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Report on The Salings Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034

An Examination undertaken for Braintree District Council with the support of The Salings Parish Council on the September 2020 submission version of the Plan.

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of The Salings Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan/TSNP) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- the Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – The Salings Parish Council (the Parish Council);
- the Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – The Salings Neighbourhood Area;
- the Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – from 2019 to 2034; and,
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

The Salings Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034

- 1.1 The Salings Parish lies to the west of the District of Braintree, some 5 miles to the north-west of Braintree and seven miles north-east of Great Dunmow. At the 2011 Census, the Parish had a population of 475 persons and 204 dwellings.
- 1.2 The Parish is situated to the north of both the B1256 road (which is the former A120) and the new A120 road between Great Dunmow and Braintree. There is one bus service linking Great Saling village with Braintree, but more frequent services do follow the B1256.
- 1.3 In April 2019 the administrative parishes of Great Saling and Bardfield Saling combined to form one parish, The Salings. The Parish contains the larger settlement of Great Saling, the smaller settlement of Bardfield Saling (also known as Little Saling) and some small hamlets including Crows' Green and Blake End.
- 1.4 Records indicate that Robert de Salynges was the owner of the manor during the reign of King Henry II in the 12th century, which may be the derivation for the Saling name. Great Saling developed as a small nucleated village between Saling Hall and Saling Grove surrounding a

central green. Bardfield Saling is a more dispersed settlement set within countryside. The Parish has a rich heritage, with over 60 Listed Buildings. At Great Saling, the Grade II* Listed church of St. James the Great dates in part from the 12th century. The church is situated close to Saling Hall, which is a Grade II* Listed timber-framed manor house dating from the 17th century. At the southern end of the Great Saling Conservation Area is Saling Grove, a Grade II Listed 18th century house with gardens laid out by Humphry Repton. At Bardfield Saling, the Grade I Listed church of St. Peter and St. Paul dates from the 14th century.

- 1.5 Probably the most significant event of modern times in the history of The Salings was the building of the first United States airfield in the country during the Second World War. Around half of the airfield is in the neighbouring parish of Stebbing. It was then known as Andrews Field USAAF Station 485 after Lieutenant General Frank Andrews, commander of the US forces in Europe until his death in an accident in 1943. It was built rapidly during 1942/43 using hardcore rubble from the London Blitz. At the end of the War, the airfield quickly fell into disuse and was abandoned by 1948. However, the airfield was brought back into aviation use, now named Andrewsfield, when it was licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority in 1976.
- 1.6 Since the Second World War, there have been other changes affecting The Salings. Fewer people are now employed in agriculture but there have been increases in employment within the leisure and tourism sectors, such as a popular craft centre at Blake End. However, there has also been a decline in local services, and there is no longer a shop, post office or public house in the Parish.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.7 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Plan by Braintree District Council (the District Council), with the agreement of the Parish Council.
- 1.8 I am a chartered town planner, with over 45 years of experience in planning. I have worked in both the public and private sectors and have experience of examining both local plans and neighbourhood plans. I have also served on a Government working group considering measures to improve the local plan system and undertaken peer reviews on behalf of the Planning Advisory Service. I therefore have the appropriate qualifications and experience to carry out this independent examination.
- 1.9 I am independent of the qualifying body and the local authority and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.10 As the independent examiner, I am required to produce this report and recommend either:

- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
- (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
- (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

1.11 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:

- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
- Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.
- Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').

1.12 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

1.13 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)¹; and
- meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.14 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the Habitats Regulations').²

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

2.1 The Development Plan for this part of Braintree District Council, at the time The Salings Neighbourhood Plan was prepared (not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development), comprised the Braintree District Local Plan Review and the Braintree District Core Strategy Local Development Document. The Braintree District Local Plan Review was adopted on 25 July 2005. A number of policies in the adopted Local Plan Review expired, or were superseded, after its adoption in 2005, and those parts of the document were then replaced by the Braintree District Core Strategy Local Development Document ('the Core Strategy'). This was adopted on 19 September 2011 and covers the period 2011 to 2026. The Core Strategy was accompanied by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Proposals Map, which replaced the previous Local Plan Review Proposals Map. The LDF Proposals Map defined Inset Areas, with Inset Map 31 covering Great Saling.

2.2 Prior to 2014, the District Council was also working on a Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) to replace the remaining Local Plan Review policies. However, as a result of new research, the decision was taken not to submit the Plan for examination and to then begin work immediately on a new Local Plan. At the Full Council meeting on 15 September 2014, it was agreed that the ADMP (as amended by

¹ The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

² This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

further changes) be used for the purposes of development management decision making.

- 2.3 Work then commenced on a new draft Local Plan 2013-2033 in two sections. The Braintree District Local Plan 2013-2033 Section 1: North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan ('the Section 1 Plan') was prepared jointly by the District Council, with Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council and was submitted for examination in 2017. Following a lengthy examination, the Inspector's report was published in December 2020. On 22 February 2021, the District Council formally adopted the Section 1 Plan, which incorporates the Inspector's recommended main modifications in accordance with Section 23(3) of the 2004 Act. The adopted Section 1 Plan contains the suite of strategic policies for the three authorities, and constitutes part of the Development Plan for the District for the purposes of assessing the Basic Conditions.³
- 2.4 The Section 2 Plans were prepared individually by each of the three North Essex authorities for their respective districts and were also submitted for examination in 2017. In due course, the Braintree District Local Plan Review and Core Strategy will be replaced, in full, on the formal adoption of the Section 2 Plan. This contains further specific local policies and proposals for Braintree District, again for the period 2013-2033. However, the examination of the Section 2 Plan has not yet been concluded, with the hearing sessions provisionally to be held in July 2021. Therefore, in assessing general conformity with the strategic policies of the extant Development Plan for the area, I do not consider the Section 2 Plan as it is not presently scheduled to be formally adopted by the District Council until Autumn/Winter 2021. However, I do have regard to the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁴ which states that it is important to minimise any conflicts between policies in the neighbourhood plan and those in the emerging local plan, including housing supply policies. The PPG advises that the reasoning and evidence informing emerging local plans can be relevant to neighbourhood plans. Where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before an up-to-date local plan is in place, the local planning authority and qualifying body should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between their emerging policies and the adopted development plan.
- 2.5 The Basic Conditions Statement (at Section 5) provides an assessment of how each of the eleven policies proposed in the Plan has regard to national policy and are in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan (which in this case, at the time of preparation, comprised the Braintree Local Plan Review 2005 and the Braintree District Core Strategy 2011) and also considers the submission draft Local Plan 2013-2033 (2017) comprising the two sections. As noted above, I now take into account the fact that the Section 1 Plan has been

³ See paragraph 1.13 above.

⁴ PPG Reference ID: 41-010-20140306.

adopted by the District Council, and this has important consequences for this examination and my recommended modifications to TSNP.

- 2.6 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The PPG offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. A revised NPPF was published on 19 February 2019 (and updated on 19 June 2019). All references in this report are to the 2019 NPPF and its accompanying PPG.

Submitted Documents

- 2.7 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:
- The submission version of The Salings Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034 (September 2020);
 - the Basic Conditions Statement (May 2020);
 - the Consultation Statement and Appendices A-D (March 2020);
 - the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (March 2020); and
 - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation.⁵
- 2.8 I have also considered the supporting evidence documents that have informed the preparation of the Plan, including the following documents:
- Housing Needs Assessment (Urban Vision);
 - Landscape Assessment Study (Liz Lake Associates);
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (t4ecology); and
 - Housing Needs Survey (RCCE).⁶

Preliminary Questions

- 2.9 Following my appointment as the independent examiner and my initial review of the draft Plan, its supporting documents and representations made at the Regulation 16 stage, I wrote to the District Council and the Parish Council on 14 December 2020⁷ seeking further clarification and information on three matters contained in the submission Plan, as follows:
- Firstly, I noted that the Plan contains numerous references to the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community (WoBGC), examples being at paragraphs 1.0.12-1.0.16, 4.3.7, 4.4.4, Policy SAL5 and Map The District Council's letter of 9 November 2020 (ref: TSNP67-76) stated (at the 3rd paragraph) that "*Since the West of Braintree Garden Community has been removed from the Braintree*

⁵ View at:

https://braintree.objective.co.uk/portal/neighbourhood_plans/tsnp/tsnpre16/tsnp_reg16?tab=files

⁶ View at: <https://salings-pc.gov.uk/salings-parish-council-neighbourhood-plan>

⁷<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control/neighbourhood-planning/8?documentId=261&categoryId=20010>

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Publication Local Plan it is advisable that references to it are removed".

My initial assessment of the Plan confirmed that modifications will be necessary in order to delete the extensive references to the WoBGC, and that such deletions are likely to necessitate further consequential modifications across the Plan.

In order to enable me to consider the full extent of the necessary modifications, I therefore requested the following additional information from the District Council:

- i. a note setting out the reasoning and justification for the removal of the WoBGC from the Braintree Publication Local Plan, together with the date of that decision, and whether or not that removal is now the subject of the representations/submissions to the ongoing examination of the Local Plan to the effect that the WoBGC should remain as part of the Local Plan, either as originally proposed or in a different form.
 - ii. a note setting out whether the District Council's decision to remove the WoBGC from the Local Plan has any further policy implications for the Neighbourhood Area, notably in respect of the Policies Map (at page 65 of the Plan). In particular, I note that the District Council's representation concerning Policy SAL9 states that the Policy "*could be considered to undermine the strategic policies contained in the emerging Local Plan ...*". This Regulation 16 representation repeats part of the District Council's Regulation 14 consultation response, which clearly predated the removal of the WoBGC from the Local Plan. Can the District Council please confirm that they continue to have concerns regarding the wording of Policy SAL9 in light of the decision to remove the WoBGC?
 - iii. confirmation that the reference to the Coggeshall Neighbourhood Plan in the final paragraph of the District Council's letter dated 9 November 2020, referred to above, was an error.
- Secondly, with regard to Policy SAL3 (Protecting Key Views and Ensuring Visual Connectivity with the Surrounding Countryside), Map 3 and Appendix 2 in the Plan, I invited the District Council to provide me with a note explaining how Key View 8 "*may be difficult to maintain in the longer term*", and the factors that led the District Council to make a representation on that matter.
 - Thirdly, with regard to Policy SAL11 (Tourism and Leisure Development) and Map 1 in the Plan, I invited the District Council and/or the Qualifying Body to confirm that, following the necessary deletion of Map 1 (on Page 9 of the Plan), there are presently no other development proposals which would affect the continued use of

Andrewsfield as an operational airfield and community facility as set out in that Policy.

- 2.10 In response to my letter of 14 December 2020, the District Council provided me with responses to the preliminary questions on 15 January 2021.⁸ I have taken account of the additional information contained in these responses as part of my full assessment of the draft Plan, alongside the documents listed at paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 above.

Site Visit

- 2.11 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 4 January 2021 to familiarise myself with it and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan, evidential documents and representations.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.12 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections and comments regarding the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum. I am satisfied that the material supplied is sufficiently comprehensive for me to be able to deal with the matters raised under the written representations procedure, and that there was not a requirement to convene a public hearing as part of this examination. In all cases the information provided has enabled me to reach a conclusion on the matters concerned.

Modifications

- 2.13 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications in full in the Appendix.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by The Salings Parish Council. An application to the District Council for the Parish Council areas of Great Saling and Bardfield Saling to be designated a neighbourhood planning area was made on 4 October 2016 and was approved by the District Council on 6 February 2017, following public consultation during November/December 2016.

⁸ <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/directory-record/1057713/01-bdc-tsnp-bdc-response-to-examiner-questions-15-jan-2021>

- 3.2 The designated Neighbourhood Area comprises the whole of the Parish of The Salings, which is the title of the administrative area that was formerly covered by the two Parishes of Great Saling and Bardfield Saling, following their combination into a single Parish on 1 April 2019. Neither the submission Plan nor the Basic Conditions Statement contains a map of the designated area (whilst the designated area is shown on Map 1 at page 9 in the Plan, that map is entitled 'Proposed New Garden Community West of Braintree' and is, in any event, recommended for deletion as part of my recommended modification PM6). The omission of a specific map showing the designated area must be rectified, and recommended modification **PM1** addresses that matter. The Salings Neighbourhood Plan is the only Neighbourhood Plan in the designated area.
- 3.3 The Parish Council is the designated body for the preparation of the Plan. The preparation of the Plan has been led by the Parish Council through a Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, comprising a number of Parish Councillors, residents and other representatives of the local community.

Plan Period

- 3.4 The draft Plan specifies (on page 4) the period to which it is to take effect, which is 2019 to 2034. This encompasses the plan period for the recently adopted Section 1 Plan (2013-2033) and the proposed plan period for the emerging Section 2 Local Plan for Braintree District, which will also cover the period 2013-2033. I consider that TSNP should also indicate its Plan period on the front cover to assist users and recommended modification **PM2** addresses that point.

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.5 The Consultation Statement and its Appendices sets out a full record of the Plan's preparation and its associated engagement and consultation activity. The decision to undertake the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan was taken in 2016, following an initial meeting on 10 August 2016 and a 'Launch Workshop' on 29 October 2016. Residents and Business Surveys were undertaken between March-May 2017, together with informal community engagement at major village events during 2017.
- 3.6 Further community engagement took place in 2018 prior to the preparation and publication of the draft Plan for Regulation 14 consultation.
- 3.7 The Regulation 14 draft Plan was published for public consultation from 1 September to 31 October 2019. A total of 56 responses were received from residents, together with responses from Braintree District Council, Essex County Council and potential developers. Following this consultation, the draft Plan was amended where considered appropriate to take account of the responses.

- 3.8 The Consultation Statement sets out a comprehensive record of the community engagement and consultation that was undertaken during the preparation of the Plan, including summaries of the responses that were received at each stage.
- 3.9 At its meeting held on 13 May 2020, the Parish Council resolved to formally submit the Plan under Regulation 15 to the District Council for examination, and the Plan was duly submitted on 8 September 2020. Regulation 16 consultation was then held for a period of six weeks from 28 September to 9 November 2020. I have taken account of the 33 responses then received, as well as the Consultation Statement. I am satisfied that a transparent, fair and inclusive consultation process has been followed for the Plan, that has had regard to advice in the PPG on plan preparation and is procedurally compliant in accordance with the legal requirements.

Development and Use of Land

- 3.10 Subject to the modification I recommend to Policy SAL7 in PM7 (see paragraph 4.49 below), the draft Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

- 3.11 From my review of the documents before me, the draft Plan does not include policies or proposals that relate to any of the categories of excluded development.⁹

Human Rights

- 3.12 Neither the District Council nor any other party has raised any issues concerning a breach of, or incompatibility with Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). From my assessment of the Plan, its accompanying supporting documents and the consultation responses made to the Plan at the Regulations 14 and 16 stages, I am satisfied that the Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998. I consider that none of the objectives and policies in the Plan will have a negative impact on groups with protected characteristics. Many will have a positive impact.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

- 4.1 Essex County Council – Place Services, issued a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report in March 2020 in accordance with the

⁹ The meaning of 'excluded development' is set out in s.61K of the 1990 Act.

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Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, ('the SEA Regulations'). This Screening Report was submitted alongside the draft Plan and concludes that the policies in the draft Plan are not likely to have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore an SEA is not considered to be required. The Screening Report has been the subject of consultation with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England, and none of these bodies raised any concerns such that a SEA would be required for the Plan.

- 4.2 I have considered the SEA methodology by which the Plan was duly screened to determine whether the Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, bearing in mind also that the policies in the adopted Braintree Local Plan documents were also subject to separate sustainability appraisal at various stages. Overall, I am satisfied that a proportionate approach has been taken and that the Plan was screened to take full account of any potential environmental effects upon interests of importance in the Plan area.
- 4.3 The Plan was also screened by Essex County Council in March 2020 in order to establish whether the Plan required a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with the 2017 Regulations. North Essex contains three sites of European importance, the Blackwater Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA), the Blackwater Estuary Ramsar site and the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The HRA Screening Assessment, which is also contained within the SEA Screening Report, concluded that the draft Plan is not predicted to have any likely significant effect on any of those sites, in combination with other plans and projects, and therefore did not require an HRA. I have also noted that Natural England has not raised any concerns regarding the necessity for an HRA.
- 4.4 Therefore, I consider that on the basis of the information provided and my independent consideration of the SEA/HRA Screening Report and the Plan itself, I am satisfied that the Plan is compatible with EU obligations under retained EU law.

Main Assessment

- 4.5 The NPPF states (at paragraph 29) that "*Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan*" and also that "*Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies*". The NPPF (at paragraph 11) also sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It goes on to state (at paragraph 13) that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.

- 4.6 Having considered above whether the Plan complies with various legal and procedural requirements, it is now necessary to deal with the question of whether it complies with the remaining Basic Conditions (see paragraph 1.13 of this report), particularly the regard it pays to national policy and guidance, the contribution it makes to sustainable development and whether it is in general conformity with strategic development plan policies.
- 4.7 I test the Plan against the Basic Conditions by considering specific issues of compliance of the Plan's 11 policies, which address the following themes: Heritage; Natural Environment; Housing and Design; and The Rural Economy. As part of that assessment, I consider whether the policies in the Plan are sufficiently clear and unambiguous, having regard to advice in the PPG. A policy should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.¹⁰ I recommend some modifications as a result.

Synopsis

- 4.8 The Plan is addressing a period up to 2034 and seeks to provide a clear planning framework to guide residents, businesses, the District Council and developers as to how the community wish to shape future development in the Plan area during that period. Section 4 of the Plan contains specific policies in respect of each of the themes listed above.
- 4.9 Section 1 of the Plan provides an introduction to the Plan following the designation of the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area in February 2017. However, the Plan does not include a map of the designated area and my recommended modification PM1 (see paragraph 3.2 above) addresses that deficiency.
- 4.10 Section 2 of the Plan provides an overview of The Salings today and the Plan's vision for the future. The development of the vision follows the Residents Survey, and how residents would like The Salings to develop. It states that "*Our vision for the Salings is for a safe, friendly, tranquil community with a village feel, which conserves our historic buildings and natural habitats – particularly our wildlife and woodlands – and with easy access to the open countryside*".
- 4.11 Section 3 describes the issues facing The Salings, under the headings of Heritage; Natural Environment; Housing; Community and Leisure Facilities; Highways; The Rural Economy; and the Design Character of The Salings. This section of the Plan contains a detailed description and appraisal of the Parish at the present time under those headings, together with an assessment of issues raised by residents during the course of the

¹⁰ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

Plan's preparation and the relevant conclusions of the supporting evidence base documents (see paragraph 2.8 above).

- 4.12 A number of these issues are non-planning matters, such as speeding traffic and the lack of public transport. Where appropriate, these issues are taken forward as Community Actions in Section 5 of the Plan, which largely cover the topics of health and wellbeing, community and leisure facilities and highway matters. Most of the actions will be taken by the Parish Council, in conjunction with other relevant statutory authorities.
- 4.13 On the matters affecting the land-use planning policies in the Plan, the key issue raised concerning the Heritage of the Plan area was to ensure that the Plan seeks to maintain and preserve the important local features. With regard to the Natural Environment, the visual amenity value of the landscape, and in particular the protection of key views, was a significant issue raised. Housing provision was a specific part of the Residents Survey, following which a Housing Needs Assessment was commissioned. This work was undertaken by Urban Vision and was a 'top down' assessment calculated from the adopted Core Strategy.
- 4.14 The Basic Conditions Statement (at Sections 5 and 6) describes how the Plan, and its Policies, has regard to national policies contained in the NPPF and contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. The Table within Section 5 of the Basic Conditions Statement sets out how each of the Plan's 11 policies are consistent with the national policies contained in the NPPF and in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan Review, the Core Strategy and the submission draft Local Plan 2013-2033 (2017), Section 1 of which has since been formally adopted by the District Council on 22 February 2021.
- 4.15 I consider that overall, subject to the detailed modifications I recommend to specific policies below, that individually and collectively the Plan's policies will contribute to the achievement of sustainable patterns of development. There are also a number of detailed matters which require amendment to ensure that the policies have the necessary regard to national policy and are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the District Council, the most important of which relate to the recent adoption of the Section 1 Plan. Accordingly, I recommend modifications in this report in order to address these matters.

Specific Issues of Compliance

- 4.16 I turn now to consider the proposed policies in the draft Plan, and I take into account, where appropriate, the representations that have been made concerning those policies. Section 4 of the Plan contains the proposed policies for the Plan area under the headings of Heritage; Natural Environment; Housing and Design; and The Rural Economy.

Heritage

- 4.17 Section 4.1 is concerned with the heritage of the Plan area and contains one policy, Policy SAL1 (Conserving Our Historic Heritage). This is a lengthy policy containing clauses addressing heritage assets throughout the Plan area, development proposals outside the defined settlement boundary of Great Saling, development proposals within the proposed Special Character Area of Bardfield Saling, the preservation of soft frontages to properties and the design of signage and lighting.
- 4.18 As drafted, it is not entirely clear which aspects of the Policy apply to the Plan area as a whole and which aspects apply to specific areas within the Plan area. Furthermore, I find it surprising that the Policy only makes a limited reference to the Great Saling Conservation Area, which contains the greatest concentration of heritage assets in the Plan area. Taking account of a number of representations concerning this Policy, I consider that it should be redrafted to improve its clarity, its effectiveness and its consistency with national policy, and to ensure that it can be readily understood by users of the Plan. Notwithstanding that a footnote to the Policy states that the clause concerning the preservation of 'soft frontages' to properties would apply "*where this does not conflict with Permitted Development rights*", it is the case that Permitted Development rights could still be infringed by this clause, and I consider that the clause should be deleted. I therefore recommend modification **PM3** to address the redrafting of this Policy and its title.
- 4.19 With recommended modification PM3, I consider that the draft Plan's section on heritage and its accompanying policy (SAL1) is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Braintree Local Plan documents, has regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

Natural Environment

- 4.20 Section 4.2 is concerned with the natural environment of the Plan area and contains four policies (Policies SAL2-SAL5) covering various aspects of the natural environment.
- 4.21 Policy SAL2 (Conserving Our Landscape and Its Key Ecological Features) is also a lengthy policy and, as with Policy SAL1, from the perspective of a future user of the Plan it is difficult to understand and interpret the full requirements of the Policy in relation to prospective development proposals. It is the case that the Policy lacks the necessary clarity for users of the Plan, and that, as drafted, it is rather too complex. After careful consideration, including the representations that were made concerning this Policy, I consider that the Policy should be redrafted and that certain material relating to Local Landscape Character Areas and species enhancement should be placed within the supporting justification to the Policy. Indeed, in contrast to the Policy itself, I consider that the

justification to support the Policy is presently rather too brief. I therefore recommend modification **PM4** to address the redrafting of the Policy and the addition of further supporting justification, again to improve its clarity, its effectiveness and its consistency with national policy. This modification takes account of other modifications that I recommend to other parts of the Plan.

- 4.22 Policy SAL3 (Protecting Key Views and Ensuring Visual Connectivity With The Surrounding Countryside) seeks to maintain the visual amenity value of the Plan area by encouraging the design of new developments which respond positively to the area's landscapes, trees and existing buildings. In particular, it seeks to protect 14 Key Views within the Plan area which are valued by the community. These views are notated on Policy Maps 1 and 3 and described more fully at Appendix 2.
- 4.23 In my initial assessment of the Plan and the Regulation 16 representations, I noted that the District Council had raised a concern that Key View 8 (which is a view from Blake End Road towards Parks Farm) may be difficult to maintain in the longer term. As one of the preliminary questions that I raised with the District Council, I sought further background information on this representation. The District Council responded on 15 January 2021 stating that *"the Council was of the opinion that the view would not be maintainable in the long term if the West of Braintree Garden Community came forward. However, as the Garden Community is no longer part of the emerging Local Plan, we withdraw the comment"*.
- 4.24 Taking account of the District Council's response and other representations regarding the Policy, I am satisfied that the Policy is appropriately drafted, and that the 14 Key Views identified on the Policy Maps and described in Appendix 2 are all justified as important views of significant heritage assets, countryside and landscape features within the Plan area. However, arising from the necessity to remove references in the Plan to the previously proposed West of Braintree Garden Community, a minor amendment is required to Appendix 2. This is addressed as part of recommended modification PM6, referenced in paragraph 4.44 below.
- 4.25 Policy SAL4 (Protecting Local Green Spaces) identifies 16 sites (refs. GS01- GS16) for proposed designation as Local Green Spaces. They are described in further detail at Appendix 3 and are shown on Policy Maps 1, 4A and 4B. The proposed Local Green Spaces are in two groups, ten (GS01-GS06/GS10-GS13) at Great Saling and six (GS07-GS09/GS14-GS16) in and around Bardfield Saling. I am satisfied that all landowners of the proposed Local Green Spaces were made aware of the proposed designations at the Regulation 14 consultation stage in 2019, inviting their comments.¹¹ No representations were received from the landowners concerned at that stage or subsequently at the Regulation 16 consultation stage. I have visited each of the proposed Local Green Spaces during the

¹¹ PPG Reference ID: 37-020-20140306.

course of my site visit to the Plan area.

- 4.26 Site GS01 is the Recreational Playing Field adjacent to the Millennium Hall at Great Saling. From my observation, it is clear that it is a well used community resource for sport, children's play, informal recreation and major village events. I am satisfied that its designation as a Local Green Space is justified against the NPPF criteria (paragraphs 99-100), which will safeguard its amenity and recreational value during the Plan period and beyond.
- 4.27 Site GS02 is the Village Green at Great Saling. It is an important space within the Conservation Area containing a number of mature trees. I consider that it is of significant amenity value in the centre of the village and that its designation as a Local Green Space is justified to ensure its protection for the Plan period and thereafter.
- 4.28 Site GS03 is a grassed area in front of housing at Vicarage Close at Great Saling. Although relatively small, it is an important amenity space for the residents of Vicarage Close and contains the village War Memorial. Again, I consider that its designation as a Local Green Space is justified to ensure its protection for the Plan period and beyond.
- 4.29 Site GS04 are the village allotments, situated to the north of Vicarage Close. I observed that the allotments are well maintained and that they clearly provide a valuable resource for local residents. I consider that their designation as a Local Green Space is justified against the NPPF criteria, which should enable them to be retained for the Plan period and thereafter.
- 4.30 Site GS05 is Saling Grove Green which, together with site GS11, comprises part of the Grade II Registered Park and Garden of Saling Grove. The Historic England listing details state:- "*Saling Grove, a park and pleasure ground for which Humphry Repton produced a Red Book in 1790, with subsequent mid-C19 and late C20 additions, is registered as Grade II for the following principal reasons: Saling Grove is by one of the most important and influential landscape designers of the late C18 and early C19 and it is a well preserved example of a late-C18 park and pleasure ground, retaining many key elements such as shrubs and trees, the walled kitchen garden, and the vista over the park to the south*". In view of the fact that sites GS05 and GS11 are both protected at national level as part of a Registered Park and Garden, I do not consider that their designation as Local Green Spaces is necessary to ensure their future long-term protection, notwithstanding that the Local Green Space designation can include sites with other policy protection.¹² I am satisfied that, in this case, the sites are suitably protected, and I therefore recommend their deletion from the Plan as proposed Local Green Spaces, as part of modification **PM5**.

¹² PPG Reference ID: 37-011-20140306.

- 4.31 Site GS06 is described as the St. James the Great Churchyard at Great Saling. However, I note that the church building is included within the proposed Local Green Space designation on Policy Map 4A. In my assessment, the designation of the churchyard is justified, recognising its important historic status. However, the church building should be excluded from that designation, as it places a constraint upon the Diocese of Chelmsford should they wish to undertake any alterations or improvements to the church. I address this point as part of recommended modification **PM5**, together with an adjustment to the text of Policy SAL4 to ensure clarity.
- 4.32 Site GS07 is described as the St. Peter and St. Paul Churchyard at Bardfield Saling, and further includes a field behind the church which is also part of the registered churchyard. I consider that the designation of the churchyard is fully justified, as it is of significant historic importance to the village of Bardfield Saling. However, as with site GS06, the church building would appear to be included within the proposed Local Green Space designation on Policy Map 4B. Again, I consider that the church building should be removed from the designation, in view of the constraint that it places upon the Diocese of Chelmsford. I also address this point as part of recommended modification **PM5**.
- 4.33 Site GS08 is an area of open space containing an ancient stone situated to the front of St. Peter and St. Paul Church at Bardfield Saling. I observed that it contributes positively to the setting of the church and the nearby property, Arundels. I consider that its designation as a Local Green Space is justified in view of its significance to the setting of those buildings and its historic importance.
- 4.34 Site GS09 is an historic former playing field to the south of Plums Lane at Bardfield Saling. As such, it is the only significant area of green space in the village of Bardfield Saling that is not in agricultural use. I have given careful consideration to the justification for its designation as a Local Green Space. On balance, I do consider that it is justified in view of its historic importance to the Bardfield Saling community for recreational use.
- 4.35 Site GS10 comprises the Grade II Registered Park and Garden of Saling Hall at the north of Great Saling village. The Historic England listing details state: "*A late C17 walled garden beside further gardens laid out from 1936 onwards, initially by Lady Carlyle and since 1970 by Hugh Johnson*". As with my assessment of sites GS05 and GS11, I consider that as site GS10 is protected at national level as a Registered Park and Garden, I do not consider that its designation as a Local Green Space is necessary to ensure its long-term protection. I therefore recommend the deletion of site GS10 from the Plan as a proposed Local Green Space, as part of modification **PM5**.
- 4.36 I consider site GS11 at paragraph 4.30 above, alongside my assessment of site GS05, both sites being part of Saling Grove.

- 4.37 Site GS12 is an attractive Public Right of Way known as The Chase, extending along the western boundary of Saling Hall. I observed that it is clearly a popular and well-used route for walkers and horse riders and that it provides an important recreational resource for the local community. However, in general, there is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space.¹³ With this in mind, I have given this my very careful consideration. Whilst there are clearly statutory provisions to protect the right of way, designation as a Local Green Space does, in my view, represent a wider objective. I can see no prejudice in its designation as Local Green Space and based on the evidence, including its very attractive setting which I observed on my site visit, I consider it meets the necessary criteria when assessed against the NPPF.
- 4.38 Site GS13 is known as Hall Farm Green and comprises an area of amenity space created as a result of the conversion of former farm buildings at Hall Farm in 2000. From my site visit, I observed that, whilst it provides an attractive setting to the buildings at Hall Farm, it is not a site that in my assessment meets in full the NPPF criteria for designation as a Local Green Space. Specifically, I am not persuaded it holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. I therefore recommend its deletion from the Plan as a proposed Local Green Space, as part of modification **PM5**.
- 4.39 Sites GS14 (Long Green Lane), GS15 (Rogues Green Lane) and GS16 (Paulsies Lane) are three historic green lanes in the Bardfield Saling area, which are also described at paragraphs 3.2.11 and 4.2.10 in the Plan. Notwithstanding they are linear green lanes with existing statutory protection, they are not only of historic significance but they are also important wildlife habitats and corridors. I consider that, in each case, their designation as Local Green Spaces is justified as they represent historic routes linking settlements in the area, which still remain available for public use.
- 4.40 I therefore recommend that, having regard to NPPF paragraphs 99-100 and the guidance in the PPG, that sites GS01-GS04, GS06-GS09, GS12 and GS14-GS16 as identified within Policy SAL4 should be designated as Local Green Spaces and that the policy (as recommended for modification) meets the Basic Conditions. I further recommend that sites GS05, GS10, GS11 and GS13 be deleted from the Policy, and that sites GS06 and GS07 be amended to exclude the respective church buildings from the proposed Local Green Spaces at those sites. Recommended modification **PM5** encompasses the various amendments to Policy SAL4, Policy Maps 1, 4A and 4B and Appendix 3 as set out above. Finally, I consider that the Policy has sufficient regard to NPPF paragraph 101 regarding the management of development on a Local Green Space.

¹³ PPG Reference ID: 37-018-20140306.

- 4.41 Policy SAL5 (Local Landscape Protection Zone) proposes the designation of a Local Landscape Protection Zone (LLPZ) over a substantial area within the central part of the Plan area, and the proposed designation is shown on Policy Maps 1 and 2. In other parts of the Plan, the LLPZ is also referred to as a Green Buffer. The evidence base for this proposed designation is the Landscape Assessment Study undertaken by Liz Lake Associates, which also leads to the proposed Local Landscape Character Areas to be designated as part of Policy SAL2, and a paper prepared by DAC Planning in 2020.
- 4.42 Upon my initial assessment of the Plan, I noted that Policy SAL5 specifically states that the proposed LLPZ would “provide separation between The Salings and the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community”. I further noted that the District Council had stated, as part of their Regulation 16 consultation response, that “*Since the West of Braintree Garden Community has been removed from the Braintree Publication Local Plan it is advisable that references to it are removed*”. I therefore raised this issue with the District Council as part of my preliminary questions (see paragraph 2.9 above) to seek further clarification on matters concerning the proposed Garden Community. In their response, the District Council have confirmed that the Garden Community was removed from the Section 1 Plan, following a letter dated 15 May 2020 from the Inspector who was examining that Plan. As noted above, the Section 1 Plan was subsequently adopted by the District Council on 22 February 2021.
- 4.43 It is therefore the case that the Garden Community is no longer a proposal which affects the Plan area. It is my assessment that the principal rationale for Policy SAL5 and specifically for the proposed LLPZ has been removed since TSNP was drafted. Furthermore, the LLPZ generally coincides with the Local Landscape Character Areas with High Sensitivity, and I am satisfied that Policy SAL2 (as recommended for amendment) will provide appropriate safeguards against unacceptable development proposals in those areas. The Plan contains many references to the Garden Community within its text and within Policy SAL5. It is now necessary to remove all of these references, in order to meet the Basic Conditions.
- 4.44 In this case, and to avoid multiple recommended modifications in this report, I recommend a single modification **PM6** to delete all references, both direct and indirect, in the Plan to the previously proposed West of Braintree Garden Community. In summary, this will include the deletion of Policy SAL5 and all of its supporting text, the deletion of Map 1 (on page 9), the deletion of text where reference to the proposed Garden Community is made in other sections of the Plan, the deletion of the proposed LLPZ designation on Policy Maps 1 and 2, amendments to Appendix 2 (specifically on page 74) and the consequential re-numbering of text paragraphs and Policies (from Policy SAL6 onwards) to take account of the material removed from the Plan. Such consequential

amendments should also take account of all other recommended modifications to the Plan.

- 4.45 With recommended modifications PM4-PM6, I consider that the draft Plan's policies for the natural environment are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Braintree Local Plan documents, have regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

Housing and Design

- 4.46 Section 4.3 of the draft Plan is entitled 'Housing and Design' and contains four policies (Policies SAL6-SAL9) relating to the quantum, location and design of new housing developments in the Plan area. As with certain other parts of the Plan, this section has had clear regard to the previously proposed West of Braintree Garden Community, and paragraph 4.3.1 states that "*this section also includes policies on design and nomination rights that will be applicable to the Garden Village should it proceed*". I therefore take account of my recommendation to delete all references to the Garden Community in the Plan in my assessment of each of the policies in this section.
- 4.47 Policy SAL6 (Spatial Policy for Housing Development) is the spatial planning policy for new residential development in the Plan area. It supports the provision of around 10 dwellings, which slightly exceeds the identified housing requirement for the Plan area over the Plan period but includes dwellings for which planning permission has already been granted. The policy states that the remaining housing requirement will be met by developments within the Great Saling village development boundary, on rural exception sites or on other sites which comply with the policy criteria contained in the NPPF. The Policy also refers to the need for developments to make contributions to the recently adopted Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).
- 4.48 In my assessment, Policy SAL6 has regard to national policy and is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Braintree Local Plan documents.
- 4.49 Policy SAL7 (Priority for those with a Local Connection) states that "*Wherever possible, the affordable housing element in new developments should give priority to applicants with a local connection*". As drafted, this does not constitute a land-use planning policy as it is a statement more related to the strategic housing allocation policies and Choice Based Lettings Scheme of the District Council. The Policy therefore requires amendment to ensure that it meets a valid planning purpose, consistent with the aims of the Plan. I address this matter by recommended modification **PM7**.
- 4.50 Policy SAL8 (Design Policy for Infill Development) sets out design requirements for new infill residential development (which is defined as any development of less than 10 dwellings). I am satisfied that the

design criteria set out in the policy are appropriate for the Plan area, which is largely rural in character but with many heritage assets, and thus the policy reflects the local context. However, in view of my recommended modification concerning Policy SAL9 (see paragraph 4.52 below), I consider that Policy SAL8 should apply to all residential developments in the Plan area, rather than simply to infill developments. This requires some minor amendments to the Policy title and text, and I recommend modification **PM8** to address those amendments.

- 4.51 Policy SAL9 (Design Policy for Strategic Housing Sites) is a lengthy policy setting design requirements for any new strategic residential developments (defined as for any sites of 10 dwellings or more) in the Plan area. Upon my initial assessment of the Plan, and taking note of representations concerning this Policy made by the District Council at both the Regulation 14 and Regulation 16 consultation stages, I raised a preliminary question with the District Council seeking the Council's view on whether they continue to have concerns with the Policy in light of the decision to delete the West of Braintree Garden Community from the (now adopted) Section 1 Plan. The Council responded stating that the Policy needs to be amended as it refers to strategic development which could potentially cause confusion with the Section 1 Local Plan. I concur with that view. Furthermore, I note that there are no proposals for strategic-scale residential development in the Plan area in any of the adopted Braintree Local Plan documents, nor any known speculative proposals for such development within the area. Additionally, the identified housing requirement for the Plan area up to 2034 totals only 10 dwellings, of which a total of five dwellings had already been granted planning permission by 2019, and a further dwelling was under construction, leaving a requirement of four dwellings.
- 4.52 In my assessment, Policy SAL9 is essentially strategic in nature, referring as it does to "strategic housing sites" and a scale of development which is presently unlikely to take place in the Plan area. It is addressing matters which fall properly to be considered by the District Council, and which are the subject of adopted Braintree Local Plan policies. I conclude that the Policy should be deleted from the Plan, as it fails to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and could lead to confusion with relevant Local Plan policies. Nevertheless, as noted above, I do recognise that the Plan requires a design policy for all new residential developments in the Plan area, and my recommended amendments to Policy SAL8 seek to meet that requirement. I therefore recommend modification **PM9** to delete Policy SAL9 from the Plan.
- 4.53 With the revisions to the Plan encompassed by recommended modifications PM7-PM9, I consider that the draft Plan's policies for housing and design are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Braintree Local Plan documents, have regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

The Rural Economy

- 4.54 Section 4.4 of the draft Plan is entitled 'The Rural Economy' and contains two policies (Policies SAL10 and SAL11) to meet the Plan's objectives to encourage and support local businesses including home working, and to promote the development and diversification of agriculture and other land-based rural businesses.
- 4.55 Policy SAL10 (Local Business Development) states that proposals for new and existing businesses and employment will be encouraged where they are appropriate both in scale and in terms of their potential environmental impacts, such as noise and lighting to a countryside setting. I consider that the policy is appropriately drafted and that it meets the objective of supporting new business and employment proposals, subject to meeting acceptable planning requirements.
- 4.56 Policy SAL11 (Tourism and Leisure Development) states that proposals for sustainable rural tourism and leisure development especially within existing settlement boundaries will be supported. It goes on to state that the continued use of Andrewsfield (which is partly within the Plan area), as both an operational airfield for light aircraft and as a restaurant and bar will also be supported. As part of my preliminary questions to the District Council (see paragraph 2.9 above), I sought confirmation that there are presently no development proposals which would affect the continued use of Andrewsfield as an operational airfield and community facility. The District Council has confirmed to me that it is unaware of any such proposals. I therefore conclude that Policy SAL11 is appropriately drafted.
- 4.57 I consider that the draft Plan's policies for the rural economy are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Braintree Local Plan documents, have regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

Other Matters

- 4.58 There is the likelihood that there will be a need to formally review the Plan during the Plan period, particularly following the potential adoption of the emerging Section 2 Local Plan for Braintree District, which is presently timetabled in the Council's Local Development Scheme to occur in Autumn/Winter 2021. The Plan as drafted does not contain a statement regarding a potential future review during the period up to 2034 to take account of the emerging Section 2 Local Plan, and any subsequent review of the Local Plan, and I consider this to be an omission. I therefore recommend modification **PM10** to add a further paragraph to Section 1 of the Plan in order to address this point.

Concluding Remarks

- 4.59 I consider that, with the recommended modifications to the Plan as summarised above and set out in full in the accompanying Appendix, The Salings Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034 meets the Basic Conditions for neighbourhood plans. As an advisory comment, where the Plan is being redrafted to take account of the recommended modifications in this report, it should be re-checked for any typographical errors and any other consequential changes, etc.

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Salings Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034 has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard to all the responses made following consultation on the Plan, and the supporting documents submitted with the Plan, together with the responses to my preliminary questions.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify certain policies and other matters to ensure that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. The Salings Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034, as modified, has no policies or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I therefore recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Area.

Overview

- 5.4 It is clear that The Salings Neighbourhood Plan is the product of much hard work undertaken since 2016 by the Parish Council, its Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the many individuals and stakeholders who have contributed to the preparation and development of the Plan. In my assessment, the Plan reflects the land use aspirations and objectives of the Great Saling and Bardfield Saling communities for the future planning of their Parishes up to 2034. The output is a Plan which should help guide the area's development over that period, making

a positive contribution to informing decision-making on planning applications by Braintree District Council.

Derek Stebbing

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 1	<p><u>Section 1 - Introduction</u></p> <p>Insert the Neighbourhood Area Designation Map, dated 6 February 2017, in this section of the Plan, with the title "The Salings Neighbourhood Area". (This map could replace the existing map on Page 9, which is recommended for deletion as part of modification PM6).</p> <p>Remove the footnote reference on Page 1 to the Policies Map (which is not the designated Neighbourhood Area map).</p>
PM2	Front Cover	Add the Plan period "2019-2034" to the Front Cover title panel.
PM3	Page 39	<p><u>Policy SAL1 – Conserving Our Historic Heritage</u></p> <p>Amend the title of the Policy to read: "Protecting Our Historic Heritage" (and amend the list of Policies on Page 2 accordingly).</p> <p>Delete existing Policy text in full, and replace with:</p> <p>"Within the Plan area, development proposals affecting designated or non-designated heritage assets should show that great weight has been placed on the preservation and enhancement of those assets, demonstrate that there is an understanding of the historic significance of the assets and their settings and how the development will respect their historical attributes in ways that are beneficial to maintaining or improving the historic character of The Salings. Applicants should also demonstrate how heritage assets will be put to viable and appropriate use.</p> <p>Development proposals will also be assessed to ensure that the character and integrity of the Great Saling Conservation Area, as shown on Policy</p>

		<p>Maps 1 and 5, including views both from and within it are safeguarded.</p> <p>Within the Special Character Area at Bardfield Saling, as shown on Policy Maps 1 and 6, development proposals should seek to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic character of that area.</p> <p>Proposals for signage and lighting within the Plan area will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects upon the character, appearance and setting of any heritage assets, including the Great Saling Conservation Area and the Bardfield Saling Special Character Area.”</p>
PM4	Pages 41, 42 and 66	<p><u>Policy SAL2 – Conserving Our Landscape and its Key Ecological Features</u></p> <p>Delete existing Policy text in full, and replace with:</p> <p>“Within the Plan area, development proposals should demonstrate how they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the rural character and appearance of the landscape; • protect the traditional dispersed rural settlement pattern, small pastoral fields, paddocks and meadows associated with peripheral farmsteads; and • conserve and enhance historic field patterns and existing hedgerows. <p>Within the Local Landscape Character Areas as defined on Policy Map 2, and described in the Landscape Assessment Study, development proposals in areas of High, Medium and Low Sensitivity will be supported where they will not lead to coalescence between existing settlements or the loss of Local Green Spaces and/or Key Views as defined on Policy Maps 1, 3, 4A and 4B.</p> <p>Additionally, development proposals</p>

		<p>within areas of High Sensitivity must ensure that existing positive landscape features are protected and enhanced.</p> <p>All development proposals should include measures to safeguard existing wildlife habitats, increase the connectivity for wildlife and mitigate any impacts on key ecological features. Where required, a site-specific ecological appraisal should be submitted as part of a planning application.</p> <p>All proposals should seek to achieve net environmental and biodiversity gains, in addition to protecting existing habitats and species.”</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.2 – 2nd line – add the words “and low” after “medium”.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.2 – add new 3rd sentence to read:</p> <p>“Within areas of Low Sensitivity, opportunities to restore or create new landscapes will also be sought where the existing landscape has been degraded.”</p> <p>Add new Paragraph 4.2.3, as follows:</p> <p>“The policy also seeks to ensure that wildlife habitats and other ecological features are safeguarded, and that environmental and biodiversity gains can be achieved. Species enhancement will be encouraged and supported through measures such as low impact lighting, hedgehog gaps in fences, reinforced boundary treatment and buffer strips with native species, new meadows and ponds and measures to limit external light pollution and the impact of any overhead cables.”</p> <p>Re-number Paragraphs 4.2.3-4.2.25 as 4.2.4-4.2.26.</p> <p>Policy Map 2 (Page 66) – Amend map title to Read “Local Landscape Character</p>
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		<p>Areas” (and amend list of Policies Maps on Page 64 accordingly). Delete “Landscape Protection Zone” notation from the Map and from the Legend.</p>
PM5	Pages 43, 44, 66, 68, 69 and 78-80	<p><u>Policy SAL4 – Protecting Local Green Spaces</u></p> <p>Delete the 2nd sentence of Policy text in full.</p> <p>Delete site references GS05, GS10, GS11 and GS13 from the text of Policy SAL4 and Appendix 3, and from Policy Maps 1, 4A and 4B.</p> <p>Amend Paragraphs 4.2.6, 4.2.8 and 4.2.9 to delete references to Saling Hall and Saling Grove as Local Green Spaces.</p> <p>Delete the church buildings and their immediate curtilage from site references GS06 and GS07 (to only include the registered churchyards) as notated on Policy Maps 4A and 4B.</p> <p>Re-number sites GS06-GS09, GS12 and GS14-GS16 to become GS05-GS12 respectively and amend all references accordingly.</p>
PM6	Throughout the Plan	<p><u>West of Braintree Garden Community</u></p> <p>Delete all references, both direct and indirect, in the Plan to the previously proposed West of Braintree Garden Community which is no longer a proposal within the adopted North Essex Authorities’ Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan.</p> <p>This necessitates the deletion of Policy SAL5 and all of its supporting text, the deletion of Map 1 (on page 9), the deletion of text in other sections of the Plan where reference to the proposed Garden Community is made, the deletion of the proposed LLPZ designation and notation Policy Maps 1 and 2, amendments to Appendix 2 (specifically on page 74) and the consequential re-numbering of text paragraphs and Policies (from Policy SAL6 onwards) to take account of the material removed from the Plan.</p> <p>Such consequential amendments should take account of all other recommended</p>

		modifications to the Plan.
PM7	Page 51	<p><u>Policy SAL7 – Priority for those with a Local Connection</u></p> <p>Amend title of Policy to read “Affordable Housing – Meeting Local Needs”.</p> <p>Delete existing Policy text in full, and replace with:</p> <p>“The development of new affordable housing in the Plan area will be supported where such proposals are in accordance with other policies contained in this Plan and the adopted Braintree Local Plan. Proposals should take account of the Housing Needs Survey (June 2019), or any subsequent updated Housing Needs Survey.”</p> <p>Add new paragraph 4.3.12, as follows:</p> <p>“A key objective of the Plan is to seek the provision of new housing developments which meet the needs of the local community. A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in 2019 by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) which confirmed a need for new affordable homes in the Parish to meet local need.”</p>
PM8	Page 52	<p><u>Policy SAL8 – Design Policy for Infill Development</u></p> <p>Amend title of Policy to read:</p> <p>“Design Policy for New Residential Developments”.</p> <p>Amend first sentence of Policy text to read:</p> <p>“New residential development in the Plan area must be designed to a high quality which responds to the heritage and distinctive character of The Salings by way of:”.</p> <p>(Remainder of Policy text is unchanged).</p>
PM9	Pages 53 and 54	<p><u>Policy SAL9 – Design Policy for Strategic Housing Sites</u></p> <p>Delete Policy SAL9 in full.</p>

		<p>Delete reference to Policy SAL9 from the Justification heading on Page 54.</p> <p>Delete Policy SAL9 from the list of Policies on Page 2.</p>
PM10	Page 5	<p><u>Section 1 - Introduction</u></p> <p>Add new Paragraph 1.0.8, as follows:</p> <p>“The relationship with the Local Plan is important because evolving Government policy and the continuing pressure for housing in the North Essex area means that the new Local Plan for Braintree District will probably need to be reviewed during the next five years. Any implications for the Neighbourhood Plan will then need to be considered. If necessary, the Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed to ensure that it remains an important part of the statutory development plan for the Parish.”</p> <p>Re-number existing Paragraphs 1.0.8 onwards to 1.0.9 etc., but to take account of other modifications requiring the deletion of material in Section 1 relating to the previously proposed West of Braintree Garden Community.</p>