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Report on the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2033

An Examination undertaken for Braintree District Council with the support of Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council on the March 2024 submission version of the Plan.

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Date of Report: 9 September 2024

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Contents

Main Findings - Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction and Background	4
The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2033	4
The Independent Examiner.....	5
The Scope of the Examination.....	5
The Basic Conditions	6
2. Approach to the Examination	7
Planning Policy Context.....	7
Submitted Documents	8
Examiner Questions	8
Site Visit	10
Written Representations with or without Public Hearing	10
Modifications.....	10
3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights.....	10
Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area.....	10
Plan Period	11
Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation	11
Development and Use of Land.....	12
Excluded Development	12
Human Rights	12
4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions	12
EU Obligations.....	12
Main Assessment	13
Synopsis	14
Specific Issues of Compliance	15
Countryside and Environment	15
The Built and Historic Environment	17
Housing.....	18
Local Economy	20
Community Facilities	21
Highways and Transport.....	22
Monitoring and Review.....	23
Appendices - Supporting Documents.....	24
Background Information.....	24
Concluding Remarks.....	25

5. Conclusions 25

Summary 25

The Referendum and its Area 25

Overview 25

Appendix: Modifications 27

Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) 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 – Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council (the Parish Council);
- the Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Area;
- the Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – from 2022 to 2033; 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 Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2033

- 1.1 The Parish of Steeple Bumpstead lies in the north-west of the District of Braintree, some 3 miles to the south of Haverhill, 15 miles north-west of Braintree and 11 miles east of Saffron Walden. At the 2011 Census, the Parish had a population of 1,627 persons with 659 households.
- 1.2 The village of Steeple Bumpstead is served by the B1054 and B1057 roads, which both provide connections to the A1017 road which is the principal route linking Braintree with Haverhill and then westwards to Cambridge (via the A1307). The nearest railway station is at Audley End, 13 miles to the west. There are two bus services linking Steeple Bumpstead with Haverhill and Saffron Walden.
- 1.3 The Parish is characterised by rolling arable farmland and hills surrounding steep valleys containing small streams. The village of Steeple Bumpstead and other small hamlets are located in the valleys. Steeple Bumpstead originated as a valley settlement alongside the Bumpstead Brook, which is a tributary of the River Stour and which runs through the centre of the village. The name 'Bumpstead' is believed to derive from the Anglo-Saxon

'Bumsted' or *'Bumstead'* meaning "place of reeds", reflecting the village's location at the bottom of a valley.

- 1.4 The Parish has a rich heritage, with over 40 Listed Buildings, including the Grade I listed St. Mary the Virgin Parish Church. There is a designated Conservation Area within the centre of the village, which contains 21 Listed Buildings, most dating from the 16th and 17th centuries.
- 1.5 The village contains a good range of community facilities and services, including a primary school, a village shop, a post office, two public houses, a petrol station and a large village hall. There are two public open spaces within the village at Humphrey's Meadow and Camping Close and two children's play areas.
- 1.6 Steeple Bumpstead lies within the Stour Valley Countryside Project Area (SVPA), which is the area covered by the Dedham Vale National Landscape and the Stour Valley Management Plan 2021-2026. Steeple Bumpstead lies within the Upper Stour area, which is recognised as a valued landscape.

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 Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan was prepared (not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development), comprised the Braintree District Local Plan 2013-2033.
- 2.2 The Braintree District Local Plan 2013-2033 is in two sections. Section 1 is the North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan ('the Section 1 Plan') which was prepared jointly by the District Council, with Colchester City Council and Tendring District Council, and which was adopted by the District Council on 22 February 2021. 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 The Section 2 Plans were prepared individually by each of the three North Essex authorities for their respective districts. The Braintree Section 2 Plan ('the Section 2 Plan') was adopted by the District Council on 25 July 2022 and contains a suite of 78 specific local policies and proposals (Policies LPP1-LPP78) for Braintree District for the period 2013-2033. Of specific relevance to this examination is Policies Map Inset No. 57 for the settlement of Steeple Bumpstead. I also take the Section 2 Plan into account for the purposes of assessing the Basic Conditions.
- 2.3 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 is in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan (which are listed at Table 1 in Section 2 of the Basic Conditions Statement).

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.

³ See paragraph 1.13 above.

- 2.4 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.⁴

Submitted Documents

- 2.5 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 Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2033 (March 2024);
 - the Basic Conditions Statement (January 2024);
 - the Consultation Statement and Appendices 1-11 (September 2023);
 - the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (November 2023); and
 - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation.⁵
- 2.6 I have also considered the supporting evidence documents that have informed the preparation of the Plan, including the following documents:
- Design Guidance and Codes for the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan (AECOM) (July 2022);
 - Housing Report for the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan (Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council) (March 2023);
 - Steeple Bumpstead Parish Landscape Character Assessment (Wynne-Williams Associates) (March 2023); and
 - Sustainability Appraisal for the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan at Regulation 14 Consultation (Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council).⁶

Examiner Questions

- 2.7 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 22 July 2024⁷ seeking further clarification and information on three matters contained in the submission Plan, as follows:

⁴ A new version of the NPPF was published in December 2023. All references in this report read across to the latest December 2023 version. The government is presently consulting on further changes to the NPPF (albeit these are not likely to be published in final form until later in 2024): [Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system)

⁵ View at: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control/neighbourhood-planning/15>

⁶ View at: <https://braintree-consult.objective.co.uk/kpse/event/34AEC9A0-8D1B-48E9-968B-248C816D9A3F/section/6304755>

⁷ View at: **Requested**

- Firstly, with regard to a Planning Appeal decision dated 6 September 2017 that is referenced on Pages 9 and 14 in the draft Plan, I requested that the District Council please provide me with a copy of the Planning Inspector's decision letter, concerning residential development proposals beyond the village Development Boundary, in order that I could more fully understand the Inspector's reasons for dismissing that particular appeal.
- Secondly, with regard to land at 42. North Street, Steeple Bumpstead, I noted a number of representations make specific reference to this previously developed site, which was formerly in commercial use as a motor vehicle workshop. I understood that Outline Planning Permission was granted in June 2007 for five residential properties at the site, but that planning permission has now lapsed. In the context of the material that is set out at paragraphs 5.4.9-5.4.12 in the draft Plan, I wished to understand the current planning position with regard to this site. The site is referenced as STEB 395 in Section 2 of the adopted Braintree District Local Plan 2033 (adopted July 2022). I therefore requested that the District Council provide me with a note setting out the current planning status of the site, and whether any residential development proposals are currently being progressed at the site.
- Thirdly, with regard to the representations (Ref. SBNP23) submitted to the draft Plan on behalf of Messrs. Argent, the owners of the Blois Business Park, which seek an extension of the Business Park site allocation that is identified on Map 5 in the draft Plan, I wished to further understand the position of the District Council and the Qualifying Body with regard to the land that is the subject of these representations, which I note is in the ownership of Messrs. Argent. I further note that there is no identified extension to the Business Park in Section 2 of the adopted Braintree District Local Plan 2033, and I wished to understand to what extent that was considered during the preparation of the Local Plan. I therefore requested that the District Council and the Qualifying Body each provide me with a note setting out their assessment of the land's potential for an extension to the existing Business Park. I also confirmed that I would visit the Business Park during the course of my site visit.

2.8 In response to my letter of 22 July 2024, the District Council provided me with responses to the written questions on 16 August 2024 and the Qualifying Body provided me with its responses on 25 July 2024.⁸ 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 2.5 and 2.6 above.

⁸ View at: Not available to view at the date this report was completed - 16 August 2024
Requested

Site Visit

- 2.9 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 8 August 2024 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

- 2.10 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

- 2.11 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 Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council. An application to the District Council for the Parish Council area of Steeple Bumpstead to be designated a neighbourhood planning area was made on 19 February 2018 and was approved by the District Council on 8 March 2018, following public consultation.
- 3.2 The designated Neighbourhood Area comprises the whole of the Parish of Steeple Bumpstead. The submission Plan contains a map (Map 1) of the designated area at Page 6. The Steeple Bumpstead 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 Plan Steering Group, comprising a number of Parish Councillors and local residents.

Plan Period

- 3.4 The draft Plan specifies on its front cover and on Page 5 the period to which it is to take effect, which is from 2022 to 2033. This encompasses the remainder of the plan period for the adopted Braintree District Local Plan 2033 , which covers the period 2013-2033.

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 early 2018, and the Neighbourhood Planning Group (later to become the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) was formed by the Parish Council in January 2018, comprising three Parish Councillors and three local residents.
- 3.6 An initial information leaflet was distributed to all households in the Parish in Spring 2018. A community consultation workshop was held in June 2018, attended by 23 residents and which identified a series of priorities for the emerging Plan to address. Further informal community engagement took place in August 2018, when the Steering Group held a stall at a car boot sale held at the village hall.
- 3.7 In September 2019, a comprehensive Residents Survey was distributed to all 1,280 local residents on the Electoral Register for the Parish, with completed surveys received back from 453 residents representing a response rate of over 35%. The survey results were used to inform and justify the Vision, Objectives and draft Policies for the preparation of the draft Regulation 14 consultation Plan.
- 3.8 The Regulation 14 draft Plan was published for public consultation from 30 March to 17 May 2023. The consultation was accompanied by a questionnaire, which was made available online and at the two public houses, the village shop and at the village Library. A public meeting was held on 15 April 2023, which was attended by 44 residents, and the draft Plan was also publicised at the Annual Village Meeting held on 19 April 2023. A total of 56 responses were received from residents, together with responses from Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, other statutory consultees and others with an interest in the draft Plan. Following this consultation, the draft Plan was amended where considered appropriate to take account of the responses (and this is fully recorded at Appendix 11 of the Consultation Statement).
- 3.9 The Consultation Statement provides 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.

- 3.10 At its meeting held on 8 February 2024, the Parish Council resolved to formally submit the Plan under Regulation 15 to the District Council for examination, and the Plan was duly submitted shortly thereafter. Regulation 16 consultation was then held for a period of six weeks from 19 March to 3 May 2024. I have taken account of the 26 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

- 3.11 I am satisfied that 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

- 3.12 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

- 3.13 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 November 2023 in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, ('the SEA Regulations'). This Screening Report was submitted alongside the draft Plan and concludes (at paragraph 5.1) that the policies in the draft Plan are not likely to have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore the draft Plan can be screened out for its requirement of SEA in accordance with the requirements of Directive

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

2001/42/EC. 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 November 2023 in order to establish whether the Plan required a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with the 2017 Regulations. There is only one site of European importance within 20 kilometres of the Plan area which is the Devil's Dyke 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 that site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and the requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the 2017 Regulations is therefore screened out. 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: Countryside and Environment; The Built and Historic Environment; Housing; Local Economy; Community Facilities; and Highways and Transport. 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 2033 and seeks to ensure that the Parish of Steeple Bumpstead will be a place where residents enjoy an excellent quality of life and people feel valued. Heritage assets will be protected, and countryside, wildlife and valuable views will be safeguarded. Section 5 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 March 2018. Map 1 shows the designated Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.10 Section 2 of the Plan provides a description of the process undertaken in the preparation of the draft Plan during 2018-2024. It also sets out the various legal requirements, including the need to meet the Basic Conditions. This section of the Plan makes reference to the NPPF published in 2021. This should be amended to refer to the current NPPF that was published in December 2023, and recommended modification **PM1** addresses this necessary amendment.
- 4.11 Section 3, entitled 'About Steeple Bumpstead', describes the history of Steeple Bumpstead, the main features of the countryside and environment in the Parish and the key demographic and economic characteristics of the Parish. It notes the dismissal of a planning appeal in September 2017 for up to 65 dwellings on land off Finchingfield Road in the village (see also my first Question at paragraph 2.7).
- 4.12 Section 4 of the Plan sets out the Plan's Vision which is as follows:
"The Parish of Steeple Bumpstead will be a place where residents enjoy an excellent quality of life and people feel valued. Heritage assets will be

¹⁰ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

protected; countryside, wildlife and valuable views will be safeguarded and celebrated. Homes, businesses and other facilities will meet the needs of a vibrant, affordable and safe rural community.”

Essex County Council has made a number of comments regarding the Vision and considers that its scope should be broadened, particularly regarding multifunctional green infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain. I take these comments into account as part of my assessment of the relevant Policies.

- 4.13 Section 5 of the Plan contains the Plan’s Objectives and Policies, and I consider the draft Policies in greater detail at paragraphs 4.16-4.57 below.
- 4.14 The Basic Conditions Statement (at Section 5) 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 Tables within Section 5 of the Basic Conditions Statement set out how each of the Plan’s 11 policies are consistent with the national policies contained in the NPPF, are in general conformity with the strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan and contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.
- 4.15 I consider that overall, subject to the detailed modifications which 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 a number of detailed matters which require amendment to ensure that the policies have the necessary regard to national policy and the strategic policies of the District Council. Accordingly, I recommend modifications in this report in order to address those 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, together with the responses by the Qualifying Body and the District Council to my written questions (see paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 above). Section 5 of the Plan sets out the proposed policies for the Plan area under the headings of Countryside and Environment; the Built and Historic Environment; Housing; Local Economy; Community Facilities; and Highways and Transport.

Countryside and Environment

- 4.17 Section 5.2 addresses the Countryside and Environment of the Plan area and contains two policies (Policies SB1 and SB2) to meet the Plan’s objectives to protect and respect the landscape, wildlife and countryside of the Parish, and cherish its natural beauty and to minimise the impact of any future development on the landscape and scenic beauty of the area.

- 4.18 Policy SB1 (Location of New Development) states that development proposals within the Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary as defined on accompanying Maps 1 and 2 will be supported provided that they:
- a. are located on brownfield development; and
 - b. represent sustainable development; and
 - c. meet relevant requirements set out in other policies of this Plan.

It goes on to state that development proposals outside of the Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary will be supported where the proposals relate to a Rural Exception Scheme or uses appropriate to the countryside such as agricultural uses.

- 4.19 As drafted, I consider that this Policy only provides very limited guidance on the factors that should be considered as part of the assessment of development proposals within the Plan area. In that respect, I take particular account of the representations that have been made by Essex County Council and Essex Police, notably in relation to mitigating the risk of crime. I therefore recommend a number of amendments to the text of this Policy in order to ensure its clarity and take account of matters that have been raised in representations. These necessary amendments are addressed by recommended modification **PM2**.

- 4.20 Policy SB 2 (Protected Views) states that the village of Steeple Bumpstead is characterised by views across and down into the valley, and views to and from the Church of St Mary the Virgin. Specific Protected Views are identified within the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), shown on accompanying Map 3. It goes on to state that development proposals will be supported provided that they protect and/or enhance these views. Development proposals which may have an adverse impact upon views across and down into the valley, and views to and from the Church of St Mary the Virgin, should be supported by a visual impact assessment which demonstrates the impact of the development upon views which are important to the character of the area.

- 4.21 During the course of my site visit, I visited all of the locations identified on Map 3 and noted the views to be protected by this Policy. I agree that each of the views is worthy of protection, and that they are suitably evidenced within the LCA. I recommend an additional sentence and two other focused amendments to the Policy text in order to ensure it is clear, and these amendments are all addressed by recommended modification **PM3**.

- 4.22 With recommended modifications PM2 and PM3, I consider that the draft Plan's section on Countryside and Environment and its accompanying policies is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Braintree Local Plan, has regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

The Built and Historic Environment

- 4.23 Section 5.3 is concerned with the Built and Historic Environment in the Plan area and contains two policies (Policies SB3 and SB4) to meet the Plan's objectives to protect and respect the rich history and heritage of the Parish and to minimise the impact of any future development on the heritage assets of the village. Essex County Council make a representation concerning the second of these objectives, and I consider that their comment is justified. I therefore recommend a focused amendment to that objective to reflect the importance of the respective settings of heritage assets when considering the impact of new developments, and this is addressed by recommended modification **PM4**.
- 4.24 Policy SB3 (Design in Harmony with the Built and Historic Environment) states that new development proposals in the area should demonstrate good quality design and respect the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area, and should be in conformity with the Steeple Bumpstead Parish Design Guidance and Codes document, prepared by AECOM to provide design support for the Plan, that is attached as an Appendix to the draft Plan.¹¹ It goes on to state that new development proposals will be supported provided that they fulfil all of the following requirements:
- a. using design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings; and
 - b. demonstrating that the design of the particular development has addressed and protected the positive features of the character of the local area; and
 - c. using materials which are compatible with the materials of the host or surrounding buildings; and
 - d. demonstrating that there is no or minimal negative impact on views or historic assets and their settings.

It further states that the village of Steeple Bumpstead is located in a valley, where the existing settlement pattern is predominately located below 70m above Ordnance Datum (AOD), as shown on accompanying Map 4. This pattern of development is important to the character and appearance of the area. New development proposals located above 70m AOD will be required to provide a Visual Impact Assessment which demonstrates the impact of the development on the character, appearance, and settlement pattern of the Parish. Proposals which have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance, and existing settlement pattern of the Parish will not be supported.

- 4.25 I am satisfied that this Policy is appropriately drafted and provides clear guidance on its requirements. I only recommend one focused amendment to the Policy text in order to provide the necessary clarity, and this is addressed by recommended modification **PM5**.

¹¹ See PPG Reference IDs: 26-005-20191001 and 26-008-20191001.

- 4.26 Policy SB4 (Residential Development on Garden Land) states that proposals for new dwellings on private residential gardens will be discouraged and will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
- a. the reduced garden sizes of the existing dwellings in combination with the garden sizes of the new dwellings relate well to each other and to the surrounding neighbourhood; and
 - b. the character of the surrounding neighbourhood (in terms of appearance and the massing of development and landscape value) is respected.
- 4.27 Again, I am satisfied that this Policy provides clear guidance for users of the Plan on proposals for new residential developments that are within the gardens of existing properties. However, I do recommend four focused amendments to the Policy text for accuracy, including the replacement of the word “permitted” as the Parish Council is not able to grant planning permission for planning applications that are submitted within the Parish. These amendments are addressed by recommended modification **PM6**.
- 4.28 With recommended modifications PM4-PM6, I consider that the draft Plan’s policies for the Built and Historic 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

- 4.29 Section 5.4 of the draft Plan is entitled ‘Housing’ and contains one policy (Policy SB5) to meet the Plan’s objectives to ensure that likely future housing supply is matched with likely future housing needs, ensure an appropriate mix of housing for local needs, including affordable housing, and define appropriate criteria for identifying potential sites for housing and types of homes required.
- 4.30 Policy SB5 (Affordable Housing) states that new development proposals should:
- a. Provide affordable housing in accordance with the requirements set out within the adopted Braintree District Local Plan; and
 - b. Outline current local needs for affordable housing, and demonstrate how the proposed development will assist in meeting local needs; and
 - c. Ensure that affordable housing provision is made available in the first instance to people with a local connection to the Parish.

It goes on to state that outside of the defined Steeple Bumpstead village Development Boundary, proposals for a Rural Exception Site will be supported, subject to 100% allocation to affordable housing within the Rural Exception Site as well as the requirements of other policies within

this Plan, provided that the affordable housing will be made available in the first instance to people with a local connection to the Parish in perpetuity.

- 4.31 With regard to the supporting text within this section of the Plan, the District Council comment that the Census data at paragraph 5.4.1 should be updated to 2021 Census data, which is now available, in order to provide a more updated and reliable position on potential housing need in the Parish. I concur with that comment, which will also affect paragraph 3.3.1 in Section 3 of the draft Plan. The District Council also comment that it is inappropriate to include the references to the High Court judgment in respect of a housing development proposal in Thurston, Suffolk in the Plan, as the circumstances in that area are likely to be different to those pertaining in Braintree district and Steeple Bumpstead. I also concur with that comment, and the necessary amendments and deletions to the draft Plan are included as part of recommended modification **PM7**.
- 4.32 With regard to the text of Policy SB5, some focused amendments are necessary for accuracy and consistency, and these amendments are also addressed by recommended modification **PM7**.
- 4.33 Finally, with regard to this section of the Plan, I have considered the various representations that have been made concerning land at 42. North Street, Steeple Bumpstead, which is a significant previously developed site within the village, formerly used as a motor vehicle workshop. I raised this matter as the second of my written questions (see paragraph 2.7 above). The District Council's response to this question confirms that there are no extant planning permissions or current planning applications affecting the site at the present time, which is described as land rear of Nos. 40-58 North Street by the District Council. The most recent planning permission for residential development lapsed in 2013. As such, the last lawful use of the site remains as "*ancillary residential parking, including garage and outbuildings*", although the garage and outbuildings have now been demolished.
- 4.34 I find it surprising, as the most recent planning permission lapsed in 2013, that the draft Plan makes no reference to this site which is within the Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary and which, in my assessment, has very clear potential for an appropriate, well-designed residential development in a very sustainable location within the village, in accordance with the objectives of the Plan. I consider that, should the site continue to remain largely vacant and undeveloped, a future review of the Plan might address the future of this site as part of an assessment of future housing need within the Parish, and the identification of potential housing allocation sites (see also paragraph 4.56 below).
- 4.35 With recommended modification PM7, I consider that the draft Plan's policy for Affordable Housing in the Plan area 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.

Local Economy

- 4.36 Section 5.5 of the draft Plan is entitled 'Local Economy' and contains two policies (Policies SB6 and SB7) to meet the Plan's objectives to support local business and retain local employment, and to encourage new business and employment opportunities in the Parish.
- 4.37 Policy SB6 (Protecting Existing Business Uses) states that proposals which will result in the loss of an existing business use (including Use Classes B2, B8, and E) will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the site has been marketed effectively for a minimum of twelve months at a rate which is comparable to local market value for its existing use, or as redevelopment opportunity for other similar uses, and it can be demonstrated that the continuous existing use of the site is no longer viable, taking into account the site's existing and potential long-term market demand in its current use. The Business Park allocations within the Parish are shown on accompanying Map 5.
- 4.38 In my assessment, this Policy is not satisfactorily drafted as it principally comprises a single sentence of over 90 words in length. It therefore does not provide sufficient clarity for future users of the Plan. Accordingly, I consider that the Policy wording should be redrafted, in order to provide much clearer guidance, and recommended modification **PM8** addresses the necessary amendments.
- 4.39 Policy SB7 (Farm Businesses) states that outside development boundaries, proposals which support the diversification of farm businesses through small-scale commercial development will be supported provided that the development relates to the conversion and re-use of existing buildings that are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without complete re-building. It goes on to state that proposals for the provision of rural workers' accommodation will be supported provided that the need is demonstrated in order to support the future management of the farm business. Accommodation should be provided through the conversion and re-use of existing buildings where possible.
- 4.40 I consider that this Policy is well drafted and provides clear guidance on proposals for farm diversification enterprises. I do recommend a focused amendment to the Policy text, for clarity, and this is addressed by recommended modification **PM9**.
- 4.41 I have also considered a representation, submitted on behalf of the owners of the Blois Business Park, which seeks an extension of the Business Park site allocation that is identified on Map 5 in the draft Plan. As the third of my written questions (see paragraph 2.7 above), I wished to further understand the position of the District Council and the

Qualifying Body with regard to the land that is the subject of this representation, which I noted is in the ownership of the owners of the Business Park. In my assessment of this representation, I have taken account of the responses received from the Qualifying Body and the District Council to this question, and I visited the area during the course of my site visit. I also note that the land has also been submitted to the District Council for consideration through the current Local Plan Review process, with the reference STEB2282. The site has not yet been considered by the District Council's Local Plan Sub-Committee. The principal constraint affecting the site is that it falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3. However, as the District Council has not yet considered the submission to the Local Plan Review process, I do not make any further conclusions regarding the allocation of this land, although I do consider that it would clearly contribute to meeting the Plan's objective to encourage new business and employment opportunities in the Parish.

- 4.42 With recommended modifications PM8 and PM9, I consider that the draft Plan's policies for the Local Economy in the Plan area 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.

Community Facilities

- 4.43 Section 5.6 of the draft Plan is entitled 'Community Facilities' and contains two policies (Policies SB8 and SB9) to meet the Plan's objectives to maintain and protect the community facilities and services available to residents, and to ensure that the open public spaces within the village are protected and properly maintained.
- 4.44 Policy SB8 (Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation) states that development at the public open space areas, Humphrey's Meadow and Camping Close and Other Areas of Community Value, as shown on accompanying Map 6, will be permitted where the proposals are ancillary to the existing uses on the site, and support and enhance the enjoyment of these areas. It goes on to state that proposals for development that would result in the loss of the whole or part of the public open space areas, including Humphrey's Meadow and Camping Close and Other Areas of Community Value (as shown on Map 6) will not generally be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances for essential utility infrastructure where no other feasible alternative site is available, or where an equivalent or enhanced replacement facility is provided in a convenient and accessible location.
- 4.45 Subject to three focused amendments to the Policy text, to replace the word "permitted" with the word "supported", as the Parish Council is not able to grant planning permission for planning applications, and to also take account of a representation by Essex County Council, I consider that

the Policy is appropriately drafted. These amendments are addressed by recommended modification **PM10**.

- 4.46 Policy SB9 states that proposals which will result in the loss of an existing community use (including Use Classes E and F) will be supported provided that it can be demonstrated that the site has been marketed effectively for a minimum of twelve months at a rate which is comparable to local market value for its existing use, or as redevelopment opportunity for other similar uses, and it can be demonstrated that the continuous existing use of the site is no longer viable, taking into account the site's existing and potential long-term market demand in its current use. It goes on to state that marketing evidence is not required in relation to educational facilities (Use Class F). Proposals resulting in the loss of an educational facility will not be supported unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing use of the educational facility is redundant, a satisfactory alternative facility is to be provided or local education needs will be appropriately provided for in the area to the satisfaction of Essex County Council, lead authority for education. Finally, it notes that areas of community use are shown in Map 7.
- 4.47 As with Policy SB6, the first paragraph of text in this Policy is of excessive length and lacks the necessary clarity for users of the Plan. Accordingly, I consider that this paragraph should be redrafted, in order to provide much clearer guidance, and recommended modification **PM11** addresses the necessary amendments. However, it is not necessary to recommend any amendments to the other parts of this Policy.
- 4.48 With recommended modifications PM10 and PM11, I consider that the draft Plan's policies for Community Facilities in the Plan area 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.

Highways and Transport

- 4.49 Section 5.7 of the draft Plan is entitled 'Highways and Transport' and contains two policies (Policies SB10 and SB11) to meet the Plan's objectives to improve safety for all highways users in, through and around the village, including pedestrians and cyclists, and to promote and support public transport, and travel by foot and cycle.
- 4.50 Policy SB10 (Impact of New Development on Traffic) states that proposals for new development will be required to:
- a. Provide safe and convenient access for vehicles and pedestrians with visibility splays consistent with current standards; and
 - b. Submit a Transport Assessment or Statement and Travel Plan as appropriate.

- 4.51 Subject to two focused amendments to take account of a representation by the District Council, I consider that this Policy is appropriately drafted. The focused amendments are addressed by recommended modification **PM12**.
- 4.52 Policy SB11 (Parking Provision) states that development proposals that generate an increased need for parking must provide adequate and suitable off-street parking in order to minimise obstruction of the local road network in the interests of the safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Parking spaces can take the form of spaces or garage/car port facilities, but must be permanently available to the resident for parking use. It goes on to state that any new residential parking to be provided, whether in new development or through additional provision associated with alterations or extensions to existing development, is required to have regard to Essex Parking Standards (or any subsequent update to this) and the design principles established in the Essex Design Guide. Departures from the Essex Parking Standards (EPS) will require the submission of supporting evidence. Finally, it states that proposals that would reduce the existing level of off-street parking provision will be resisted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount of overall provision is adequate for the existing and future use of the site.
- 4.53 Subject to one focused amendment to the Policy text, which is addressed by recommended modification **PM13**, I am satisfied that this Policy is appropriately drafted.
- 4.54 Essex County Council and the District Council have each made representations concerning this section of the Plan, and in particular that it does not contain sufficient emphasis on promoting and encouraging active and sustainable transport options in the Plan area. I acknowledge that Steeple Bumpstead is not well served by public transport and that the narrow roads and lanes in many parts of the Plan area do make walking and cycling improvements difficult to achieve. However, there may be scope as part of a future review of the Plan, to consider how walking and cycling can be further encouraged, particularly in and around the village, in line with the Plan's objective to promote travel by foot and cycle.
- 4.55 With recommended modifications PM12 and PM13, I consider that the draft Plan's policies for Highways and Transport 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.

Monitoring and Review

- 4.56 Section 6 of the Plan addresses the future monitoring and review of the Plan. There is the likelihood that there will be a need to formally review the Plan during the Plan period, particularly following the review of the Braintree District Local Plan 2033 which is presently scheduled to take place over the period 2024-2026, as programmed in the Council's latest

Local Development Scheme dated March 2024. The Plan as drafted does not contain a specific statement regarding a potential future review to take account of the emerging review of the Local Plan, and I consider this to be an omission. I therefore recommend modification **PM14** to add a further paragraph to Section 6 of the Plan in order to address this point.

Appendices - Supporting Documents

4.57 Section 7 of the Plan lists the various Appendices to the Plan which comprise supporting documents for the Plan, which are all available on the Parish Council's website¹²:

- Report on Housing for Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal;
- Design Guidance and Codes (AECOM);
- Landscape Character Assessment (plus two Appendices) (Wynne-Williams Associates Limited);
- Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement (DAC Planning Limited);
- Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement (DAC Planning Limited);
- The maps contained within the Landscape Character Assessment, the most important of which are:
 - Figure 1 - Essex Landscape Character Assessment Map
 - Figure 2 - Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment Map
 - Figure 3 - Stour Valley Project Area Extract
 - Figure 6 - Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Map
 - Figure 8 - Access in the Parish (detailing footpaths within the Parish)
 - Figure 10 - Steeple Bumpstead Parish Landscape Character Area Map;
- The Steeple Bumpstead Residents' Survey and Results (September 2019).

As noted above, the Appendices include the Design Guidance and Codes which have been developed in parallel to complement the Neighbourhood Plan.

Background Information

4.58 Section 8 of the Plan is entitled 'Background Information' and comprises a list of national, District Council and national policy documents, together with other local studies and Planning Appeal documents that have formed part of the evidence base for the preparation of the draft Plan. My only comment is that the reference to the NPPF should be to the current version dated December 2023 (see also **PM1**).

¹² [Neighbourhood Plan | Steeple Bumpstead PC \(steeplebumpstead-pc.org\)](https://www.steeplebumpstead-pc.org)

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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 Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2033 meets the Basic Conditions for neighbourhood plans.
- 4.60 As an advisory comment, when the Plan is being redrafted to take account of the recommended modifications in this report, it should be re-checked for any typographical errors, consequential changes (such as paragraph numbering), factual and other minor updates etc, where appropriate. None of these alterations would affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.¹³

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2033 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 written 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 Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2033, 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 Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan is the product of much hard work undertaken since 2018 by the Parish Council, its

¹³ PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509.

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 Steeple Bumpstead community for the future planning of their Parish up to 2033. 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	Pages 8 and 53	<p><u>Section 2 – Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan</u></p> <p>Amend the reference at paragraph 2.2.2 to refer to the NPPF (December 2023).</p> <p><u>Section 8 – Background Information</u></p> <p>Amend the reference to the National Planning Policy Framework to refer to the December 2023 version.</p>
PM2	Page 22	<p><u>Policy SB1 – Location of New Development</u></p> <p>Amend Policy title to read “Proposals for New Development”.</p> <p>First paragraph of Policy text – clause a) – delete the words “brownfield development” and replace with “previously developed or suitable vacant sites”.</p> <p>Second paragraph of Policy text – delete the words “outside of the Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary” in the first line of text and replace with “elsewhere within the Plan area”.</p> <p>Second paragraph of Policy text – delete the words “or uses appropriate to the countryside such as agricultural uses” in the second and third lines of text and replace with “to uses and types of development that are compatible with their location within the countryside of the Plan area.”</p> <p>Add new third paragraph of Policy text to read as follows:</p> <p>“All proposals for new development in the Plan area should take account of the need, where relevant, to secure Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with national policy requirements, to provide</p>

		multifunctional green infrastructure in accordance with national and local requirements for the benefit of people and wildlife and to mitigate the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour in order to create a safe environment."
PM3	Page 22	<p><u>Policy SB2 – Protected Views</u></p> <p>Add new second sentence to the first paragraph of Policy text to read as follows:</p> <p>"This Policy protects the most important views to ensure that new developments do not have an adverse impact on the landscape character of the areas concerned."</p> <p>Add the word "All" to the start of the second paragraph of Policy text.</p> <p>Amend the words "visual impact assessment" in the second paragraph of Policy text to read "Visual Impact Assessment".</p>
PM4	Page 22	<p><u>The Built and Historic Environment</u></p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <p>Delete text of second objective in full and replace with:</p> <p>"To minimise the impact of any new developments on the heritage assets and their settings within the Parish."</p>
PM5	Page 25	<p><u>Policy SB3 – Design in Harmony with the Built and Historic Environment</u></p> <p>Amend the first sentence of Policy text to read as follows:</p> <p>"All proposals for new development in the Plan area should demonstrate good quality design and that they respect the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area, and that they also conform with the Steeple Bumpstead Design Guidance and Codes which is attached to this Plan as an Appendix."</p>

PM6	Page 27	<p><u>Policy SB4 – Residential Development on Garden Land</u></p> <p>Delete the word “permitted” in the second line of Policy text and replace with “supported”.</p> <p>Delete the word “neighbourhood” in clauses a. and b. of the Policy text and replace with “area”.</p> <p>Insert space between the words “of” and “appearance” in the text of clause b.</p>
PM7	Pages 12, 27, 29, 30 and 33	<p><u>Section 3.3 Housing</u> <u>Section 5.4 – Housing</u> <u>Policy SB5 – Affordable Housing</u></p> <p>Update the 2011 Census demographic and household data contained at paragraphs 3.3.1 and 5.4.1 with the equivalent data from the 2021 Census.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.4.14 - delete this paragraph in full, including the Case Study regarding Thurston Parish Council.</p> <p>Re-number paragraphs 5.4.15-5.4.26 to be 5.4.14-5.4.25.</p> <p><u>Policy SB5</u></p> <p>Amend clause b. of the Policy text to read as follows:</p> <p>“Take account of the current identified local needs for affordable housing in the Parish and demonstrate how the proposed development will assist in meeting local needs; and”.</p> <p>Second paragraph of Policy text – delete the words “Outside of the defined Steeple Bumpstead village Development Boundary, proposals for a Rural Exception Site will be supported,” and replace with “In those parts of the Plan area beyond the defined Steeple Bumpstead Village Development Boundary, proposals for</p>

		Rural Exception Affordable Housing developments on suitable sites will be supported,”.
PM8	Page 36	<p><u>Policy SB6 – Protecting Existing Business Uses</u></p> <p>Delete existing Policy text in full, and replace with:</p> <p>“This Plan seeks to support and retain existing local businesses and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Proposals which would result in the loss of existing sites and premises within the Plan area that are in business and employment use (including Use Classes B2, B8 and E) will only be supported where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the site/premises have been marketed for continued business uses for a period of at least 12 months; and b) it can be demonstrated that the continued use of the site/premises for business and employment purposes is no longer viable. <p>Map 5 identifies the existing site within the Plan area that is allocated for business uses.”</p>
PM9	Page 37	<p><u>Policy SB7 – Farm Businesses</u></p> <p>Delete the words “Outside development boundaries,” in the first paragraph of Policy text and replace with “Within the Plan area, and subject to the requirements of other relevant Policies in this Plan,”.</p>
PM10	Page 41	<p><u>Policy SB8 – Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation</u></p> <p>Delete the word “permitted” in the first and second paragraphs of Policy text and replace with the word “supported”.</p>

		Delete the word “generally” in the second paragraph of Policy text.
PM11	Page 42	<p><u>Policy SB9 – Protecting Community Uses</u></p> <p>Delete the first paragraph of Policy text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“This Plan seeks to protect the existing community uses within the Plan area.</p> <p>Proposals which would result in the loss of an existing community use including Uses Classes E and F) within the Plan area will only be supported where:</p> <p>a) the site/premises have been marketed for its further community use for a period of at least 12 months; and</p> <p>b) it can be demonstrated that the continued use of the site/premises either for its current community use or for an alternative community use is no longer viable.”</p>
PM12	Page 47	<p><u>Policy SB10 – Impact of New Development on Traffic</u></p> <p>Amend clause a. of the Policy text to read as follows:</p> <p>“Provide safe and convenient access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists with visibility splays in accordance with the adopted standards of the Highways Authority; and”.</p> <p>Amend clause b. of the Policy text to read as follows:</p> <p>“Where required, submit a Transport Assessment or Statement and Travel Plan as part of the planning application for the proposed development.”</p>
PM13	Page 47	<p><u>Policy SB11 – Parking Provision</u></p> <p>Amend the words “to the resident” in the first paragraph of Policy text to read “to residents”.</p>

PM14	Page 49	<p><u>Section 6 – Monitoring and Review</u></p> <p>Add new Paragraph 6.0.4, as follows:</p> <p>“The relationship with the Local Plan is particularly important as Braintree District Council has commenced a review of its current adopted Local Plan. Any implications for this Neighbourhood Plan will 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>
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