – 2008 satisfies the Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) target of 38,500,000 for that year.
- The percentage of users satisfied with the local bus service in Essex increased from 73% in 2006 – 2007 to 76% in 2007 – 2008. The 2007 - 2008 return satisfied the 2007 – 2008 LTP2 target of 75%
- There is a clear seasonal pattern with higher volumes of cyclists in Essex during the summer months and lower volumes during the winter.
- Over four fifths of the population of Braintree District live within 30 minutes of a primary school, secondary school, retail centre, GP surgery and / or employment centre.
- The Congestion Reference Flow (CRF) of a link is an estimate of the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flow at which the carriageway is likely to be congested at peak periods on an average day. Within Essex, 12 road links were assessed as having exceeded their CRF in 2007. Of these, one can be found in Braintree District. This is Junction 24 to Junction 25 of the A12 which is also within Colchester Borough.
- In the 2001 Census, there were 66,119 residents within Braintree who had a job whilst there was a total of 50,481 recorded jobs in Braintree District. This has implications on commuting and travelling to and from the district, often at peak times. It can be seen that there are more employed residents in Braintree than there are jobs available for them. In total, 37,619 residents both live and work in Braintree. This translates to 56.9% of employed Braintree residents or 74.5% of Braintree jobs).
- According to the 2001 Census, 42% of Braintree District residents drive either a car or van to work. This is a higher proportion of private vehicle use than both the East of England, at 39.1%, and England, recorded as 34.68%. Private vehicle use is the most popular travel to work method in the district, the region and nationally.
- At 47.24 Killed or Seriously Injured Casualties (KSIs) per 100,000 population, Braintree District has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest KSI rate in the county and a rate below the Essex average of 51.87 per 100,000 population. The Department for Transport (DfT) 2010 target stated that a 40% reduction of the 1994 – 1998 figure was needed in KSI casualties by 2010, and a 50% reduction in child casualties by the same year. In addition, a Public Service Agreement (PSA) provided an interim target and was entered into in 2004.

- Motorcyclists and young drivers were the top 2 causes of KSIs in all the districts and boroughs in Essex.
- 66, the number of KSIs reported in 2008, represents the biggest single yearly decrease across the period of study and satisfies the 2008 interim indicator of 90. Current performance also satisfies the 2010 indicator.
- Between 1994 and 2008, the number of reported child KSIs has reduced from 19 to 2 in Braintree District. Current performance satisfies the interim Department for Transport (DfT) and LTP2 indicator for both 2008 and the final indicators in 2010.

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