

SEPTEMBER 2024

# contact

Your residents' magazine



## INSIDE:

Skateparks get  
a makeover!

Shape the  
district's future

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- Halstead Leisure Centre
- Braintree Swimming & Fitness
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 Braintree District Council

# Delivering your priorities



“ This year we unveiled our new **Corporate Strategy**, which outlines our priorities for the next four years, shaped by your feedback. Our desire is to develop stronger and safer communities, sustainable economic growth, safeguard our environment, deliver and protect services, whilst making sure to reduce inequalities for our communities.

Six months in and we are well on our way with many projects in progress - we are refreshing our Local Plan to guide sustainable growth across the district which we plan to have adopted in 2026 and there will be opportunities for people to influence this and voice their views throughout this process.

Through our cost-of-living fund, we have supported 18 local projects so far, focused on health and wellbeing, food and essentials and winter resilience – more on this on page 15.

Earlier this year we held a successful Green Business Expo for local businesses to support them with green and sustainable solutions and we'll continue to develop business support services alongside partners to attract new and grow existing businesses.

We have been able to secure over £150,000 funding to work with partners on a safer streets project for Halstead which is being rolled out this year, looking to reduce anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood crime and violence against women and girls.

We are not immune to significant financial challenges ahead, driven by pressures outside of our control, but we will continue to invest in improving services, ensuring they are fit for the future whilst tackling inequalities.

Our focus remains to deliver value for money, putting Braintree district residents at the heart of all that we do and working together with our partners to build a more sustainable future for those that live and work in the district.

**Cllr Graham Butland**  
Leader of Braintree District Council

## A budget designed to invest in frontline services



With reduced government funding, coupled with inflation and rapidly rising demand on services, we continue to work hard to deliver a balanced budget whilst protecting frontline services residents and businesses rely on.

Whilst we may be in a better financial position than some other authorities, we are still not immune to significant financial challenges ahead. This is why we continue to take necessary and cautious steps to find much-needed savings.

[www.braintree.gov.uk/budget](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/budget)

Your local council tax helps to fund over

## 100 local services

for around **£3.85 per week** \*based on a Band D property.

Just some of what was delivered in 2023-24...



**459**  
businesses supported



**2,450**  
housing register applications completed



**£33,154**  
distributed via **Councillor Community Grants**



**424**  
affordable homes secured



**207**  
homelessness cases prevented



**25,907**  
community transport journeys



**1,064**  
fly tips cleared



**29,046**  
tonnes of recycling



# Local Plan Review

## GUIDING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



We're in the process of reviewing our Local Plan. The council's current Local Plan covers the period up to 2033 but has to be reviewed and updated if necessary, at least every five years, to keep up with Government policies and legislation.

The review will extend the Local Plan's timeframe from 2033 to 2041, looking at growth options post 2033 to meet evolving longer-term needs of communities and changing national planning guidance and best practice.

## What is a Local Plan?

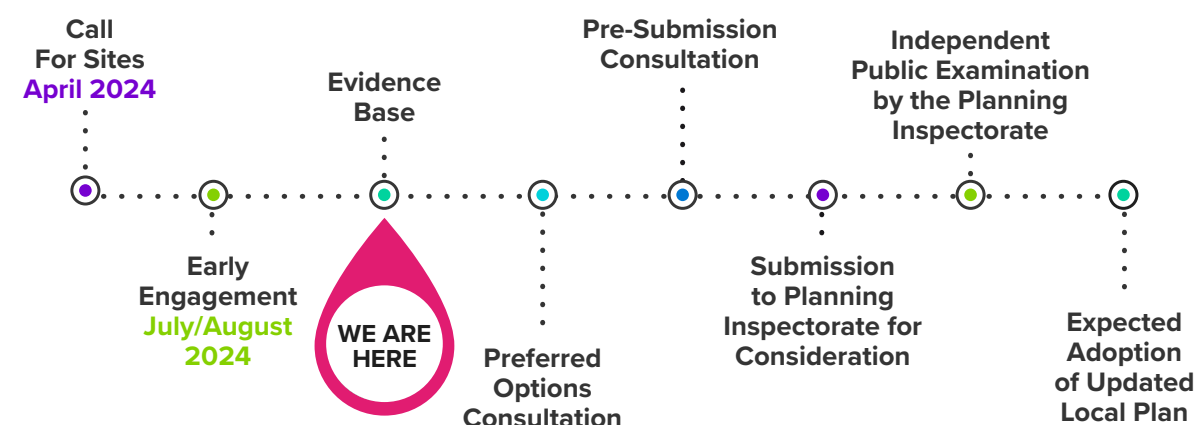
The Local Plan serves as the strategic framework that guides where businesses and homes will be located, and protection of the green environment and heritage.

The Braintree district is evolving and changing, our population is growing and people are living longer lives.

We have to make sure there are enough homes for young people, families and older residents. Having no growth is not an option, so the council creates the Local Plan to ensure future growth happens sustainably and development is properly planned.



## Where are we now and what happens next?



The Local Plan Review timetable is being reviewed following the recent central government announcement on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

It's not just about homes – it's also about creating jobs alongside new homes being built, accompanying infrastructure needed to support the population, open spaces, community facilities and protecting our environment.

Putting all this in place for communities costs money. Developers pay something called 'Section 106 contributions', which go towards providing infrastructure that supports the site being developed and the local community.

They are only to be used for things that are needed and directly related to the development, and also by the relevant authority such as NHS for healthcare and Essex County Council for schools and highway improvements. The council can't use them for anything else and they have to be spent within a set timeframe.

Having a clear and up-to-date plan for managing growth makes sure the Braintree district remains a vibrant and attractive place to live, work, socialise and study.

## Have your say

We want input from residents and businesses to help shape this updated plan.

Further opportunities for you to influence the future of your district during this process will take place in due course. Keep updated on timings via the channels listed below.

## Keep updated on the Local Plan Review



[www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview)



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# Improving places to play

This year, we have made a significant investment in enhancing the skateparks located in Ramsey Road in Halstead, Spa Road in Witham and Weavers Park in Braintree, creating exciting new spaces for residents and visitors of all ages to enjoy.



Weavers Park



These transformative upgrades were funded by a combination of Section 106 funding and a council contribution, totalling just over £500,000. The new facilities boast modern ramps, smooth concrete surfaces and features catering to a wider range of skill levels and ages.

At Ramsey Road, the upgrades go even further, promoting inclusivity through accessible play area equipment, hammocks for older children and a new outdoor gym. These improvements are designed to support our communities to enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle.



Ramsey Road

## Meet our cover star Jenson

When news of the Ramsey Road skatepark revamp hit social media, Jenson Inkipin shared his excitement with us. He became a regular fixture at the park, rushing down before and after school to witness the construction progress with growing anticipation and was one of the first to try it out once it was completed.

Jenson is seven years old and has been skateboarding for two years. After receiving a penny board for Christmas, he learnt how to push and tic-tac from a family friend and then attended a 'Learn to Skate' event in Chelmsford where he borrowed a proper board and learned how to pump and turn the board. He hasn't looked back!

**Jenson said:** "I love pushing myself each week, learning a new skill or trick every time I go, me and my Dad love to check out new parks all over Essex, mainly because the original Braintree park was hard to skate on as it was a little rubbish."



"My favourite skatepark now is Halstead but before that it was Channels at the Beaulieu estate in Chelmsford but I go to skate parks in Sudbury, Silver End, Tiptree, Saffron Walden and lots of other places including London."

"The previous Ramsey Road Park wasn't very good, it didn't have any flow and it was difficult to use as a beginner. The new park is much better, I can already drop in from the 6ft and go over the Box. The halfpipe is a good size to learn new tricks on."

"My favourite trick is a 360 olly, this is when all wheels are off the ground and you spin the whole way round. It is hard at first and takes lots of practice."

"My dream is to skate at the Olympics or skate in America at one of the amazing parks. I love Skye Brown and Nyjah Huston."



Ramsey Road Skatepark

# Support our Markets!



## Braintree Traditional Market

**Braintree holds a market every Wednesday and Saturday** from 7.30am to 3.30pm. Stalls include fruit and veg, fish, baked goods, cheese, household items and tools, plants, cupboard essentials and jewellery.

## Braintree Monthly Street Market

**The Braintree Monthly Street Market usually runs on the last Saturday of the month** between March and December from 9am to 5pm. This bumper market includes street food stalls, handmade items and gifts, sweet treats, collectables and clothes.

## Witham Weekly Market

**Witham holds a market every Saturday** in the Newlands Shopping Centre from 7.30am to 3.30pm with stalls including food, household items, handmade crafts, jewellery, clothing and accessories.

## Coggeshall Weekly Market

**Coggeshall holds a market every Thursday** between 8am and 12pm, selling fruit and veg, fish, cheese, baked items and freshly made Indian delicacies. Find it on Stoneham Street.

## White Colne Village Market

**Runs on the third Saturday of the month** at White Colne Village Hall from 9am to 12pm with local produce, food, drink, arts and crafts.



## Bures Market

**Runs on the second Saturday of the month** on Bures Common with food, drink, plants, flowers, jewellery and other handmade items. Runs from 10am to 1pm.



From 10am til 4pm

Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th September

## Essex Autumn Shopping Fair

### Cressing Temple Barns

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- ★ Food & Drink ★
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[www.charlieowenevents.co.uk/tickets](http://www.charlieowenevents.co.uk/tickets)





# Changing climate: are you flood-resilient?

UK Met Office data shows that winters have become 15% wetter over the last 100 years. The warmer air caused by climate change also contributes to heavier rainfall, which can cause flash floods.

While Essex was less impacted than other parts of the country, last winter and spring we still saw a number of flooding events in the district.

The good news is that there are measures you can take to be flood resilient.

Winters  
have become  
**15%  
wetter**

## Protect your home

You can make changes to your home to prevent water from getting in.

Check your flood risk before making these, as not every home will need them all. You can do this online:  
[www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk](http://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk)

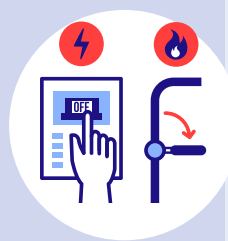
### Measures you can take include:

- ✓ installing flood resistant external doors or buying a temporary flood barrier to use when needed
- ✓ installing a membrane in ('tanking') vulnerable rooms
- ✓ replacing traditional air bricks with self-closing ones
- ✓ buying an inflatable 'bung' to temporarily block your toilet and avoid sewage backflow
- ✓ fitting flood resistant valves in drain and water pipes.

## Make a plan

Having a flood plan in place will save you valuable time in an emergency.

- ✓ **INSURANCE:** Check your insurance policy to make sure you are covered
- ✓ **ENERGY & WATER:** Find out how to turn off your gas, electricity and water supplies
- ✓ **PUT TOGETHER AN EMERGENCY FLOOD KIT:** Mobile phones and chargers, emergency cash and credit cards, children's essentials, torch with spare batteries, bottled water
- ✓ **STORE ALL YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS IN A WATERPROOF TUB:** Make sure it's easy to access, along with contact details for important people and organisations, like your insurance and utilities suppliers.



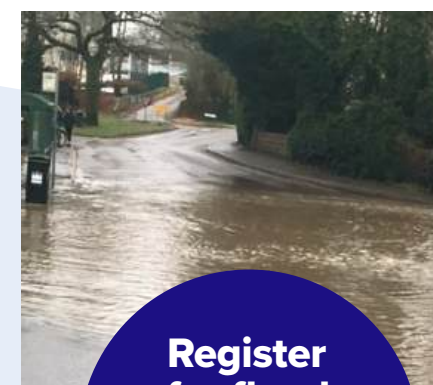
## Has your home ever been flooded?

Essex County Council offers Property Flood Resilience Grants of up to £8,000 to protect your home from future flooding.

Check eligibility and find out more. It is recommended that you apply by the end of November 2024.



SCAN HERE



**Register  
for flood  
warnings:  
0345 988  
1188**

## Useful links

### Make a flood plan:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan)  
[www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/about-flooding/preparing/checklist-action-plan](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/about-flooding/preparing/checklist-action-plan)

### Sign up for flood alerts online:

[www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)  
[www.check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and-warnings](http://www.check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and-warnings)

### If you have been flooded and are struggling to get home insurance:

[www.floodre.co.uk](http://www.floodre.co.uk)

### Prepare for an emergency:

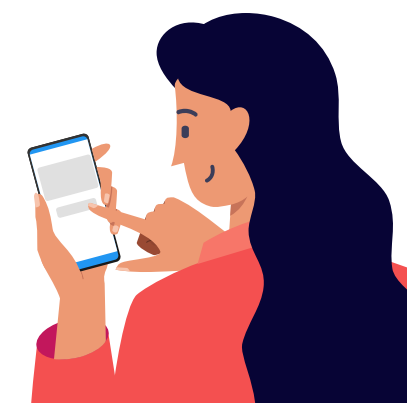
[www.gov.uk/prepare](http://www.gov.uk/prepare)

### Sign up to our emergency planning newsletter:

[www.braintree.gov.uk/tellmemore](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/tellmemore)

### For flood related products and services:

[www.bluepages.org.uk](http://www.bluepages.org.uk)





# Support for happier and healthier families

We are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of all families in our community. Throughout the district there are a range of services and support programs designed to meet the needs of children, young people and families and we strive to help everyone live a fulfilling and healthy life.



## ParkPlay in Halstead

If you are looking for a free and fun way to spend a Saturday morning then head to the King George V Playing Fields in Halstead for the ParkPlay sessions.

This fantastic community event brings people of all ages together for games, activities, and laughter. It's a perfect opportunity to meet new friends, get active, and enjoy the great outdoors!



**EVERY  
SATURDAY  
morning  
from 9:30am  
JOIN THE  
FUN!**



Find out more information and register to play on the ParkPlay website:  
[www.park-play.com/parks/halstead](http://www.park-play.com/parks/halstead)

## Essex ActivAte: fun, food, and fantastic holidays!

Keep your kids entertained and well-fed during the holidays with Essex Activate!



This fantastic programme offers free holiday clubs packed with exciting activities, from sports and arts to cooking and outdoor adventures. Plus, kids enjoy delicious, nutritious meals! Whether they're budding athletes, creative geniuses, or just looking for fun, there's something for everyone.

**6,000 spaces** are offered across **19 different clubs** including two offering SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) provision and one mental wellbeing hub.



Find out if you are eligible to take part:  
[www.activeessex.org/children-young-people/essex-activate](http://www.activeessex.org/children-young-people/essex-activate)

For more information, how to book, list of clubs please see here:  
[www.activeessex.org/children-young-people/essex-activate/holiday-club](http://www.activeessex.org/children-young-people/essex-activate/holiday-club)

If you have any questions please contact  
[haf@activeessex.org](mailto:haf@activeessex.org)



## Health and Wellbeing panel grant

In 2023/24 we awarded **£20,155** to 20 very deserving local charities and community groups to enhance the health and wellbeing of families in our district.

The grants aim to support our livewell priorities for projects tackling obesity, increasing physical activity, addressing frailty and improving mental health.



### Grants were awarded to:

- Braintree Mencap
- CARA Essex
- Dance Network Association
- Grow with the flow
- Interact
- POP Essex
- Team Kinetix
- and many more.





# Making the district's streets safer

Over the past few years Braintree District Council has been delivering Safer Streets projects in Witham and Halstead alongside our partners. We have been talking to the community, hearing their concerns and using the Home Office Funding and match funding to run a series of initiatives to make where you live safer.

## Witham

The Witham Safer Streets Programme ran from October 2022 to March 2024. We were awarded **£297,202** of Home Office funding to deliver the Safer Streets Programme in Witham. In addition to this funding, **£150,506** of match funding was provided by various members of the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership to support the bid.

### Some of the initiatives that were funded in Witham include:

**3,108**  
home security measures given out



**1000**  
anti-spiking items given out



**1,928**  
attendances to teen sport activities and self defence classes at Witham Leisure Centre



**11**  
CCTV cameras throughout Witham



**1** Witham Street Warden



**2** bleed kits in licensed premises



**2** community safety impact nights



**713**  
sexual assault therapy sessions from Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA)



**2** Spot it Stop It training sessions



**1** Dog Day event that lead to 65 Dogwatch sign ups



## Halstead

The Halstead Safer Streets Programme started in October 2023 and will run until March 2025. The Home Office funding came to a total of **£300,223**, and a further **£150,171** was match funded by partners.

We ran a survey to understand the concerns for Halstead locals and received 309 responses which highlighted the three main concerns as antisocial behaviour (66%), drug use (63%) and groups of people congregating (59%).

The three main areas of concern within the specified area of Halstead were Halstead Public Gardens, Weavers Court Car Park and the High Street.

Initiatives have already started in Halstead such as increased CCTV, parking barriers, a Dog Day, CARA counselling sessions, free teen and self-defence classes at Halstead Leisure Centre and the introduction of a Halstead Street Warden.



## Braintree

Over the last four years Braintree town centre has experienced ongoing antisocial behaviour issues which have impacted on local businesses, residents and those visiting the town centre. Reports have been received from local businesses along with members of the public, those living in residential properties within the town centre.

To address this, we will be introducing a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). PSPOs can be introduced for identified public areas where the local authority is satisfied that certain conditions have been met.

Councils can use PSPOs to prohibit specified activities, and/or require certain things to be done by people engaged in particular activities, within a defined public area. Those who breach the order without a reasonable explanation could be subject to enforcement action.



# The story so far... £1m Cost of Living Fund



Last year, we announced we were allocating our £1m New Homes Bonus to a £1m Cost of Living Fund to support our residents in accessing support during the Cost of Living crisis.

## Here is how that money has been spent so far:

**£98,951**

to Braintree Area Foodbank for outreach and delivery



**£22,135**

to provide 500 free electric blankets to vulnerable residents



**£10,000**

to Sport for Confidence to run accessible sports sessions



**£500**

to provide free period products to those facing homelessness



**£140,000**

awarded as part of the Cost of Living Small Grants Scheme.



We also have funding allocated for a range of upcoming projects that we can't wait to share with you!

If you run a community group or have an idea for the Cost of Living Fund, please get in touch with our Community Services team via **communityservices@braintree.gov.uk**



# Rural boost

## £558k in Grants elevate Local Businesses and Communities

Rural businesses and community groups within our district are set to receive a significant financial boost, thanks to the allocation of £558k in grants from the UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund.

**Nineteen organisations have been allocated grants ranging from £10,000 to £50,000 for the delivery of capital projects in rural areas.**

The grants will be used to improve community facilities, grow local tourism economies and help rural businesses expand products, amenities and services.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund is a rural top-up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, from which we've already spent £377k since 2022 supporting businesses and communities.

The primary goal of the fund is to stimulate business growth and create employment opportunities in rural areas. The initiative aims to boost productivity, strengthen the rural economy and enhance the vibrancy of rural communities.



**Tuffon Hall Vineyard and Wedding Venue** in Sible Hedingham will be using the funds to build a glamping pod to complement its existing onsite accommodation.



Daniel Miller, Trustee at Blackmore End Village Hall and Playing Field, said:

"This project will go a long way towards improving our village hall and making it more sustainable. The hall acts as the hub of our small community, offering many events and opportunities for local people to come together. We are very happy to have been awarded this grant, allowing us to improve this vital part of our village and reach out to more people."



**Blackmore End Village Hall** will replace an outdated sewage system dating back to the 1920s.



**The grants will be paid to recipients once projects are complete.**

## Planning permission granted for Witham's new community centre

**Our plan to build a new multi-use community centre in Witham has been approved at planning committee.**

The three-storey centre will be built on land next to Haygreen Road, just behind the Aldi supermarket off Hatfield Road.

The plans include a mixed-use hall, kitchen, bar area and changing rooms to serve sports players using the adjacent football pitch.

The communities in and around Witham will be able to use the hall to play sports, attend meetings or events and go to social clubs.

There will be 32 car parking spaces, plus an additional four for disabled drivers. There will also be 14 secure bicycle lockers for cyclists.

The site will be landscaped with plants and trees and an area of open space north of the building will be retained, along with a number of trees.

Building work is expected to start later this year.



Site on right taken on Haygreen Road, Witham.

**Cllr Mary Cunningham**, Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, said:



"With these plans, we are supporting the residents of Witham as well as communities

within the surrounding villages too. Community centres are places where people of all ages can meet to socialise, play games as well as participate in sports. They are important hubs which keep minds and bodies healthy as well as reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. With this approval, we're a step closer in bringing this important asset to fruition."



the plaza

## Co-working space with

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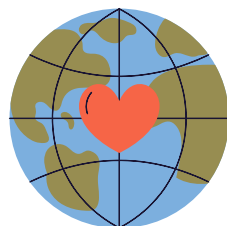
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**£10**  
per day



# LOVE YOUR DISTRICT, LOVE YOUR PLANET



Over the past year, we have seen so many Braintree District residents quietly making changes that add up to a better world: conserving rainwater, litter picking and composting.

**We all know that small actions add up to big change.**

One of the best ways to help our world is to look at what and how we consume. Everything we buy has used precious resources to create, package, ship and sell it.

## RECYCLING IS GOOD, BUT WE CAN DO BETTER...

### CHANGE:

Our district has several shops selling loose items, from cleaning products to dry goods like pasta or tea. Bring your own containers and buy only what you need. Download the Refill app for all your local options: [www.refill.org.uk](http://www.refill.org.uk)

**REPAIR:** When something breaks, why not see if it's an easy fix instead of a costly replacement? For electrical goods, bikes, sewing machines or even clothes, try the monthly Repair Cafés: Braintree Repair Café, every 3rd Saturday of the month at Cornerstone Church, Black Notley, and Great Notley Repair Café - see [www.facebook.com/groups/greatnotleyrepaircafe](https://www.facebook.com/groups/greatnotleyrepaircafe) for details.



### DID YOU KNOW?

If everyone on the planet consumed resources like we do in the UK, we would need 2.5 planets to sustain us.

### STOP AND THINK:

When you buy something, think about where it will end up. Do you need it or are you spending money on something that is quickly going into landfill?

**REHOME:** Our addiction to fast fashion is a huge problem for the planet. Why not arrange a clothes swap with friends, neighbours or work colleagues? It's a fun way to get to know people and can get you a new wardrobe for nothing!

**RECYCLE:** If all else fails, there are options to recycle. It doesn't all end with your kerbside collection; in the Braintree District you can recycle so much more. Go to [www.recyclenow.com/recycle-an-item](http://www.recyclenow.com/recycle-an-item) for more information.

Leading environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy has come up with a handy guide to help us all think differently: go to [www.keepbritaintidy.org](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org) and search for 'waste hierarchy'.



Braintree District Council  
in partnership with DWP  
is hosting its

# JOB FAIR

**SATURDAY**  
**2 NOVEMBER 2024**  
**9.30AM – 12.30PM**

**At Queen's Hall,**  
Chipping Hill, Halstead,  
Essex, CO9 2BY

**Joining talent  
with opportunity**

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[www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)



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Department  
for Work &  
Pensions







# Powering the future with food recycling

When you recycle food in your kerbside caddy, it is collected by Braintree District Council, taken for processing and turned into fertiliser and energy



Find out how to recycle your food at home by visiting **[loveessex.org/food-recycling](https://loveessex.org/food-recycling)** or scan the **QR code** using your smartphone's camera

**Together we can make a difference**  
[loveessex.org](https://loveessex.org)

Working in partnership with  
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Borough and City Councils.