

**Braintree District Council**

**Development Management Plan DPD**

**&**

**Site Allocations DPD**

**Sustainability Appraisal  
and**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**

**Scoping Report**

**Annex C – Stakeholder Workshop Report**

**February 2012**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Braintree District Council is currently in the process of producing a Local Development Framework (LDF) which will replace the District's existing Local Plan. The LDF is a suite of Local Development Documents (LDDs) including the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), which was adopted on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011, the Development Management Plan DPD and a Site Allocations DPD which collectively set out the spatial planning strategy for the area.

UK legislation requires Sustainability Appraisals (SA) to be undertaken for each of these documents in parallel with their preparation. The purpose of SA is to examine the environmental, social and economic effects of a proposed plan with the intention of ensuring the most sustainable outcome is achieved. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is also required under the European Directive 2001/42/EC which assesses the environmental impacts of implementing a plan and ensures that environmental considerations are integrated into its preparation and adoption.

Braintree District Council commissioned the Spatial Planning & Regeneration Team of Essex County Council to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating the SEA requirements for the Braintree Site Allocations and Development Management Plan Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The first stage is to establish the scope of the SA and identify the sustainability issues affecting the District. Sustainability issues are identified in the SA process from analysis of baseline information and by reviewing plans and programmes that are relevant to the proposed plans. Once identified, they will help shape the SA objectives and the framework against which the LDF documents will be assessed.

In addition to the above methods of information gathering it was considered important to ascertain the views of stakeholders and involve them early in the SA process so that they were able to contribute to the development of the SA objectives and framework. This is in line with Braintree District Council's amended Statement of Community Involvement (April 2010).

## 1.1 Stakeholder Workshop

Key stakeholders in Braintree were invited to attend a stakeholder workshop on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012. There were a total of 25 attendees representing 18 organisations or areas with a wide variety of interests from Braintree District and neighbouring authorities. See Appendix A for the comprehensive list of attendees.

## 1.2 Workshop Structure

Cllr Roger Walters, the Chairman of the Local Development Framework Panel, introduced the workshop, before Eleanor Dash, Braintree District Council Planning Policy Manager, then gave a presentation on the LDF process and an update on Braintree District's progress producing LDF documents. This was followed by an overview of the Sustainability Appraisal process and the aims of the stakeholder workshop by Emma Woods of the Spatial Planning & Regeneration Team at Essex County Council.

Presentations were then followed by workshop discussions with stakeholders divided into two separate breakout groups facilitated by one member of the Spatial Planning & Regeneration team also acting as scribe. In the first task stakeholders were asked to discuss what they believed were issues within the District identifying whether they were environmental, economic or social concerns or any combination therein. The

second task involved each stakeholder identifying from the group's list of sustainability issues, which issues were most important to them or to the organisation they represented. Issues that received the highest numbers of 'votes' were compiled into a list of the top five issues to focus further discussion for the whole group.

The breakout groups were brought together at the end of the workshop to present their findings to the wider group and to engage in discussions on developing SA objectives. The SA Objectives used for the appraisal of the Submission Core Strategy, included in Appendix C of this report, were used as an example and starting point.

The workshop presentation slides have been included within Appendix B.

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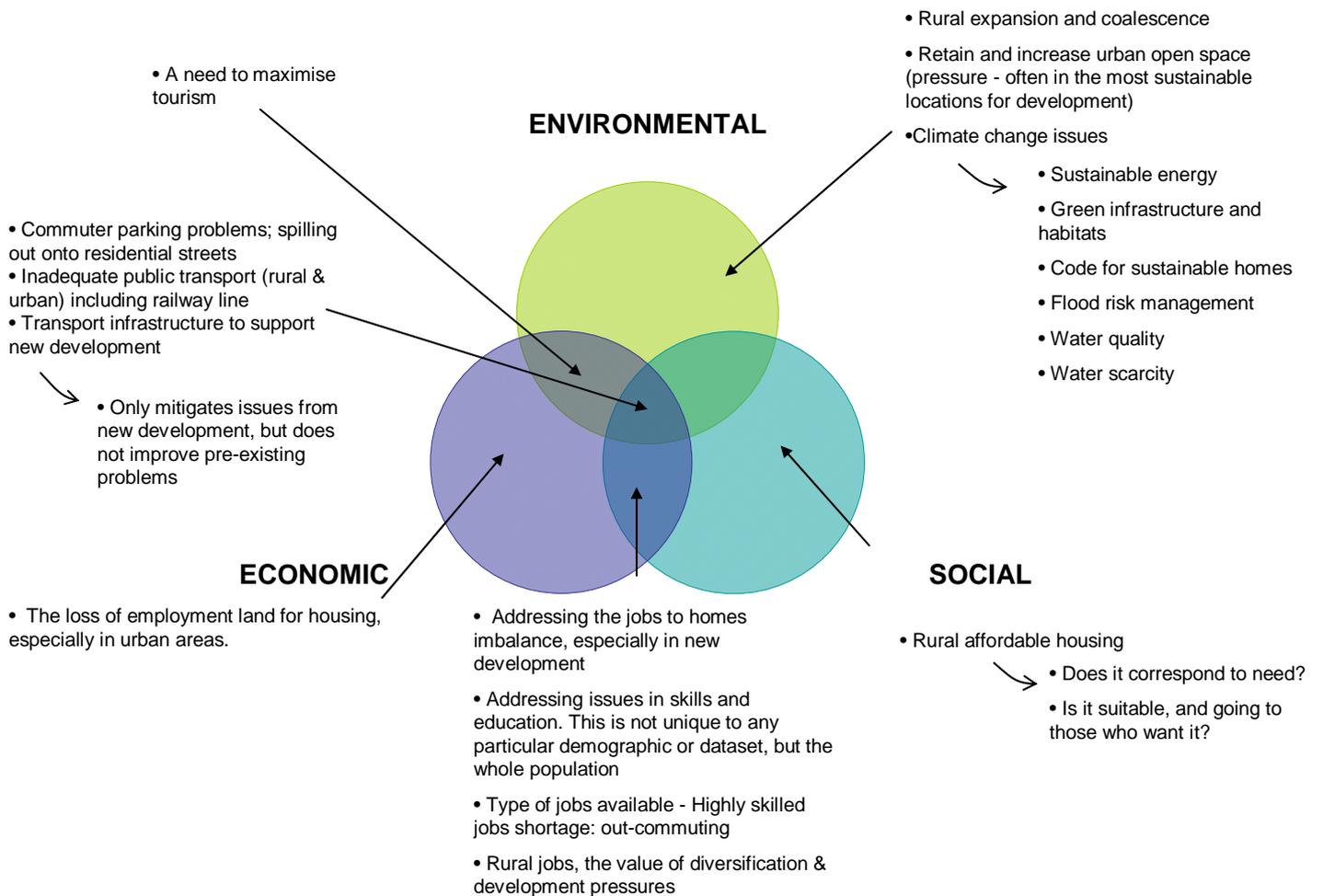
## 2 SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

This section of the report outlines the sustainability issues identified by the stakeholders during their break out group discussions.

### 2.1 Breakout Group 1

FIGURE 1: GROUP 1 DISCUSSIONS

#### WORKING GROUP ONE



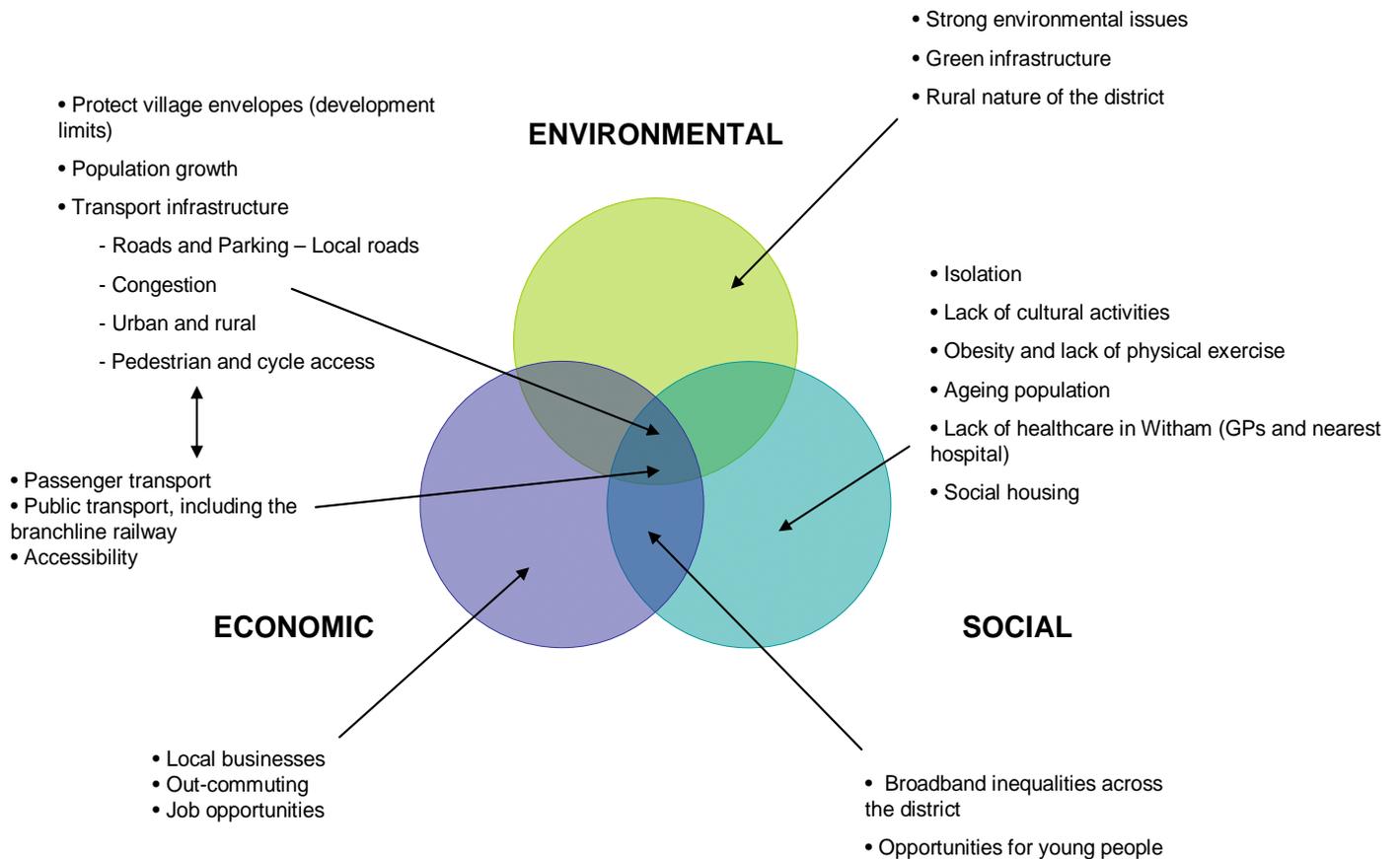
#### Group 1's Top Five Sustainability Issues

- The imbalance between jobs and homes.
- Transport infrastructure to support new development.
- Climate change and flood risk management.
- Rural affordable housing; its suitability and who it's for.
- Public transport in both urban and rural areas.

## 2.2 Breakout Group 2

FIGURE 2: GROUP 2 DISCUSSIONS

### WORKING GROUP TWO



### Group 2's Top Five Sustainability Issues

- Transport infrastructure (urban and rural): congestion, parking, accessibility, public transport.
- Protecting village envelopes and coalescence.
- Economic growth: job opportunities (particularly for the youth, but also the whole population), local businesses, broadband inequalities.
- Population growth: ageing population and increasing health issues such as obesity.
- Lack of healthcare, particularly in Witham.

## 2.3 Combined Group Discussion – Top 5 Issues

The room merged to discuss the two groups' 'Top 5 issues', examples of possible sustainability objectives (taken from the SA of the district's Core Strategy DPD), and any other issues that arose. The issues that were discussed were:

- The imbalance between jobs and homes resulting in high levels of out-commuting. This also creates issues of on-street parking in residential areas, particularly in Witham.
- On street parking is furthermore exacerbated due to a lack of planning controls regarding the change of use of garages to living space.
- Transport infrastructure to support new development exists to mitigate the additional pressures that are likely to occur, rather than improving pre-existing conditions. This means that infrastructure enables conditions (such as congestion) to stay the same. Should transport infrastructure seek to improve or eradicate pressures outright?
- Also regarding transport infrastructure, there is a lack of large roads in the district, and the smaller roads are of poor quality. Similarly, the rail links are currently only on a branchline.
- Public transport, in both urban and rural areas needs to be affordable, and service the correct links, such as rural areas to employment areas. It was also mentioned that there is currently no public transport provider offering public transport links to Cambridge. But who is responsible for this, and how can it be addressed in the LDF?
- Economic growth including local businesses, job opportunities (for both the young and the whole population) and broadband inequalities across the district. The current situation creates high levels of out-commuting, which could be addressed by:
  - The loss of less employment land for housing
  - A larger focus on retail and non-commercial office floorspace
  - Increasing the amount of higher-skilled jobs in the district
  - Improving broadband coverage (which can benefit small businesses, particularly in rural areas, and increase working from home). But is this an LDF issue? And is the situation already being dealt with?
- Improving skills and education was seen as a key focus to be addressed across all demographics – as an example, it was mentioned that at foundation year level, 2 areas of the district are in the top 3% most deprived nationally. It is not just an issue at GCSE, A-Level or adult education level.
- Population growth, and the issues surrounding an ageing local population. This also increases associated health issues. There are also issues surrounding obesity.
- A lack of healthcare facilities in the district, as well as a lack of care-homes. These issues are particularly prominent in Witham.

- Rural affordable housing. Is it suitable for particular areas regarding design and local character. Also are units going to those who need and want rural affordable housing?
- Regarding development in rural areas, village boundaries/envelopes need to be protected and coalescence between settlements stopped.
- Climate change issues need to be at the forefront of planning control. This includes issues such as:
  - Flood risk management
  - Development in suitable locations
  - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
  - The retention, protection and enhancement of open space
  - Water quality
  - Water scarcity
  - The Code for Sustainable Homes

## **2.4 Combined Group Discussion – Sustainability Objectives**

Handouts were issued that showed the Sustainability Objectives used in the SA of the Core Strategy DPD for the district. Alongside the 15 Objectives were the baseline information and the plans and programmes from which they were derived. The handout has been included in Appendix C. The issues raised regarding the Sustainability Objectives were:

- The previous Sustainability Objective 1 (safe environments and community cohesion) in the Core Strategy SA has a negative wording. If this were to be replicated for the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan SAs, this should have a positive and more inspirational wording.
- Sustainability Objective 4, regarding the promotion of town centre vitality and viability, should be rolled out to cover all centres and settlements with a service or employment function.
- The previous Sustainability Objective 11 in the Core Strategy SA, regarding the reduction of contributions to climate change, does not appear to be derived from information in the Code for Sustainable Homes. It was discussed that statistical data on energy consumption in the domestic sector recognises the importance of household emissions.
- The Sustainability Objectives in the Core Strategy SA have been derived from Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs). As these are to be superseded by the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), how will new objectives be derived? It was discussed that the timetables for the Sustainability Appraisal and the NPPF allow the current series of PPSs and PPGs to continue to be valid at this stage. For future stages, the NPPF will be referenced instead.

## **2.5 Combined Group Discussion – Any Other Issues...**

Other issues and topics for debate raised during the workshop were:

- It was discussed that a lot of the issues mentioned throughout the workshop weren't exclusive to the district, but relevant to both the county and the region. Reasons for this included:
  - The density of the population in the East of England
  - There has been historically fewer ministers in the East of England, thus the region has had comparatively less lobbying power than other regions.
  - There has thus been a historical lack of infrastructure funding, and the previous targets and allocations of the previous East of England Plan (RSS) wouldn't have been able to be supported by existing infrastructure.
- It was further elaborated whether the Integrated County Strategy (ICS) could ease these pressures and improve growth through bidding for funds.
- Rail issues were explained due to franchise operators traditionally only having 4-5 years; therefore they can't get the funding necessary for any improvements of the desired scale. It was raised that this is beginning to change, with franchises for 15 years plus becoming more common. Specifically regarding the Braintree branchline, the current franchise is for 2-3 years, however at the end of that there is an option for a further 15 years.
- The new NPPF will supersede existing PPSs and PPGs, however Development management Policies can reiterate them, and that level of detail, if there is a perceived gap in the NPPF relevant to the district.
- Regarding Neighbourhood Plans; they can run in parallel with the Site Allocations DPD if local communities are keen to get involved.
- It was discussed that economic growth is at the centre of most of the current issues in the district and central to achieving most objectives; however there are a lot of overarching factors that can influence this and stimulate investment, including improving landscapes and townscapes. It was also raised that there should be no prioritisation of issues in that sense, as a holistic approach is needed.

### 3 CONCLUSION

The workshop highlighted a range of perceived sustainability issues covering Braintree District from a local perspective; however it is acknowledged that the findings and conclusions of the workshop are just a snapshot of the issues from those stakeholders present and not truly reflective of the whole district.

The top five issues from each of the two breakout groups represent some of the most important issues for the stakeholders present. When analysed together it is apparent that some of the issues are universal amongst the groups. Examples of this include concerns over transport infrastructure to support new development and public transport, which were both identified as important issues. Combined, the 10 top issues can be grouped into 10 key sustainability issues:

- Ensuring the balance between jobs and homes.
- Transport infrastructure to support new development.
- Climate change and flood risk management.
- Rural affordable housing.
- Public transport in both urban and rural areas.
- Out-commuting, parking and accessibility.
- Coalescence and protecting village envelopes.
- Economic growth: job opportunities, local businesses and broadband.
- Population growth: ageing population and increasing health issues.
- Lack of healthcare.

Each one of these sustainability issues covers more specific issues within Braintree District. These sub-issues will be incorporated into the SA framework to support the key sustainability issues listed above.

#### 3.1 Next Steps

The findings from this workshop will be used in conjunction with the analysis of baseline data and a review of relevant plans and programmes to develop the SA objectives against which the Braintree Site Allocations and Development Management Plan documents will be assessed. The SA objectives will be outlined in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, which will be drafted for wider consultation prior to the final approval of the SA framework.

## APPENDIX A

### Stakeholder Workshop 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012 Facilitators

Forename	Surname	Organisation
Emma	Woods	Spatial Planning & Regeneration Team, ECC
Laura	Bennett	Spatial Planning & Regeneration Team, ECC
Jonathan	Crane	Spatial Planning & Regeneration Team, ECC

### Braintree District Council

Forename	Surname	Organisation
Cllr Roger	Walters	Great Notley and Braintree West & Chairman of the LDF Panel
Eleanor	Dash	Braintree District Council
Juliet	Kirkaldy	Braintree District Council

### Attendance List

Forename	Surname	Organisation
Kevin	Fraser	Essex County Council
Brenda	Baker	BID
Neil	Dinwiddie	Environment Agency
Beverley	McClellan	Colchester Borough Council
Sandra	Scott	Babergh District Council
Alison	Hunt	Black Notley Parish Council
Jackie	Smith	Black Notley Parish Council
Tim	Wheeler	Cressing Parish Council
Martyn	Phillips	Rayne Parish Council
Cllr Corrine	Thompson	Witham South Ward
Cllr Steve	Bolter	Gestingthorpe
Cllr Wendy	Scattergood	Heddingham and Maplestead
Richard	Parmee	Landscape Services
Mark	Squire	Witham Town Council
Alison	Jennings	Braintree District Council
Zoe	Myddelton	Braintree District Council

Forename	Surname	Organisation
Cllr Patrick	Horner	Witham West Ward
Carolyn	Johnson	Braintree District Council
Sandra	Green	Braintree District Council
Kathryn	Carpenter	Braintree District Council
Cllr Bob	Wright	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall Ward
Cllr David	Bebb	Hatfield Peverel

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# APPENDIX B

## Stakeholder Workshop Presentation

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Braintree District Council  
Local Development Framework  
Sustainability Appraisal Workshop

20<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Emma Woods

Essex County Council

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## Introductions and Agenda

- 1) Introductions
- 2) LDF Update
- 3) Sustainability Appraisals
- 4) Break-out groups
- 5) Discussion
- 6) Next Steps

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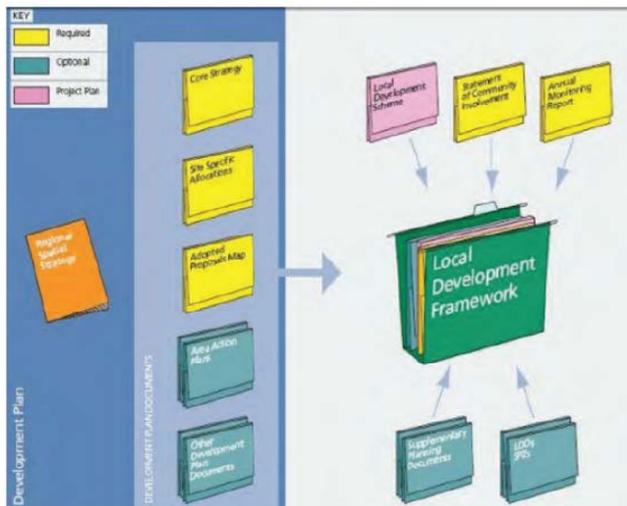
## LDF Update

### What is the Local Development Framework? (LDF)

- Revised planning system introduced LDF's in 1994
- Replaced Structure and Local Plans.
- Portfolio of planning documents, setting out how development will be managed.
- Two main documents ( plus Proposals Map) underpinned by sustainability appraisals:-
  - **The Core Strategy**
  - **Site Allocations and Development Management Plan**
- Also Annual Monitoring Report, Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Scheme (LDF Timetable )

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## LDF Update Continued...

- **Braintree District Core Strategy**
- Strategy for development of District to 2026
- Adopted in September 2011
- Provision of a minimum of 4,637 dwellings in District
- Target of 14,000 jobs
- 4 strategic growth locations - urban extensions to Braintree and Witham
- Regeneration sites in town centres and in 2 key service villages
- Infrastructure requirements and provision
- Core Policies

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## LDF Update Continued...

- **Site Allocations and Development Management Plan**
- Currently being prepared
- Must be in conformity with Core Strategy
- Defines development boundaries of towns and villages
- Allocates sites for housing, employment and other land uses
- Protects areas from development
- Sets out Development Management Policies

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## LDF Update Continued...

- **Timetable of Site Allocations and Development Management Plan**
- Reports to LDF Panel on site allocations December 2011- March 2012
- Report on Development Management Policies to LDF Panel March 2012.
- Preparation of evidence studies - on Employment Sites, Need for Care Homes and Retail Provision January- April 2012 and reports to Panel on these issues.
- LDF Panel approves draft plan options June 2012
- SA/SEA of Draft Plan options June-August 2012

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## LDF Update Continued...

- **Timetable Continued**
- Public consultation on draft Plan options September-October 2012
- LDF Panel considers responses to draft plan options and revises plan and selects preferred option November-December 2012
- Council approves Draft Plan Preferred Option January 2013
- Submission of Draft Plan Preferred Option to Government February 2013
- Examination by Planning Inspector May - June 2013
- Inspector's Report August 2013
- Adoption by Council October 2013

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## Sustainability Appraisal

- SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment
- SA – Sustainability Appraisal
- This joint assessment is often called 'sustainability appraisal' (SA).

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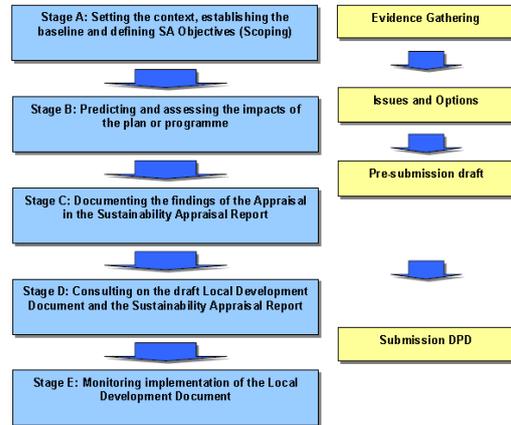
## So what is a Sustainability Appraisal



- SEA is a process
- Outputs are:
  - Scoping Report
  - Environmental Report
  - Adoption Statement
  - Monitoring Arrangements
- Iterative process

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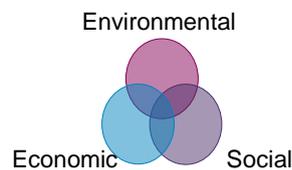
## Five Stage Approach to SA



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## Break-out Groups

- Set out the key Economic, Environmental and Social issues for Braintree.
- Identify your groups 'Top 5 issues for Braintree'.



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## Sustainability Objectives

- 1) Safe Environments
- 2) Decent homes
- 3) Improve health
- 4) Town centres
- 5) Economic growth
- 6) Biological and geological
- 7) Sustainable transport
- 8) Promote accessibility.
- 9) Education and skills
- 10) Cultural heritage
- 11) Climatic change
- 12) Water quality
- 13) Flooding
- 14) Air quality
- 15) Landscapes and townscapes

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## How will we use the Sustainability Objectives

- Appraise Braintree's LDF Options against the sustainability objectives
- Assessment will consider the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects
- Analyse the spatial extent of the effects
- Propose alternatives/recommendations

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## Next Steps

Consulting on the scope of the SA

The Scoping Report will be subject to a five week consultation with the three statutory consultees:

- Environment Agency,
- Natural England, and
- English Heritage.

Additional public consultation.

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## Any Questions

- Email  
[emma.woods@essex.gov.uk](mailto:emma.woods@essex.gov.uk)
- Telephone  
01245 437566

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## APPENDIX C

### Core Strategy Scoping Report SA Objectives

Plans and Programmes	Baseline Information	Sustainability Objective
PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) ODPM	Braintree has an ageing population. It is ranked within the 40% least deprived nationally.	1) Create Safe Environments which do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion
PPS 3 – Housing (2006) ODPM	<p>In 2008/09 there was the lowest number of net additional dwellings completed within the time period studied. Dwelling prices are lower than the county, regional and national equivalents, and mean dwelling price has remained below the county average since 2001.</p> <p>Social housing within the district is provided predominantly by RSLs rather than by the Local Authority.</p> <p>In 2008/09 the district recorded the joint third highest number of homeless acceptances in priority need within Essex.</p>	2) To provide everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home
PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) ODPM	The health of the population in Braintree is generally better than the England average; however road injuries and deaths, together with physical activity and obesity are worse than average.	3) To improve the health of the Districts residents and mitigate/reduce potential health inequalities.
PPS 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009) CLG	The district has the smallest proportion of retail and non-commercial office floorspace (as a proportion of the total Commercial and Industrial floorspace) at county, regional and national levels.	4) To promote town centre vitality and viability

Plans and Programmes	Baseline Information	Sustainability Objective
<p>PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) ODPM</p> <p>PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009) CLG</p>	<p>Braintree has a fairly even split of VAT and/or PAYE based local units located in rural and urban areas, as opposed to the national picture where almost 75% of these are located within the latter. Higher than average proportion of businesses employing 0-4 persons. The largest numbers of businesses are within the construction sector, which employs an above average proportion of people. Process plant and machine operatives are employed within the district at levels above the regional and national averages.</p> <p>Levels of out-commuting to work in higher paid jobs than those available within the district. A higher level of unemployment than the county as a whole, and from February 2008 to 2009 the number of residents claiming job seekers allowance nearly doubled. For those in work weekly wages are above the regional and national levels.</p>	<p>5) To achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth</p>
<p>PPS 9 – Biological and Geological Conservation (2005) ODPM</p>	<p>There are four SSSIs within the district, the majority of Glemsford Pits SSSI is not currently complying with PSA targets. There are six Local Nature Reserves and 251 Local Wildlife Sites distributed across the district.</p>	<p>6) To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment</p>
<p>PPG 13 - Transport (2001) ODPM</p>	<p>Braintree has above average car ownership, with above average numbers of households owning two vehicles or more. In accordance with this over 40% of residents drive to get to work, while fewer residents than the national and regional average cycle or use buses for their commute. A comparatively large proportion of residents in the district work from home.</p>	<p>7) To promote more sustainable transport choices.</p>
<p>PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) ODPM</p>	<p>Areas in the north of Braintree are over 90 minutes by public transport or walking to employment and retail centres and secondary schools in the district. The nearest centres are in Haverhill and Sudbury (Suffolk) for much of the northern part of the district.</p>	<p>8) Promote accessibility.</p>

Plans and Programmes	Baseline Information	Sustainability Objective
Braintree District Council – Community Strategy (A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2026)	GCSE attainment is lower than regional and national levels.	9) To improve the education and skills of the population
PPS 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment (March 2010) CLG	There are 3,190 listed buildings, 2,939 of which are Grade II. There are 40 Scheduled Monuments, and 39 Conservation Areas. Essex Historic Environment Record contains approximately 3,252 archaeological records relating to Braintree.	10) To maintain and enhance cultural heritage and assets within Braintree
Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to PPS 1 (December 2007) CLG	Scenarios suggest there will be warmer wetter winters, and warmer drier summers in the East of England. Braintree has been consuming more energy in total than the Essex average, but achieved a per capita reduction in CO2 emissions. The majority of energy is consumed by the transport sector, closely followed by the domestic sector.	11) To reduce contributions to climatic change
PPS 23 – Planning and Pollution Control and Annex 1. (2004) ODPM	Water Resource Management Units in Braintree are over-abstracted or classified as having no water available. The majority of water bodies within Braintree are given a moderate overall potential. However the River Blackwater and the River Chelmer are both given a poor current status.	12) To improve water quality
PPS 25 – Development and Flood Risk (March 2010) CLG	Consideration to flooding from overland flow should be given for developments occurring throughout the district, but with particular regard to Bocking, Braintree, Witham and Coggeshall.	13) To reduce the risk of flooding
PPS 23 – Planning and Pollution Control and Annex 1 (2004) ODPM	Air and Noise quality issues all related to the major road network within the district.	14) To improve air quality

<b>Plans and Programmes</b>	<b>Baseline Information</b>	<b>Sustainability Objective</b>
Sustainable Futures: Integrated Sustainability Framework for the East of England (January 2009)	In 2008/09 over 77% of completions were on PDL. The majority of agricultural land in Braintree is Grades 2 and 3. The district contains Special Landscape Areas	15) To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes

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