



# RIDGE

**EXAMINATION OF THE  
BRAINTREE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN  
SECTION 2. MATTER 1**

**FOR ACORN BRAINTREE LIMITED**

June 2021

## EXAMINATION OF THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN SECTION 2

June 2021

Prepared for

Acorn Braintree Ltd.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This representation has been made by Ridge and Partners LLP on behalf of Acorn Braintree Limited to answer the matters, issues and questions set out by the Inspector in relation to the Braintree District Local Plan Section 2 (BLP Section 2) which has been submitted to the Secretary of State under Regulation 22(3) of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.2. Our client continues to promote land to the west of Braintree, between Rayne Road and A120, through the BLP Section 2, having submitted representations for its suitability and availability to deliver circa. 1500 residential dwellings (class C3) on 32.75ha of land; an 800m<sup>2</sup> local centre (use classes A1/A2/D1/D2 – no more than 200m<sup>2</sup> A1) on 0.29ha of land; 0.65ha employment land (class B1); 12.3ha of public open space; and associated highway works with new accesses via Pods Brook Road and Rayne Road. The site is an omission site, and we note that the Inspector does not want to hear the merits of omission sites as part of this stage of the Examination process.
- 1.3. Specifically, this representation seeks to address “Main Matter 1: Legal Requirements and Overarching Issues relating solely to the policies within BLP Section 2” of the Inspector’s list.

## **2. MATTER 1: MAIN MATTER 1 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND OVERARCHING ISSUES RELATING SOLELY TO THE POLICIES WITHIN BLP SECTION 2**

2.1 The following section relates to Main Matter 1: Legal Requirements and Overarching Issues relating solely to the policies within BLP Section 2 where the Inspector raises a number of questions. That which we wish to comment on are as follows:

*“• Has BLP Section 2 been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and have the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment been met? Is it clear how the SA influenced the final plan and dealt with mitigation measures?”*

2.2 The BLP Section 2 (which was prepared and then published in 2017) was formulated on the basis of a vision for development that saw a significant level of development at two garden communities. However, following the examination of the BLP Section 1, these two garden communities have now been removed from the BLP Section 1 and therefore the draft BLP Section 2, published in 2017, is clearly based upon aspects of a vision and spatial strategy that no longer apply.

2.3 This raises a question as to whether the BLP Section 2 has been properly assessed for the purposes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulation 2004. If the spatial vision underpinning the plan has been altered, then it will be important to demonstrate that reasonable alternatives to the revised vision (i.e. the vision without garden communities) has been assessed. The Plan has failed to do this and therefore the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment have not been met.