

Evidence of Braintree District Council in relation to Five Year Housing Land Supply

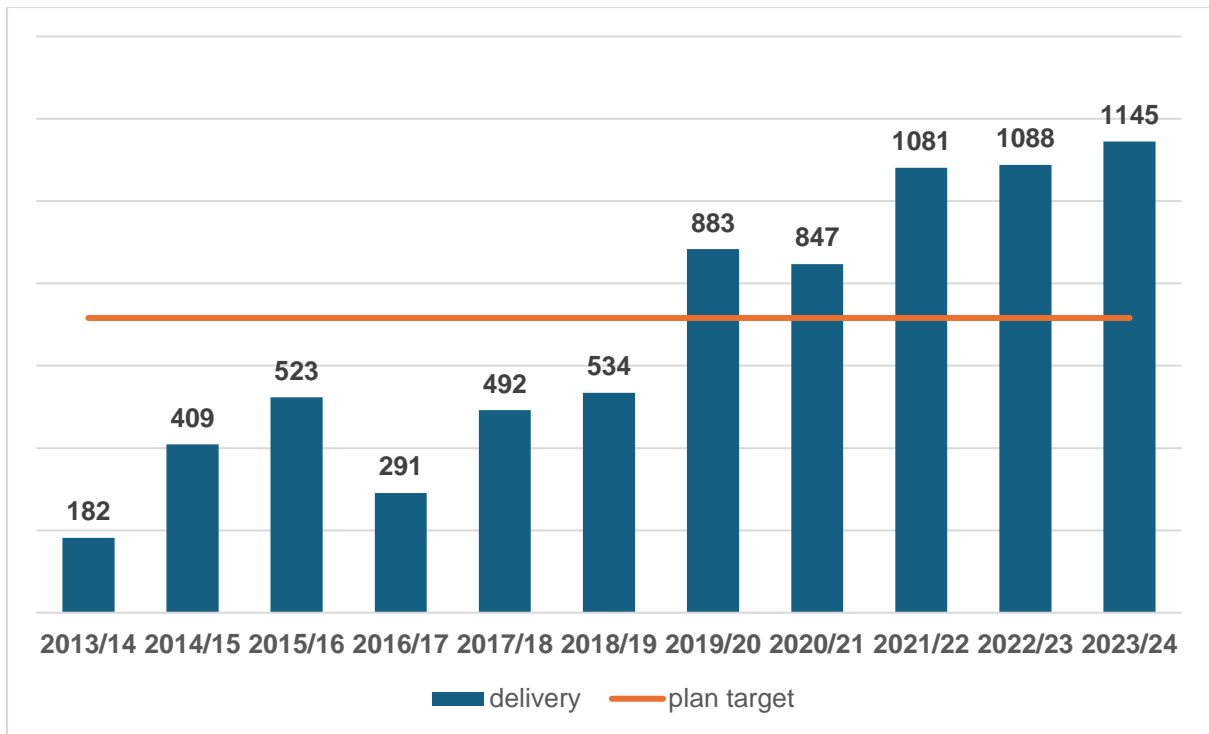
Housing delivery and five-year supply in Braintree District

The Net Supply of New Homes in Recent Years

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the number of housing completions in the District (not including the contribution to supply from additional C2 Use Class developments) from the start of the plan period.

Table 1: Net dwelling completions per year C3 use class 2013-2024			
2013/2014	182	2019/2020	883
2014/2015	409	2020/2021	847
2015/2016	523	2021/2022	1,081
2016/2017	291	2022/2023	1,088
2017/2018	492	2023/2024	1,145
2018/2019	534		
		Total 2013-2024	7,475

Figure 1: Housing completions 2013/14 to 2023/2024 (C3 use class)



C2 Use Class supply

The NPPF and the Housing Delivery Test clarified the calculation of the contribution from communal accommodation development. It is calculated by dividing the additional rooms by 1.8.

Over the monitoring year 2023/2024 there was a gain of 103 rooms; a 75 bed new care home at the Braintree College site Church Lane; a net increase of 25 rooms at the new Willowmead care home at Hatfield Peverel, and 3 rooms were added at the Blackthorns care home at Halstead.

Applying the ratio of 1.8 to the change over the year of 103 rooms, this was the equivalent of +57 dwellings, which brings the net overall supply 2023/2034 to 1,202 (1,145 C3 Use Class net increase plus 57 from the change in C2 Use Class).

The total new rooms 2013-2024 was 181, resulting in the equivalent of 101 dwelling completions (181/1.8). The addition of an equivalent 101 dwellings to the net supply from C3 use class completions brings the total housing supply 2013-2024 to **7,576**.

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The Housing Delivery Test

The Government Housing Delivery Test (HDT) measures supply over the most recent 3 years against the housing target for the District, the target being either as calculated by the Government's Standard Methodology Target or, for a time when the adopted plan is less than 5 years old, the adopted plan target.

The target varies from year to year, and a district can be deemed to have declined in performance even though delivery has increased.

The Government adjusted the target in the 2021 HDT and the 2022 HDT with a reduction to take into account the period for which delivery was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (the national lockdown caused temporary disruption to local authority planning services and the construction sector).

If a district has failed to deliver 95% of the target over the previous three years, the local authority must produce an action plan to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years.

If a district has delivered less than 85%, in addition the target for the identified supply should be increased by the addition of a buffer of 20% (from the NPPF 2024 publication, a 20% buffer is now also required if the local plan is over 5 years old).

If the district has delivered less than 75% of the target, in addition there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The result applies from the date of publication by Government of the HDT Results.

The 2021 HDT results were published in January 2022 and tested delivery over the 3-year period 2018/19 to 2020/21. Braintree District achieved 125% and was confirmed as a 5% buffer authority, with no action plan required.

The 2022 HDT results were published on 20 December 2023 and tested delivery over the 3-year period 2019/20 to 2021/22. Braintree District achieved 152%.

The 2023 HDT results were published on 12 December 2024 and tested delivery over the 3-year period 2020/21 to 2022/23. Braintree District achieved 155%.

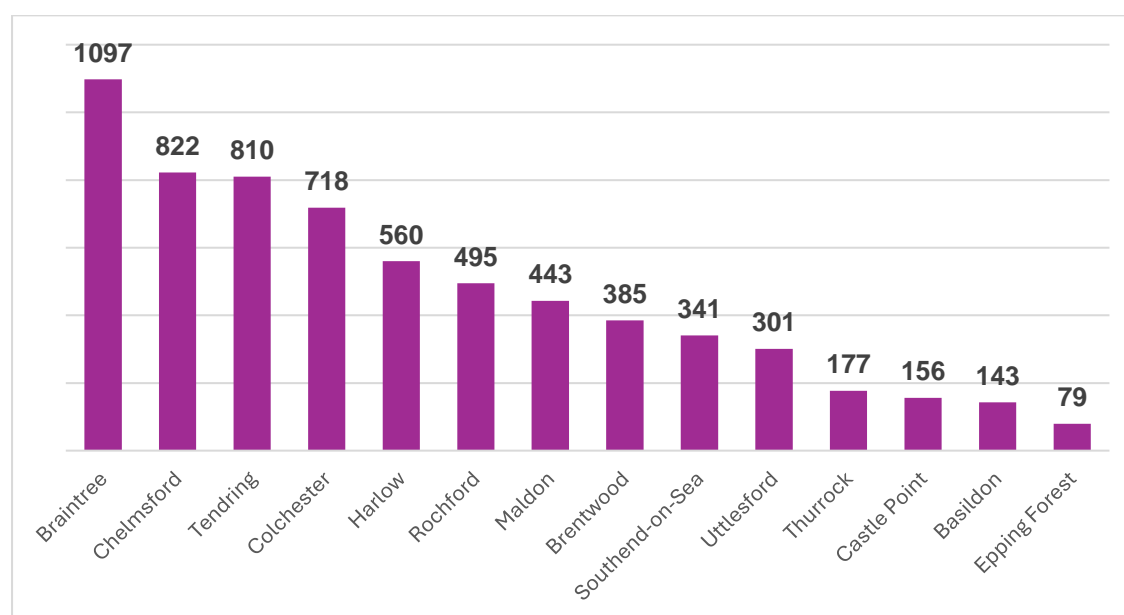
The 2024 HDT results have not yet been published by the Government.

Of the local planning authorities in Greater Essex, Braintree achieved the highest number of homes completed 2022/23; the highest number completed over the 3-year HDT period 2020-2023; and the third highest HDT result (delivery against target):

Government published data on housing supply 2021/2022 showed that the proportionate increase in Braintree District, measured as the net addition per 1,000 existing dwellings, was in the top 10% of the 309 local planning authorities (*Housing Supply in England 2021-2022, DLUHC, November 2022*).

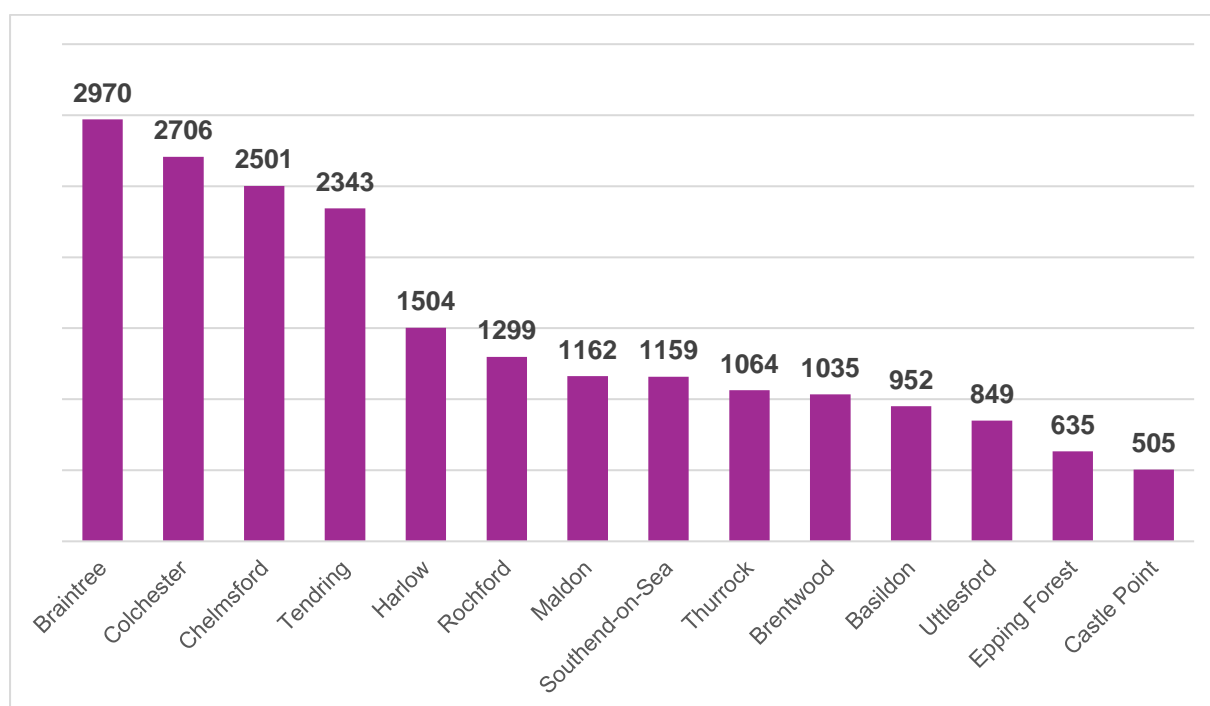
The 2024 HDT results have not yet been published yet by the Government. The expected results for Braintree District based on housing delivery data compared to the target of 716 dpa are 158% in the 2023 HDT and 157% in the 2024 HDT.

Figure 2: HDT Results 2023: Number of new homes 2022/23, Greater Essex:



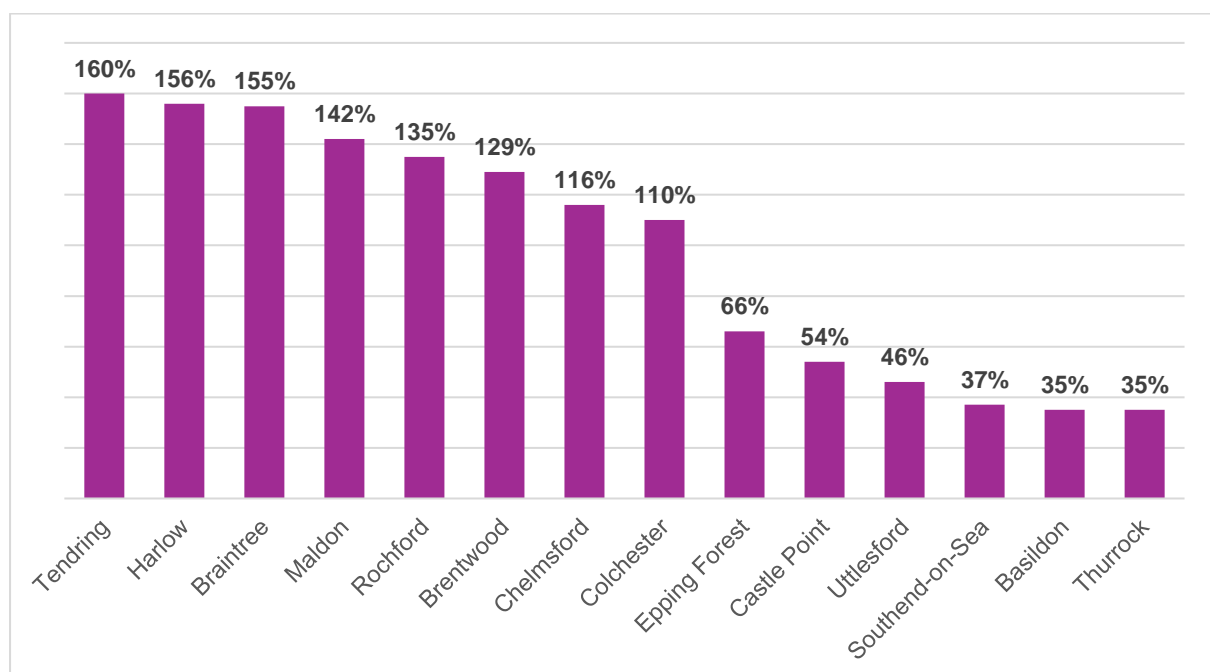
Source: Housing Delivery Test results 2023, published 12 December 2024

Figure 3: Number of new homes in 3-year HDT period 2020/21-2022/23, Greater Essex:



Source: Housing Delivery Test results 2023, published 12 December 2024

Figure 4: HDT Results Greater Essex: supply against target, 2020-2023



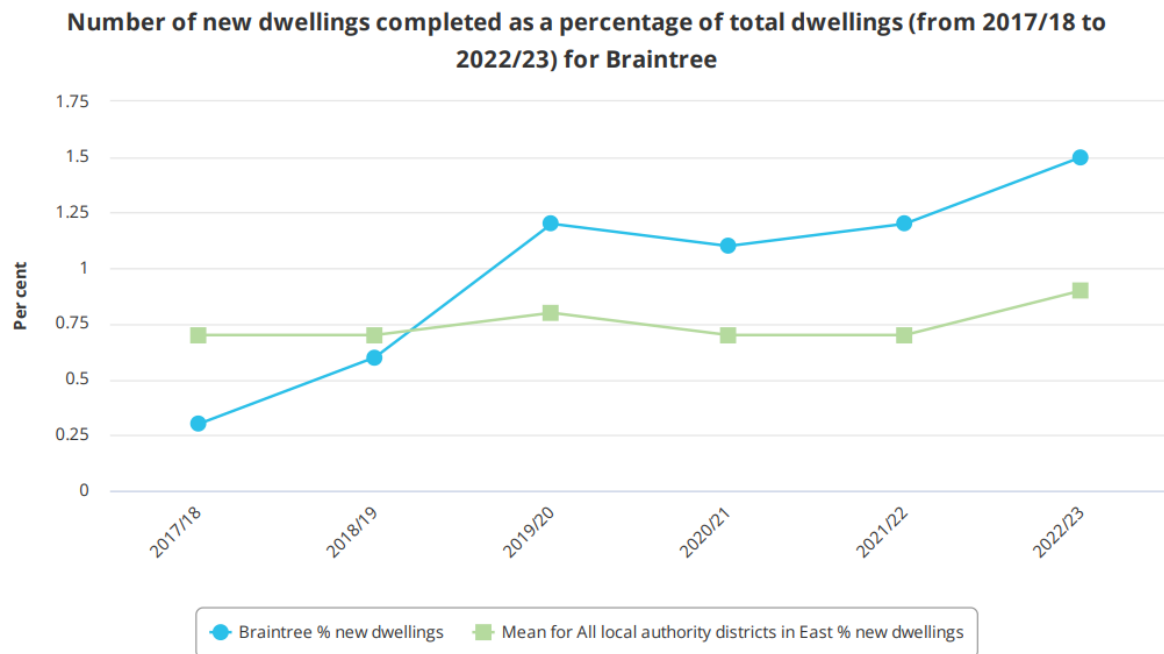
Source: Housing Delivery Test results 2023, published 12 December 2024

Delivery rates have increased dramatically in Braintree District since the start of the new plan period and have exceeded the 716 dpa average annual target in each of

the past five years, including the three years that will be examined in the 2023 and 2024 Housing Delivery Tests. Supply in each of the most recent three years (2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24) was over 150% of the Plan Period annual average target of 716.

Government data shows that since 2018 housing delivery in Braintree District is higher than average for districts in the East of England region

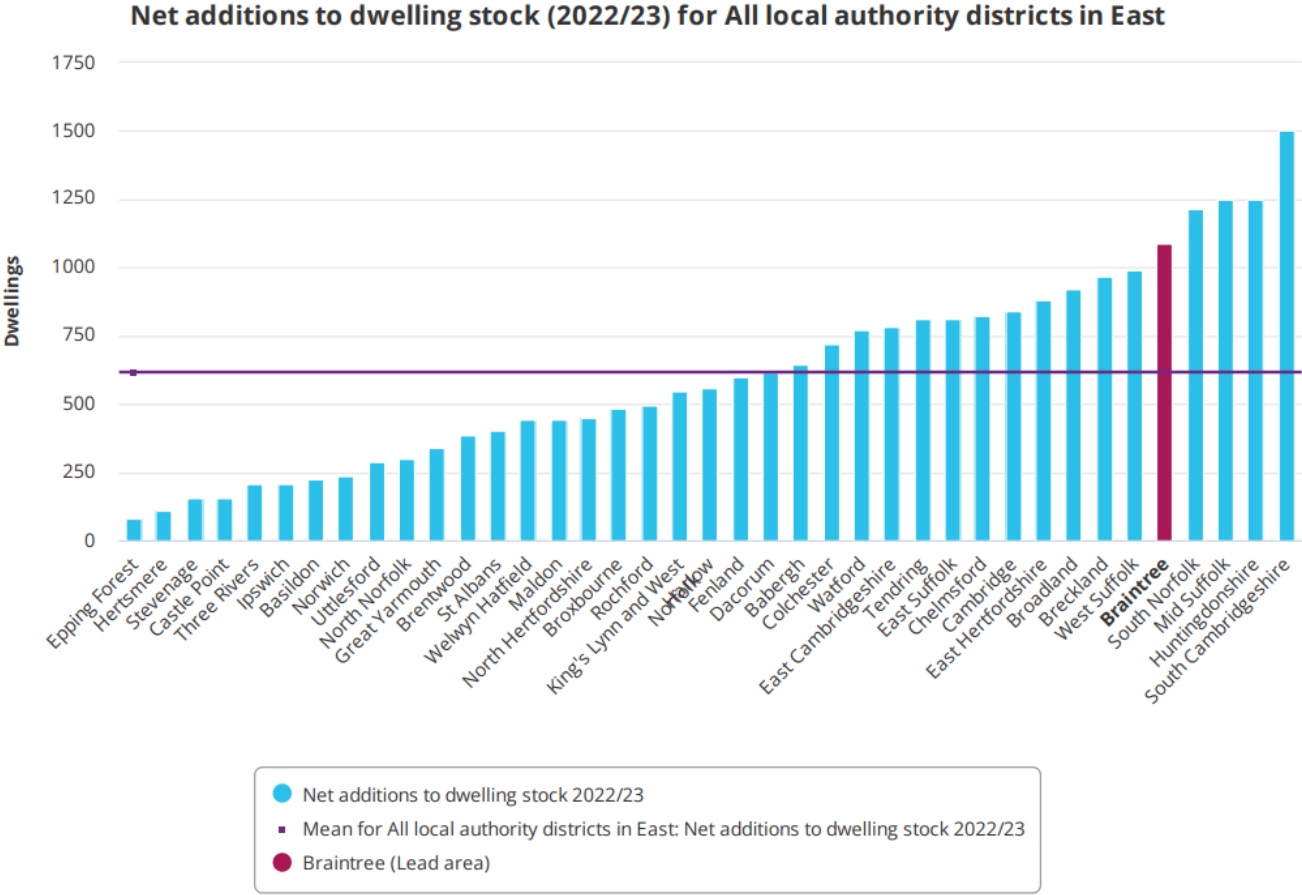
Figure 5



Source:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Dwellings completed by tenure, [Number of new dwellings completed as a percentage of total dwellings](#), **Data updated:** 27 Jun 2024

Figure 6



Source:
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Live tables on affordable housing supply, [Net additions to dwelling stock](#) , **Data updated:** 30 Nov 2023

The five-year supply position 2024-2029

Housing land supply in the District is monitored annually with a base date of 31 March.

This report sets out the Council's five-year housing land supply position for the period 2024-2029 taking into account permissions granted and development progress up to 31 March 2024. The calculation has been revised to take into account the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024.

The five-year supply position for 2024-2029 was assessed at 5.32 years.

The Local Plan housing target for Braintree District

The Local Plan Section 1 ('Meeting Housing Needs') sets the housing requirement as an annual average of 716 dwellings per year, resulting in a minimum total of 14,320 across the plan period from 2013 to 2033. This figure was subject to detailed examination during the Local Plan Section 1 examination. The Braintree District Local Plan Section 1 was adopted on 22 February 2021 and at that point replaced the Core Strategy in terms of the housing target.

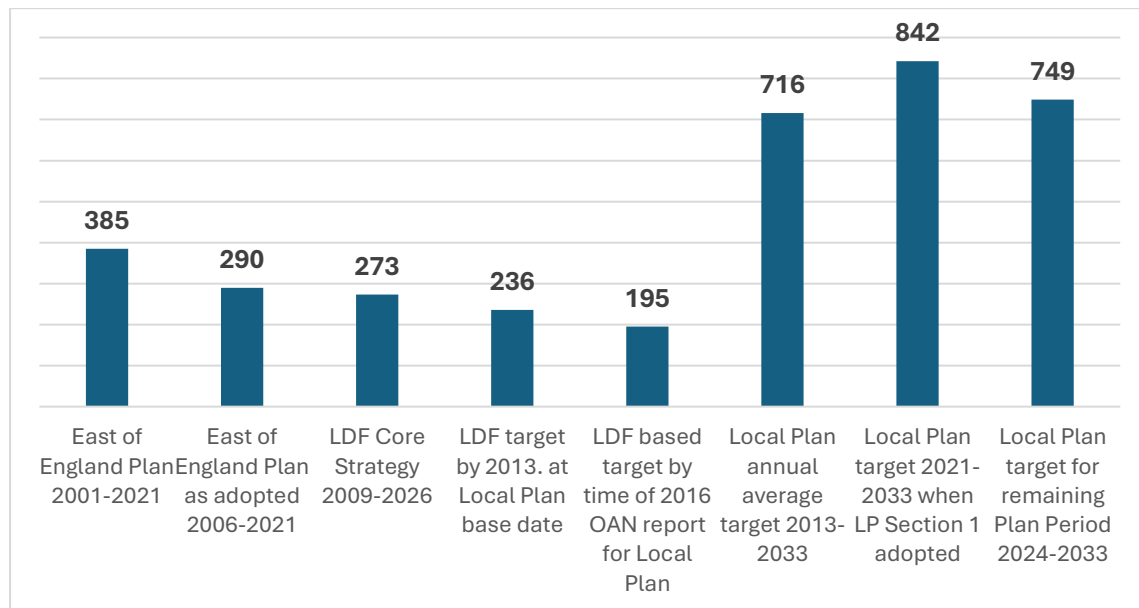
By way of context, in 2011 the Council adopted its Local Development Framework Core Strategy which included a housing target to deliver 4,637 new homes across a 17-year period between 2009 and 2026 (273 dpa). Compared to that, the objectively assessed need of 716 dpa that was defined in November 2016 represented a very large increase, but even more so when taken into account that the higher target was backdated to apply from 2013.

Figure 7 illustrates the scale of the change in target for the District. The lower target in the previous plan, together with the continuing impact of the recession, meant that development rates in the early part of the new plan period were much lower than the emerging Plan housing target.

As would be expected, sufficient sites were not in place in the early years to deliver increased supply. The Council took action to increase supply; it removed phasing limits on the Core Strategy strategic growth locations; granted permission on draft allocations in the Local Plan and granted permission on additional sites not included in the Draft Plan.

Housing delivery rates have increased, reducing the annual average target needed for the remainder of the Plan Period, and with the adoption of the Section 2 Local Plan and its housing allocations on 25 July 2022; sites are in place to meet the housing needs of the District based on the higher target.

Figure 7: the scale of the change in the housing target for the District:



Government policy amendment on planning for the supply of housing

For districts such as Braintree that have a recently adopted local plan (less than 5 years old) which was found at examination to have a five-year housing land supply; the five-year supply target is based on the adopted local plan.

Whereas the December 2023 NPPF removed the default requirement for a 5% buffer to be added to the target (i.e. unless a 20% buffer was required), the December 2024 NPPF restored the 5% buffer requirement. For Braintree District, for the 2024-2029 period the buffer requirement is 5%.

Calculating the 5-Year Housing Land Supply Target for 2024-2029

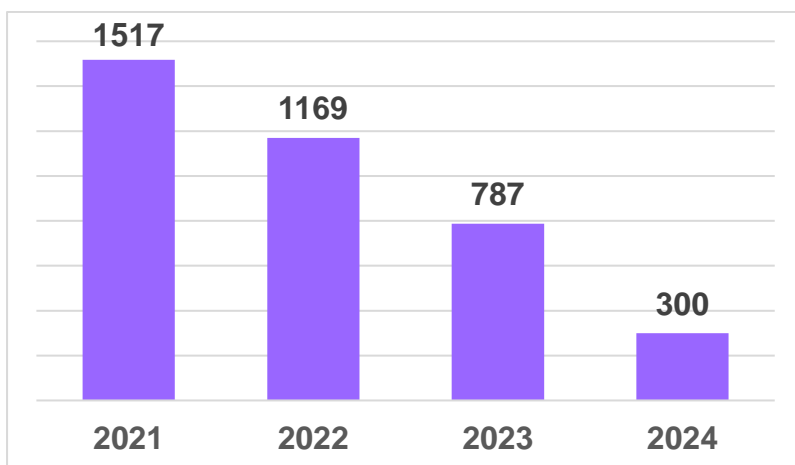
As Braintree District has an up to date adopted local plan, the target for the five-year supply is based on the Local Plan housing provision (716 dpa).

Although housing delivery in recent years has exceeded that level, low delivery rates in the early years of the plan period mean that overall, from 2013-2024, there was a cumulative shortfall measured against the target of 716 dpa of **300** dwellings. The calculation of the shortfall is summarised in Table 2 and Figure 8.

Table 2: Calculation of the shortfall in supply 2013-2024	
Net supply of homes 2013-2024, C3 Use Class	7,475
Net additional rooms C2 Use Class 2013-2024	181
Equivalent contribution to dwelling supply from C2 Use Class 2013-2024 (after applying ratio of 1.8)	101
Net total housing supply 2013-2024	7,576
Pro-rata target 2013-2024 at 716 X 11	7,876
Shortfall at 31.03.2024	300

The high delivery rates achieved in recent years reduced the cumulative shortfall from 1,517 dwellings in 2021 (when the Local Plan target of 716 dpa from 2013 was adopted) to 1,169 in 2022; 787 in 2023 and now down to 300 in 2024.

Figure 8: The reduction since 2021 in the cumulative shortfall against pro-rata cumulative target of 716 dpa from 2013



The cumulative shortfall is added to the basic target of 716 dpa for future supply. The revised NPPF published on 12 December 2024 reintroduced the default 5% buffer requirement; as this applies for decision making from the date of publication of the 2024 NPPF it has been taken into account in the calculations below (when the adopted plan reaches 5 years old, unless a new plan is in place the target will be based on the Standard Method and the buffer will increase to 20%).

The 5-year supply target calculation for 2024-2029 is set out in Table 3. The target is calculated on the basis of making up the cumulative shortfall of 300 from 2013 within the 5-year period (the default “Sedgefield Approach”). This is added to the basic annual average 5 X 716 dpa target, and a 5% buffer is then added. The result is that the five-year supply target for the District is 4,074, an annual average of 815.

Table 3: The Five-Year Housing Land Supply Target for 2024-2029

i)	Basic annual average target of 716 X 5	3,580
ii)	Cumulative shortfall in 2024	300
iii)	Basic target plus shortfall	3,880
iv)	Annual average target before buffer added	776
v)	Basic target plus shortfall plus 5% buffer	4,074
vi)	Annual average target after buffer added	815

After the Local Plan was submitted in 2017, the Government introduced a Standard Method formula for assessing local housing need; this applies to new local plans and where plans are more than 5 years old.

The Local Plan target was adopted in February 2021, which means the Standard Method would not be used in decision making to define the 5-year supply target for Braintree District until a future review of the Plan is adopted or when the Plan reaches 5 years old in February 2026, whichever is sooner.

The projected supply of new homes and the five-year housing land supply position

For decision making purposes, the Council needs to identify a 5-year supply of deliverable sites in accordance with the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework.

The Government Planning Practice Guidance on Housing supply and delivery was updated 12 December 2024 to reflect the changed NPPF.

The NPPF defines deliverability: “To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years”.

“In particular:

a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).

b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.”

The East Northants Consent Order of 12 May 2020 (Claim No. CO/917/2020) clarified that the scope of categories of site that can be included in the deliverable supply according to the glossary in the NPPF (the “limb b sites) is not a closed list.

As found in the Consent Order: *“The proper interpretation of the definition is that*

any site which can be shown to be ‘available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years’ will meet the definition; and that

the examples given in categories (a) and (b) are not exhaustive of all the categories of site which are capable of meeting that definition.

Whether a site does or does not meet the definition is a matter of planning judgment on the evidence available.”

The sources in Braintree District 5-year supply assessment are made up from:

- Sites with detailed planning permission
- Sites with outline planning permission
- One site on which an application had a Resolution to Grant planning permission, subject to signing of a Section 106 Agreement
- A windfall allowance
- Contribution from permissions for communal accommodation

In order to be “deliverable”, the Council does not have to demonstrate that there is *certainty* of delivery within 5 years, or even a *probability* of delivery; simply that there is a realistic prospect of housing being delivered within 5 years (this principle was established in the St Modwen judgement).

For sites that do not yet have detailed permission (other than non-major outline permission) – referred to as “category b sites”) the onus is on the Council to provide clear evidence of deliverability. There is no pre-defined category of the type of evidence which is capable of meeting this standard (examples are given in the PPG which are inexhaustible). It is highly case-specific.

The PPG advises that examples may include for instance current planning status; progress towards submission of a detailed application; progress on site assessment work, or evidence of developers’ intended anticipated start and delivery rates.

Local Plan allocations were not included in the Braintree District five-year supply assessment unless they had planning permission; Prior Approval; or a Resolution to Grant.

A windfall allowance has been included, taking into account the continuing evidence that windfall sites will form a reliable source of supply.

Whereas the 2012 version of the NPPF referred to consideration of a lapse allowance, this was omitted from subsequent versions of the NPPF and a lapse allowance is not required by policy or guidance. The assessment is concerned with whether there is a “realistic prospect” of sites delivering, not whether there is certainty that they will be delivered.

The supply assessment included a small number of permissions for additional communal accommodation, to which a ratio of 1.8 was applied in accordance with Government Guidance. This is consistent with the measurement of net housing supply in the Housing Flows return to Government.

The Section 2 Local Plan Examining Inspectors tested the housing supply in the Plan against the overall target and the five-year supply target, and found the approach to housing supply in the Plan to be robust and pragmatic.

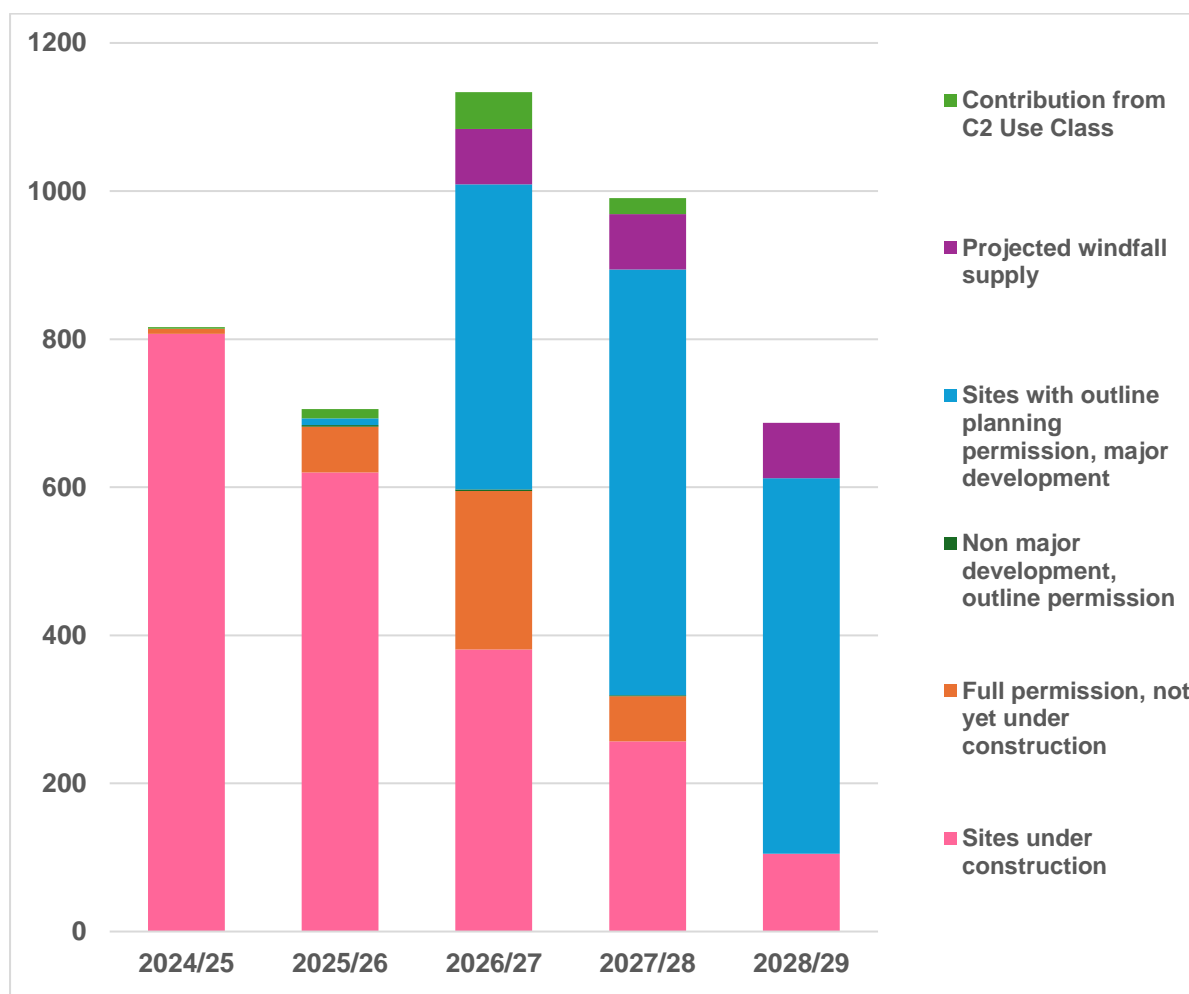
Since the Section 2 Local Plan Examination, over 1,700 dwelling plots have been added to the supply from permissions for major development (i.e. with a capacity of 10 or more dwellings). This provides additional confidence to the Examining Inspectors’ conclusion that the housing provision target will be met. These sites are all expected to be developed within the Plan Period to 2033:

- Phase 4 Land at Rectory Lane Rivenhall NE Witham: outline permission 230 dwellings, Reserved Matters recently approved for the 225 plots being developed by Bellway Homes; Building Regulations Initial Notice, and discharge of conditions applications submitted
- Land at Bournebridge Hill Greenstead Green at Halstead, 200 dwellings, Reserved Matters submitted Autumn 2024
- Boars Tye Road Silver End, 94 dwellings, Reserved Matters submitted by Bellway Homes December 2024
- London Road Kelvedon, 300 dwellings plus a 64-bed care home, Reserved Matters in preparation, first Reserved Matters submitted November 2024
- Maldon Road Hatfield Peverel, 110 dwellings, Reserved Matters submitted
- Land rear of Gilda Terrace Braintree, 118 dwellings, Reserved Matters have Resolution to Grant
- Colchester Road Coggeshall, 300 dwellings, under construction
- Mount Hill Halstead, 54 dwellings, Reserved Matters in preparation
- Halstead Hall, 20 dwellings, full permission

The categories within the 5-year supply 2024-2029 at 31st March 2024 are summarised in Table 4. A full schedule of sites in the five-year supply can be found in Appendix 1 (the Five-Year Supply Housing Trajectory 2024-2029).

Table 4: Summary of sources of supply in the 5-year supply 2024-2029	
Source category (as at 31 March 2024)	Projected supply 2024-29
Sites under construction	2,170
Sites not yet started, with Full, Reserved Matters or Prior Approval	344
Non-major sites with outline permission	5
Windfall allowance	225
Communal accommodation contribution (rooms/1.8)	86
Sites with outline permission, 10 dwellings/0.5 hectares or more	1,503
Sites with Resolution to Grant	1
Summary net supply	4,334

Figure 9: Five-year supply by source category illustrated, 2024-2029



Further information on the sites for which clear evidence was required is set out in Appendix 2

The windfall allowance

The term “windfall” relates to sites not specifically identified through the local plan process. The windfall allowance reflects supply that comes forward over time from the base date to supplement currently identified sites. This allowance must be supported by evidence demonstrating it is realistic to conclude that level of supply will come forward. Windfall sites are often small sites, although some may be larger. They are sites that come forward with permissions via the development management process rather than through first being selected to be included in Local Plans.

The Council has included a modest allowance for supply from windfall sites of 75 dwellings per year from year 3, with no allowance within Years 1 and 2 in the trajectory. Over a 5-year supply period, this would amount to 225 dwellings.

Evidence on windfall supply was considered in the Local Plan Examination in 2021. Windfall permission supply has continued after the adoption of the Plan, and includes amongst other sources prior approvals for permitted development (the regulations for which have been amended recently to encourage an increase in supply from this source).

Evidence on windfall supply was reviewed at a planning appeal hearing in April 2024, together with a linked argument from the appellant that a lapse rate of 15 dwellings per year should be applied as with the housing trajectory in the Section 2 Local Plan (Land South of Springfields Braintree, decision dated 11 June 2024, appeal ref 3338229). The Inspector concluded that a lapse rate should not be applied; the local plan trajectory serves a different purpose from the 5 year supply assessment and should not offer a standard or benchmark for the assessment of 5YHLS. Sites which do not involve major development and have permission and all sites which have detailed permission should be considered deliverable until the permission expires unless there is clear evidence that they are not. Neither the current NPPF nor the PPG refer to general application of a lapse rate. The Inspector noted that the evidence on supply from windfall sites demonstrated that the supply had been larger than was assumed in the Council’s 5YHLS assessment and would at least offset the potential effect of any permissions that did lapse.

The windfall supply allowance in the 2024-2029 five-year supply trajectory is from additional sites likely to be granted permission after the base date of 31 March 2024, based on local evidence.

Table 5 summarises the windfall permissions that have added to supply over the five-year period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024. An average of 118 dwellings per year have been added to the potential supply on sites of less than ten dwellings. Table 6 summarises the windfall permissions that have added to supply since the adoption of the Section 2 Local Plan on 25 July 2022. This demonstrates that windfall permissions are continuing to add to supply.

Table 7 shows the contribution to supply from windfall sites in terms of delivery within five years, by year, from the windfall permission (for sites with outline and then reserved matters approvals, the windfall permission is the outline permission). For small sites, the peak year is Year 3 (within 2-3 years of the permission), and for major development sites (10 or more dwellings) the peak year is Year 4 (3-4 years from the permission). After year 1, the yield is cumulative because there will be some completions from permissions granted that year, plus some from permissions granted the previous year(s) since the base date. Based on the median average yields set out in Table 7, the expected windfall supply in the 2024-2029 five year supply period from a base date of 31 March 2024 would be:

- 2024/25: small sites 4, large sites 0; total = 4
- 2025/26: small sites 4+19, large sites 0+0; total = 23
- 2026/27: small sites 4+19+34; large sites 0+0+18; total = 75
- 2027/28: small sites 4+19+34+21; large sites 0+0+18+108; total = 204
- 2028/29: small sites 4+19+34+21+12; large sites 0+0+18+108+76; total = 292
- Total over 5-year period 2024-2029: small sites 252; large sites 202

The windfall allowance included in the five-year supply assessment (75 dpa in Years 3-5, totalling 225 dwellings) is a conservative assessment and evidence of past supply from windfall permissions shows a higher level of supply. Windfall permissions are continuing to add to the supply.

Table 5: Additions to net supply, windfall planning permissions granted					
	Small sites (1-9 dwellings)	Large sites (10+ dwellings)	<i>Communal rooms</i>	Communal dwelling equivalent	Total dwellings added from windfall permissions
April 2019 to March 2020	114	518	2	1.1	633
April 2020 to March 2021	147	582	14	7.8	737
April 2021 to March 2022	104	242	-22	-12.2	334
April 2022 to March 2023	98	963	101	56.1	1,117
April 2023 to March 2024	125	67	27	15.0	207
Total in 5-year period	588	2,372	122	67.8	3,028
Annual average	118	474	24	13	606

Table 6: Additions to net supply from windfall permissions granted since adoption of the Section 2 Local Plan on 25 July 2022					
	Small sites (1-9 dwellings)	Large sites (10+ dwellings)	<i>Communal rooms</i>	Communal dwelling equivalent	Total dwellings added from windfall permissions
26 July 2022 - March 2023	50	945	89	49.4	1044
April 2023 to March 2024	125	67	27	15.0	207

Table 7: Completions on windfall sites with five years of year of windfall permission

Small sites (less than 10)					
Windfall completions in year	Within 1 year of windfall permission	Within 1-2 years of windfall permission	Within 2-3 years of windfall permission	Within 3-4 years of windfall permission	Within 4-5 years of windfall permission
2019/2020	4	13	44	17	8
2020/2021	1	35	40	23	18
2021/2022	3	25	18	11	23
2022/2023	4	19	34	37	12
2023/2024	7	-1	22	21	8
5 year mean average	4	18	32	22	14
5 year median average	4	19	34	21	12
Large windfall sites (10 or more)					
Windfall completions in year	Within 1 year of windfall permission	Within 1-2 years of windfall permission	Within 2-3 years of windfall permission	Within 3-4 years of windfall permission	Within 4-5 years of windfall permission
2019/2020	0	0	0	166	0
2020/2021	0	0	23	76	0
2021/2022	0	0	35	108	76
2022/2023	0	0	18	210	80
2023/2024	0	0	12	17	224
5 year mean average	0	0	18	115	76
5 year median average	0	0	18	108	76
All windfall sites					
Windfall completions in year	Within 1 year of windfall permission	Within 1-2 years of windfall permission	Within 2-3 years of windfall permission	Within 3-4 years of windfall permission	Within 4-5 years of windfall permission
2019/2020	4	13	44	183	8
2020/2021	1	35	63	99	18
2021/2022	3	25	53	119	99
2022/2023	4	19	52	247	92
2023/2024	7	-1	34	38	232
5 year mean average	4	18	49	137	90
5 year median average	4	19	52	119	92

Lead time and delivery rates

Lead time for the various stages in the development pipeline varies considerably from site to site and over time. In recent years the pandemic, the disruption to the housing market following the mini budget and increase in interest rates; and uncertainty in the period leading up to the General Election had a deterrent effect on the development industry and caused disruption to planning and development.

On major schemes, the Council has adopted an approach of front-loading work on design. Design Codes were approved as part of outline permissions on sites such as Towerlands Park; Straits Mill Braintree and Phase 4 Rectory Lane Rivenhall.

The Council seeks Planning Performance Agreements for applications on major sites, and developers are able to put proposals before a Members Forum meeting prior to submission, to enable problems to be ironed out at an early stage.

Appendix 3 of this Monitoring Report provides information on delivery rates on current and recent housing development. There is considerable variation, demonstrating that average rates need to be interpreted with care. It is unrealistic to apply them in a prescriptive way or as a cap on projected rates on other sites.

For many sites, the first and final years of the build out period cover only part of that year, i.e., completions start, or finish, part way through the monitoring year. The average rate over the build out period is therefore generally lower than can be achieved in a full year of delivery.

Appendix 3 shows the delivery rates by Monitoring Year (April-March) from when completions started to the end of the delivery period or – if the site is still under construction – to March 2024; but the table also shows the start date (month/year) of completions, and calculates the delivery period shown in full-year equivalents (calculated from the number of months of the delivery period from first month to last month or January 2024 if under construction). The information is more useful for sites that are developed over a longer period, and where completions have been coming through for some time.

There are several factors that tend to affect average delivery rates and can be a useful general starting point, including the size of the site, the strength of the local housing market, and the level of affordable housing provision in the development.

There were particularly high delivery rates at the sites at Colchester Road Coggeshall and at Towerlands Park Braintree; both of these sites have included build-to-rent homes in the range being delivered (in addition to affordable homes and market homes to buy) and this is supporting the high delivery rates; the Lichfields research has not yet identified that factor in its research.

Conclusion: Braintree District Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position

Table 8 calculates the Five-year housing land supply position for 2024-2029.

Table 8: The Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position 2024-2029		
i)	Five-year target 2024-2029	4,074
ii)	Annual average target 2024-2029	815
iii)	Projected supply 2024-2029	4,334
v)	Five-year supply position	5.32
vi)	Projected surplus over target	260

The five-year housing land supply position for 2024-2029 is **5.32 years**.