



Sustainability Appraisal of Braintree District Local Plan Scoping Report

Braintree District Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Braintree
District Council

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Braintree District Council commissioned LUC in May 2024 to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Braintree Local Plan. For simplicity in this report, we refer to the SA of the Braintree Local Plan Review, which should be taken as incorporating SEA (as explained below).

1.2 SA is an assessment process designed to consider and report upon the significant sustainability issues and effects of emerging plans and policies, including their reasonable alternatives. SA iteratively informs the plan-making process by helping to refine the contents of such documents, so that they maximise the benefits of sustainable development and avoid, or at least minimise, the potential for adverse effects. The purpose of this Scoping Report is to provide the context for, and determine the scope of, the SA of the Braintree Local Plan Review, and to set out the framework for assessing the sustainability of the new Local Plan.

1.3 It should be noted that this report is in an ‘Accessible format’, which means it has been formatted to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations (2018), as set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1). This means it must have larger font, larger spacing between lines and headings, less information presented in tables, ‘alt text’ provided for all figures and it is able to be read by screen-reading software.

The plan area

1.4 Braintree District is located in the north of Essex County (shown in **Figure 1.1**). With the exception of the towns of Braintree, Halstead, and Witham, it is a

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predominately rural district covering some 611.7 km² [See reference 1]. The 2021 Census reported the district as having a population of 155,200, with the highest proportion of people aged between the ages of 50 and 64 [See reference 2].

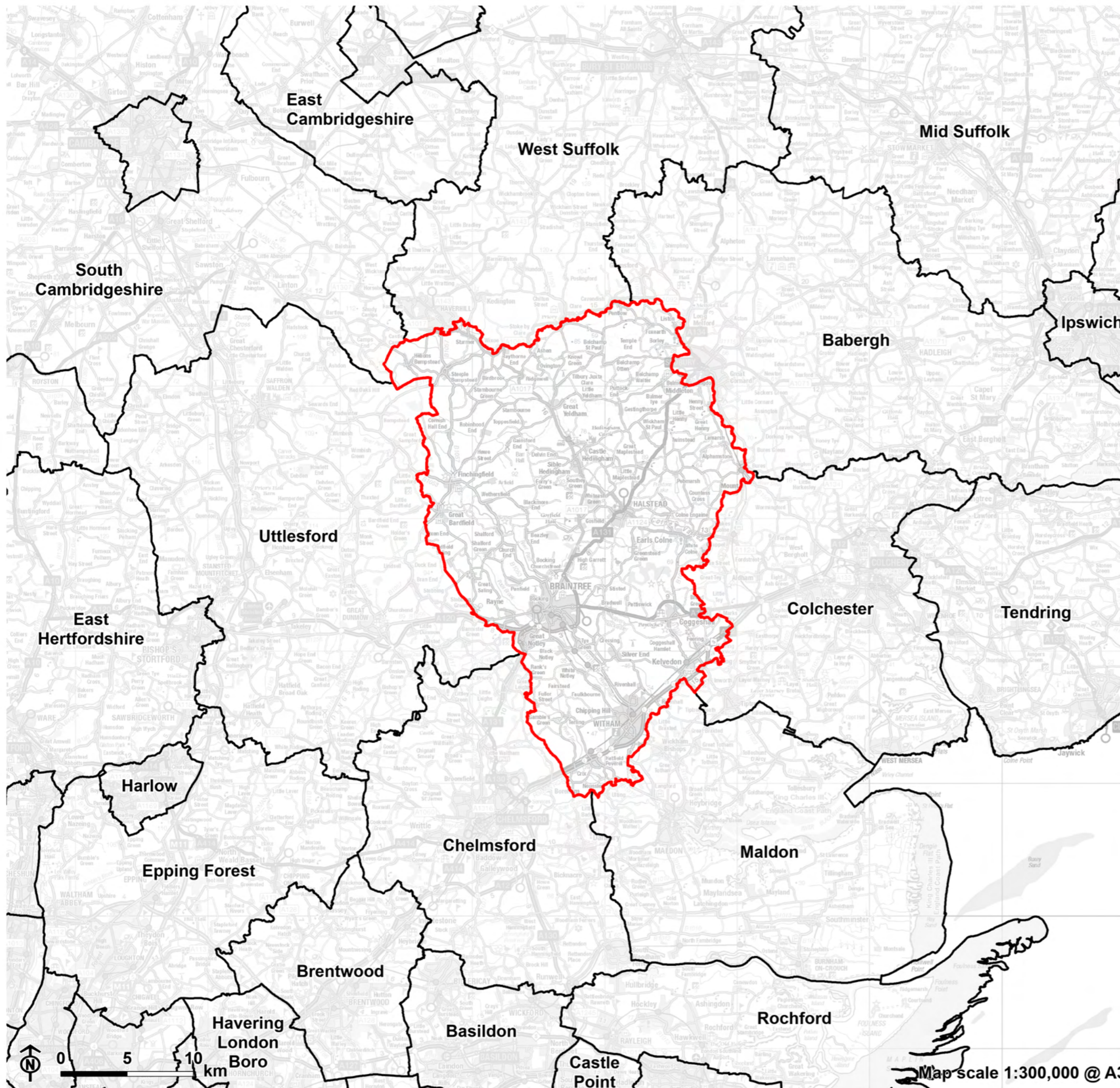
1.5 Braintree District shares its borders with Colchester and Babergh local authority areas to the east, Chelmsford and Maldon to the south, Uttlesford to the west and South Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk to the north. The largest settlement in Braintree District is Braintree town, located towards the centre of the district. The market towns of Halstead and Witham are set in rich farmlands within the district. The rural landscape forms the setting for the rural settlements and villages which characterise much of Braintree's settlements.

1.6 The district benefits from relatively good transport connectivity by a range of transport modes. Braintree town is served by the Braintree branch line, which provides direct train services to London Liverpool Street via Witham, which also lies within the district. Braintree town benefits from two railway stations: Braintree and Braintree Freeport. There are several other railway stations in the district including those at Cressing, White Notley, Kelvedon, Bures and Hatfield Peverel. Braintree has an extensive bus network, connecting the district to the surrounding towns and villages, as well as larger urban centres outside of the district, like Chelmsford and Colchester. Additionally, the A120 and A12 both run through Braintree, providing a direct link to the M11 and Stansted Airport to the west, and Colchester to the east.

1.7 There are areas of high landscape value within and surrounding the district. The district lies within the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area (NCA), which is characterised by its wooded and arable landscapes. The Dedham Vale National Landscape lies within 1.2km to the east of the district. Braintree District is home to three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - Bovington Hall Woods, Belcher's and Broadfield Woods and Chalkney Wood. The district also contains 253 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), which are dispersed across the district. These sites collectively contribute to the district's ecological diversity and natural beauty.



Figure 1.1: Location of Braintree District



- Braintree District boundary
- Neighbouring local authority

Braintree Local Plan

1.8 The current adopted Braintree District Local Plan Local 2033, provides a vision and planning framework for how the district will develop and grow up to 2033, identifying the most sustainable locations to deliver local housing needs and supporting infrastructure, such as employment, community facilities, retail, leisure and transport. The plan also includes policies to address the preservation and enhancement of heritage and character, the local environment, green spaces and tackling climate change. It allocates land for appropriate development, sets out strategic planning policies and an overall strategy to guide decisions on the location, pattern, scale, and quality of development and/or changes in the way land and buildings are used.

1.9 The plan comprises two sections:

- Section 1 of the Local Plan, prepared jointly by the North Essex Authorities (i.e. Braintree District Council, Tendring District Council, and Colchester Borough Council) which was adopted in February 2021. Section 1 outlines the strategic vision for growth and development in North Essex and forms the first part of each authority's respective Local Plan. It contains policies on sustainable development, overall housing and employment needs, infrastructure, place shaping, the spatial strategy and the development of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC).
- Section 2 of the Local Plan, which was adopted in July 2022. Section 2 provides more detailed policies and site allocations for Braintree District.

1.10 At a Local Plan Sub Committee in March 2024, the decision was made to commence work on a refresh and roll forward of the Braintree District Local Plan to 2040. The approach to be taken was to extend the plan period by seven years.

1.11 The Council is at an early stage in the development of the new Local Plan having undertaken a call for sites between April and May 2024. This process

was undertaken to help identify potential sites that may be able to help meet the district's development needs over the new plan period.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.12 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 [\[See reference 3\]](#) requires Local Plans to be subject to SA. SA is designed to ensure that the plan preparation process maximises the contribution that a plan makes to sustainable development and minimises any potential adverse impacts. The SA process involves appraising the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the policies and proposals within a plan from the outset of its development.

1.13 SEA is also a statutory assessment process, originally required under the European SEA Directive [\[See reference 4\]](#), transposed in the UK by the SEA Regulations and amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232). As set out in the explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments [\[See reference 5\]](#), the amendments are necessary to ensure that the law functions correctly following the UK's exit from the EU. No substantive changes were made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime currently operates. Therefore, the SEA Regulations remain in force, and it is a legal requirement for the Braintree Local Plan to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

1.14 SEA and SA are separate processes but have similar aims and objectives. Simply put, SEA focuses on the likely environmental effects of a plan whilst SA focuses on the social and economic effects of a plan, in addition to effects relating to the environment. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) [\[See reference 6\]](#) shows how it is possible to satisfy both requirements by undertaking a joint SA and SEA process, and to present an SA Report that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations. The SA and SEA of the

new Braintree Local Plan is being undertaken using this integrated approach and throughout this report the abbreviation 'SA' should therefore be taken to refer to SA incorporating the requirements of SEA'.

1.15 The SA process comprises five stages, with scoping being Stage A as shown below:

- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.
- Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects.
- Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- Stage D: Consulting on the Local Plan and the SA Report.
- Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan.

1.16 The 2023 Levelling-up and Regeneration Act [See reference 7] sets out various reforms to the planning system. These include reform of the current system for strategic environmental assessments, providing instead for "Environmental Outcomes Reports" designed to streamline the process for identifying and assessing the environmental impact of plans and projects. The specific requirements are to be set out in forthcoming, secondary legislation, along with information about transition arrangements, but for now the requirement for SEA remains, as set out in existing legislation. Any changes to the legal framework for carrying out SA/SEA will be addressed as appropriate as the Local Plan is prepared and documented as required, in either subsequent SA Reports or Environmental Outcomes Reports. Since the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act was passed prior to the July 2024 general election, the new government may decide to alter the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act's proposed reform of the current system for strategic environmental assessments.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.17 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of land-use plans was confirmed by the amendments to The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 [See reference 8]. The currently applicable version is The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 [See reference 9] (hereafter referred to as the “Habitats Regulations”). When preparing a land-use plan, the competent authority (in this case Braintree District Council) is therefore required by law to carry out an HRA. The competent authority can commission consultants to undertake HRA work on its behalf which is then reported to and considered by the competent authority.

1.18 The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of designated nature conservation sites (such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar wetlands) and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site. The competent authority will consider the HRA and may only progress the land-use plan if it considers that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or have a significant effect on qualifying habitats or species for which the sites are designated, or if Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) are identified.

1.19 The HRA will be undertaken separately but the findings, once available, will be considered in the SA where relevant, for example to inform judgements about the likely effects of potential development locations on biodiversity.

Approach to SA Scoping

1.20 The main tasks associated with the scoping stage of the SA (Stage A) are as follows:

- Stage A1: Setting out the policy context for the SA of the Local Plan, i.e. key policies and strategies that influence what the Local Plan and the SA need to consider.
- Stage A2: Setting out the baseline for the SA of the Local Plan, i.e. the current and environmental, social, and economic conditions in Braintree District and their likely evolution in the absence of the Local Plan.
- Stage A3: Drawing on A1 and A2, identify the sustainability problems and/or opportunities ('issues') that the Local Plan and SA should address.
- Stage A4: Drawing on A1, A2 and A3, develop a framework of SA objectives and assessment criteria against which to appraise the constituent parts of the Local Plan in isolation and in combination.
- Stage A5: Consulting on the intended scope and level of detail of the SA.

1.21 This Scoping Report sets out the intended scope and level of detail of the SA of the Local Plan for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities. It fulfils the requirements set out above and provides the foundations for appraisal of the likely effects of constituent parts of the Local Plan, as plan-making progresses. In accordance with the Government's PPG on SA/SEA, the Scoping Report is proportionate and relevant to the Local Plan, focussing on what is needed to assess likely significant effects **[See reference 10]**. It also takes account of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the emphasis it places on achieving sustainable development.

1.22 This SA Scoping Report follows key legislation, policy and guidance including:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans, and programmes on the environment i.e. the SEA Directive **[See reference 11]**;
- The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232) **[See reference 12]**;

- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal National Planning Practice Guidance [\[See reference 13\]](#);
- A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive [\[See reference 14\]](#);
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment [\[See reference 15\]](#);
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal and the Historic Environment [\[See reference 16\]](#);
- Strategic Environmental Assessment: Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal for land use plans [\[See reference 17\]](#);
- Draft Guidance on Assessing Health Impacts in Strategic Environmental Assessment [\[See reference 18\]](#); and

Meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations

1.23 The section below signposts the relevant sections of the Scoping Report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements (the remainder will be met during subsequent stages of the SA of the Braintree Local Plan). This section will be included in the full SA Report at each stage of the SA to show how the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met throughout the SA process.

SEA Regulations' requirements

Environmental report

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.24 Where an environmental assessment is required by any provision of Part 2 of these Regulations, the responsible authority shall prepare, or secure the preparation of, an environmental report in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of this regulation. The report shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of:

- implementing the plan or programme; and
- reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme.

(Regulation 12(1) and (2) and Schedule 2)

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.25 No, the full SA Report produced to accompany the Braintree Local Plan will constitute the 'environmental report' as well and will be produced at a later stage in the SA process.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.26 An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.27 Partly, see Chapters 1 and 2 in this SA Scoping Report. Further information on the contents and main objectives of the Local Plan will be provided at later stages in the SA process, once a draft of the plan is available.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.28 The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.29 Yes, see Chapters 3 and 4 in this SA Scoping Report.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.30 The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.31 Yes, see Chapter 3 in this SA Scoping Report.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.32 Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular

environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.33 Yes, see Chapter 4 in this SA Scoping Report.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.34 The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.35 Yes, see Chapter 2 and Appendix A in this SA Scoping Report.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.36 The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as:

- (a) biodiversity;
- (b) population;
- (c) human health;
- (d) fauna;
- (e) flora;

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- (f) soil;
- (g) water;
- (h) air;
- (i) climatic factors;
- (j) material assets;
- (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage;
- (l) landscape; and
- (m) the interrelationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l).

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.37 No, the requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process. Chapter 5 of this SA Scoping Report describes the method by which significant effects will be identified.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.38 The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.39 No, the requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.40 An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.41 No, the requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.42 A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.43 No, the requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.44 A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 9.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.45 No, the requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

Consultation

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.46 When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the environmental report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies.

(Regulation 12(5))

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.47 Yes, this SA Scoping Report will be published for consultation with the three statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England).

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.48 Every draft plan or programme for which an environmental report has been prepared in accordance with regulation 12 and its accompanying report (“the relevant documents”) shall be made available for the purposes of consultation in accordance with the following provisions of this regulation.

1.49 As soon as reasonably practical after the preparation of the relevant documents, the responsible authority shall:

- send a copy of those documents to each consultation body;
- take such steps as it considers appropriate to bring the preparation of the relevant documents to the attention of the persons who, in the authority’s opinion, are affected or likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the decisions involved in the assessment and adoption of the plan or

programme concerned, required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Directive (“the public consultees”);

- inform the public consultees of the address (which may include a website) at which a copy of the relevant documents may be viewed, and the period within which, opinions must be sent.

1.50 The period referred to in paragraph (2) (d) must be of such length as will ensure that the consultation bodies and the public consultees are given an effective opportunity to express their opinion on the relevant documents.

(Regulation 13 (1), (2), and (3))

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.51 No. Public consultation on the Braintree Local Plan and accompanying SA Reports will take place as the Local Plan develops.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.52 Where a responsible authority, other than the Secretary of State, is of the opinion that a plan or programme for which it is the responsible authority is likely to have significant effects on the environment of another Member State, it shall, as soon as reasonably practicable after forming that opinion:

- notify the Secretary of State of its opinion and of the reasons for it; and
- supply the Secretary of State with a copy of the plan or programme concerned, and of the accompanying environmental report.

(Regulation 14 (1))

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.53 The requirement is unlikely to be relevant to the Local Plan, as there will be no effects beyond the UK.

Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (relevant extracts of Regulation 16)

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.54 As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme for which an environmental assessment has been carried out under these Regulations, the responsible authority shall:

- make a copy of the plan or programme and its accompanying environmental report available at its principal office for inspection by the public at all reasonable times and free of charge.

(Regulation 16(1))

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.55 No, the requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.56 As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme the responsible authority shall inform (i) the consultation bodies; (ii) the persons who, in relation to the plan or programme, were public consultees

for the purposes of regulation 13; and (iii) where the responsible authority is not the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State,

- that the plan or programme has been adopted, and a statement containing the following particulars:
- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- how the environmental report has been taken into account;
- how opinions expressed in response to: (i) the invitation in regulation 13(2)(d); (ii) action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4), have been taken into account;
- how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.57 No. Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

Monitoring

SEA Regulations Requirement

1.58 The responsible authority shall monitor the significant effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action.

(Regulation 17(1))

Covered in this Scoping Report?

1.59 No, the requirement will be met after adoption of the new Local Plan.

Structure of the Scoping Report

1.60 This chapter provides a brief introduction to Braintree District and the new Local Plan and explains the requirement to undertake SA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this Scoping Report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** describes the relationship between the new Braintree Local Plan and other relevant national, plans, and summarises the international and national plans and programmes that are relevant to the Local Plan and the SA.
- **Chapter 3** sets out the baseline information for the plan area structured around a set of sustainability topics designed to cover the full range of possible sustainability effects generated by the Braintree Local Plan. This includes baseline information for all the SEA topics listed in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations:
 - Population, health and wellbeing;
 - Economy and employment;
 - Transport and accessibility;
 - Air, land and water quality;
 - Climate change mitigation and adaptation;
 - Biodiversity and geodiversity;
 - Historic environment; and
 - Landscape and townscape.

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- **Chapter 4** identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues in Braintree District of relevance to the Local Plan and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation.
- **Chapter 5** sets out a set of sustainability objectives against which the Local Plan will be appraised (the 'SA framework') and the proposed method for carrying out the SA. The key sustainability issues and opportunities have been reflected in the SA framework, which the Local Plan will be appraised against.
- **Chapter 6** describes the next steps to be undertaken in the SA of the Local Plan.

Chapter 2

Relevant plans and programmes

Introduction

2.1 This chapter addresses Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which requires the SA Report to provide:

- an outline of the contents and main objectives of the Plan and its relationship with other relevant plans or programmes; and
- the environmental protection objectives established at International, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

2.2 In order to establish a clear scope for the SA it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental, social and economic objectives contained within international and national policies, plans and strategies that are of relevance to the Braintree Local Plan. Given the SEA Regulations requirements above, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between the Braintree Local Plan and other relevant plans, policies and programmes.

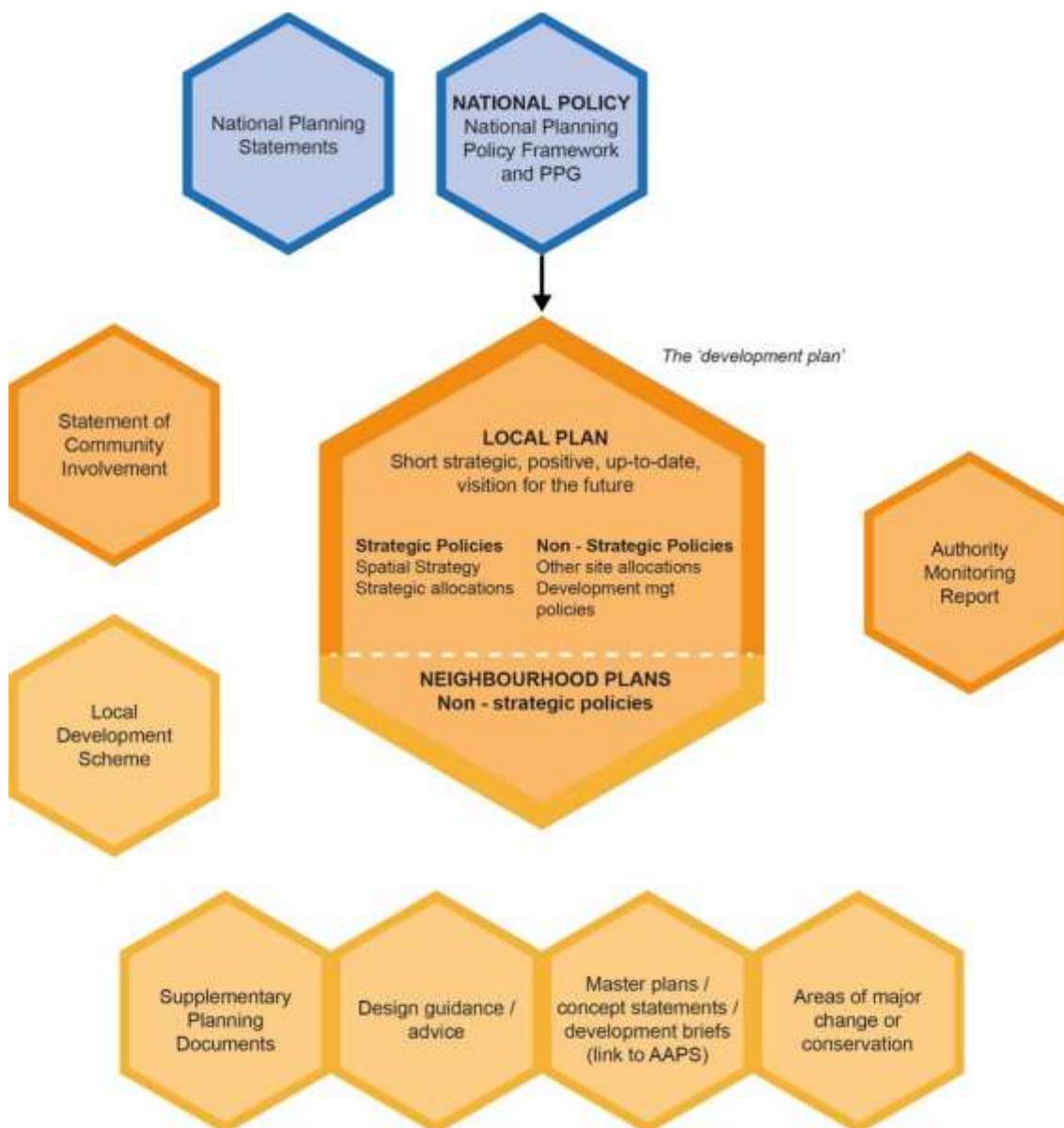
2.3 This chapter first summarises the relationship of the Braintree Local Plan to the relevant plans, policies and programmes which should be taken into consideration during preparation of the plan and its SA. The key sustainability objectives within the national plans and programmes are also summarised in this chapter. **Appendix A** provides more detail on the main sustainability objectives of international and national plans and programmes which are of most relevance for the Local Plan and the SA.

2.4 The objectives of these plans and programmes have been taken into account when drafting the SA framework in **Chapter 5**. An outline of the content and main objectives of the Local Plan will be described in subsequent SA reports, as this emerges through the plan-making process.

Relationship of Braintree Local Plan with other relevant plans and programmes

2.5 The Braintree Local Plan is not prepared in isolation and must be in conformity with a range of international and national plans and programmes. The relationship of the Local Plan to relevant planning policy and supporting documents is shown in **Figure 2.1**. The Braintree Local Plan comprises 'made' Neighbourhood Plans within the district and is supported by other documents such as the Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Scheme, Authority Monitoring Report and Supplementary Planning Documents, also shown in **Figure 2.1**.

Figure 2.1: Relationship between the Local Plan and other planning documents



The Implications of Brexit

2.6 The UK left the EU in January 2020. Much of the UK's environmental law is derived from EU law or was directly effective EU law. As a result of Brexit, the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 converts existing EU law which applied

directly in the UK's legal system (such as EU Regulations and EU Decisions) into UK law and preserves laws made in the UK to implement EU obligations (e.g. the laws which implement EU Directive). This body of law is known as retained EU law and could be subject to future, post-Brexit amendments.

2.7 As set out in the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments [See reference 19], the purpose of the Brexit amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the EU. No substantive changes are made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime operates.

2.8 Relevant international plans and policy (including those at the EU level) are transposed into national plans, policy and legislation and these have been considered in this chapter and in **Appendix A**.

International

2.9 At the international level, there is a wide range of plans and programmes which act to inform and shape national level legislation. Planning policy in England at a national and local level (i.e. the NPPF and Local Plan) should be aware of and in conformity with the relevant legislation. The main sustainability objectives of international plans and programmes which are of most relevance for the Local Plan and the SA are provided in **Appendix A**.

National

2.10 There is an extensive range of national policies, plans and programmes that are relevant to the Local Plan and the SA process. A pragmatic and proportionate approach has been taken with regards to the identification of key national policies, plans and programmes, focusing on those that are of most relevance. A summary of the main objectives of the NPPF and PPG of relevance to the Local Plan and the SA is provided below. In addition, the main

sustainability objectives of other national plans and programmes which are of most relevance to the Local Plan and SA are provided in **Appendix A**.

The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

2.11 The NPPF [[See reference 20](#)] is the overarching planning framework which provides national planning policy and principles for the planning system in England. The NPPF was originally published in March 2012 and has since been updated and revised several times. The most recent update to the NPPF was in December 2023 although at the time of writing, the new Labour Government has published a consultation on proposed changes to the NPPF [[See reference 21](#)]. Throughout this section where the most recent consultation on the NPPF text proposes changes, the proposed changes are detailed as references.

2.12 The three overarching objectives of the planning system are set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, which should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that net gains are achieved across each of the different objectives:

- “an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural wellbeing; and
- an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and

pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

2.13 The new Local Plan must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, which states:

“Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings”.

2.14 A local planning authority is also required to have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State when preparing a Local Plan **[See reference 22]**.

2.15 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states the need for strategic policies in plan making, which set out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places (to ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking) **[See reference 23]**, making sufficient provision for:

- “a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”

2.16 The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) [\[See reference 24\]](#) provides guidance for how the Government’s planning policies for England are expected to be applied. Sitting alongside the NPPF, it provides an online resource that is updated on a regular basis for the benefit of planning practitioners.

2.17 The overarching nature of the NPPF means that its implications for the SA relate to multiple topics which this report seeks to address. Considering the importance of the NPPF to the English planning system, the relevance of the Framework and its implications for the plan making process and the SA is provided in more detail below. Sustainability topics are separated under environmental, social and economic below. Consideration of issues often cut across topics. This is reflected in the grouping of environmental and social issues together under one heading. The summary provided below is not absolutely comprehensive and the NPPF is intended to be read and applied as a whole during plan making.

Environmental and social considerations

Climate change

2.18 Climate change adaption and mitigation, energy efficiency and waste minimisation measures for new development including through the promotion of renewable energy schemes are supported through the NPPF. One of the core planning principles is to “support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”. Furthermore, local planning authorities should adopt a proactive approach to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures.

2.19 Although Local Plans can no longer require levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes, they can promote the Home Quality Mark to support residents in understanding the quality and performance of new build homes and can also set targets for developers to provide for a given percentage of energy used by a new development to come from on-site renewable or low carbon technologies. Revisions were made to the Building Regulations 2022 [See reference 25], setting minimum energy efficiency standards which are increasing the performance values of properties. From 15th June 2022, all new build homes are required to produce at least 31% less carbon emissions. Local Plan policies can further support the development of renewable energy technologies where appropriate, in line with climate change mitigation strategies and targets. The UK Green Building Council has produced a resource pack which is designed to help local authorities improve the sustainability of new homes. The New Homes Policy Playbook [See reference 26] sets out minimum requirements for sustainability in new homes that local authorities should introduce, as well as proposed stretching requirements should local authorities wish to go further. For non-residential uses BREEAM assessments can be used by local authorities to ensure buildings meet sustainability objectives. Policies in the new Local Plan can also support design choices that achieve development that is better adapted to the effects of climate including through the incorporation of green infrastructure. The SA can consider the contribution the alternatives make in terms of climate change mitigation as well as climate change adaptation.

Population and health and wellbeing

2.20 In relation to health and wellbeing, healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social integration, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles are supported through the Framework. The Framework highlights that the Building for a Healthy Life design toolkit [See reference 27] can be used by local authorities to assist in the creation of places that are better for people and nature.

2.21 One of the core planning principles is to “take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all

sections of the community”. It is identified in the document that “a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation is important for the health and wellbeing of communities”. Furthermore, the retention and enhancement of local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports, cultural venues and places of worship is supported. Importantly, Local Plans should also “contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible”. Additionally, larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns are required by the NPPF to be guided by policies set within a vision that looks at least 30 years ahead [See reference 28]. The need for policies to be reflective of this longer time period is to take account of the likely timescale for delivery.

2.22 The delivery of new housing is considered to support local communities by meeting housing needs and addressing shortages. The new Braintree Local Plan can have a significant influence on addressing inequalities including those relating to health and will need to consider the appropriate siting of new development, particularly large development sites that are likely to include new service and facility provisions. The Local Plan can ensure that new development is located in areas which can improve accessibility for existing as well as new residents and ensure that future development does not exacerbate existing inequalities. The SA process can support the identification and refinement of options that can contribute to reducing inequalities and support the development of policy approaches that cumulatively improve the wellbeing of local communities.

Biodiversity

The NPPF sets out the approach Local Plans should have in relation to biodiversity and states that plans should “identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation”. Plans should also promote

conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and species, ecological networks and measurable net gains for biodiversity. A strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure is to be supported through planning policies.

2.23 The Braintree Local Plan should seek to maximise any opportunities arising for local economies, communities and health as well as biodiversity. This should be inclusive of approaches which are supportive of enhancing the connectivity of green infrastructure and promoting the achievement of biodiversity net gain. The SA process should support the identification and maximisation of potential benefits through the consideration of alternatives and assessment of both negative and positive significant effects.

Landscape

2.24 In relation to landscape, the NPPF sets the planning principles of recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as well as protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Reference is included with regards to this purpose at National Parks, The Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) [[See reference 29](#)].

2.25 The Local Plan should be supportive of an approach to development which would protect the landscape character of Braintree District and its surrounds. Where appropriate it should also seek to protect the identity of the Braintree's settlements. The SA should identify those alternatives which contribute positively to landscape and townscape character.

Historic environment

2.26 The NPPF states that in relation to the historic environment plans should “set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats”. Where appropriate, plans should seek to sustain and enhance

the significance of heritage assets and local character and distinctiveness, while viable uses of assets should be considered. Plans should take into account the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring. They should also consider the contribution the historic environment can make to the character of a place.

2.27 The new Local Plan can offer enhanced protection for designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings, including any potential archaeological finds in line with heritage protection and enhancement plans. The SA has a role to play by identifying which alternatives could offer opportunities to secure the protection and enhancement of assets as well as those which might have significant impacts in terms of their appropriate use and setting.

Pollution and flooding

2.28 The NPPF states that new and existing development should be prevented from contributing to, being put at an unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, pollutions including water pollution and air quality. Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account implications for water supply. Furthermore, strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision of infrastructure for water supply and wastewater.

2.29 The new Braintree Local Plan presents an opportunity to consider incorporating targets for water efficiency and the level of water consumption and grey water recycling in any new development. The Local Plan also can ensure that development is sited away from areas of adverse air quality (including AQMAs), high flood probability and that appropriate water drainage is in place in line with flood risk strategies. The SA process should seek to identify and address potential negative effects on air quality, flooding and the water environment, including implications relating to wastewater.

Soils and minerals

2.30 The NPPF states that the planning system should protect and enhance soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or quality, while also encouraging the reuse of previously developed land. Furthermore, planning policies should provide for the extraction of mineral resources of local and national importance.

2.31 The new Local Plan can seek to ensure the appropriate protection of soil quality, including best and most versatile agricultural land. Further to this the Local Plan should ensure that new development does not conflict with current mineral operations, as well as long-term mineral resource plans. The SA process should inform the development of the new Local Plan by helping to identify alternatives which would avoid areas of highest soil quality and best and most versatile agricultural land (in so far as this is relevant to Braintree District), as well as those which would promote the use of brownfield land.

Economic considerations

Economic growth

2.32 The Framework sets out that in terms of economic growth the role of the planning system is to contribute towards building a “strong, responsive and competitive economy” by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation. There is also a requirement for the planning system to identify and coordinate the provision of infrastructure. Furthermore, planning policies should address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

2.33 Local planning authorities should incorporate planning policies which “support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation”. Local

Plans are required to “set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration” [\[See reference 30\]](#).

2.34 The new Local Plan should seek to maximise the potential benefits of nearby strategic growth, whilst at the same time ensuring the vitality and viability of smaller localised economies. Ensuring that services and facilities within the district’s centres are maintained and enhanced is also important and will also provide support for local communities. The SA process can support the development of the new Local Plan to ensure that its policies are considerate of impacts on the economy in Braintree. The process can also be used to demonstrate that impacts on the viability of Braintree and the other market towns have been considered.

Transport

2.35 The NPPF encourages local planning authorities to consider transport issues from the earliest stages of plan making so that: opportunities to promote sustainable transport are identified and pursued; the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified and assessed; and opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure and changing transport technology and usage are realised. The framework also states that the planning system should actively manage growth patterns in support of these objectives.

2.36 Growth will inevitably increase traffic on the roads which also has implications for air quality, and the new Local Plan and SA process can seek to minimise effects of this nature through appropriately siting new development, identifying where mitigation may be needed and requiring the necessary transport provisions and contributions from new development. The Local Plan, as supported by the SA, should seek to identify opportunities to maximise the potential for alternative modes of transport to the car and reduce the need to travel, therefore reducing emissions, through the consideration of alternatives

and assessment of significant effects. This includes potential opportunities that may arise as a result of the delivery of new infrastructure.

Other national policies, plans and programmes

2.37 Numerous other policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) at a national level are of relevance to the preparation of the Braintree Local Plan and the SA. Unlike the NPPF, most of the documents are focussed on a specific topic area which the SA will consider. There will be some overlap between SA topics covered by these plans and programmes where those documents contain more overarching objectives. However, the plans and programmes considered of most relevance to the SA have been grouped by the topics they most directly seek to address, and the sections below each topic heading summarise the implications of the national PPPs for the Local Plan and the SA.

Climate change adaption and mitigation, energy efficiency and waste minimisation

2.38 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (2023)
- Powering up Britain (2023)
- The Environment Improvement Plan (2023)
- British Energy Security Strategy (2022)
- UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (2022)
- The Environment Act (2021)
- The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021)
- The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy (2021)

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- The Heat and Buildings Strategy (2021)
- The UK Hydrogen Strategy (2021)
- Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations (2021)
- National Infrastructure Strategy: Fairer, faster greener (2020)
- The Energy White Paper: Powering our net zero future (2020)
- Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)
- Sixth Carbon Budget (Climate Change Committee, 2020)
- Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: Policy Statement (2020)
- The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2020)
- The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (2020)
- Net Zero – The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming (2019)
- The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and The Flood and Water Regulations (2019)
- Climate Change Act (2008) and Climate Change Act 2009 (2050 Target Amendment) Order (2019)
- The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting: Making the country resilient to a changing climate (2018)
- Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England (2018)
- The Clean Growth Strategy (2017)
- National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) (2014)
- Waste Management Plan for England (2013)
- The Energy Efficiency Strategy: The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK (2012)
- The Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources Regulations (2011)

- The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan: National Strategy for Climate and Energy (2009)
- The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)
- Planning and Energy Act (2008)

Implications for the Local Plan and SA

2.39 The Local Plan should consider setting out policies to achieve climate change and adaptation while also encouraging development which would help to minimise carbon emissions.

2.40 The Local Plan should help to ensure that new development is energy efficient and promotes the use of sustainable construction methods and materials, as well as reduce their carbon emissions. The Local Plan should also ensure that risk from all sources of flooding as a result of climate change is managed effectively and should ensure that development is resilient to future flooding. This should include the Local Plan setting out approaches to encourage the appropriate use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise flood risk. The Local Plan should also consider the handling of waste in line with the waste hierarchy.

2.41 In addition, the Local Plan should seek to allocate development in areas where sustainable transport patterns can be best achieved and encourage development to make use of more sustainable sources of energy, potentially through the allocation of sites that would support infrastructure for renewable energy generation

2.42 The SA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SA objectives relating to the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to climate change, sustainable construction, waste management, flooding and sustainable transport.

Health and wellbeing

2.43 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Green Infrastructure Framework (2023)
- White Paper Levelling Up the United Kingdom (2022)
- A fairer private rented sector White Paper (2022)
- National Design Guide (2021)
- The Environment Act (2021)
- The State of the Environment: Health, People and the Environment (2021)
- Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care (2021)
- COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan (2021)
- Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments (2020)
Addendum (2021)
- The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020)
- Public Health England, PHE Strategy (2020-25)
- Homes England Strategic Plan (2018 to 2023)
- The Housing White Paper 2017: Fixing our broken housing market
- Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report Ready for Ageing? (2013)
- Laying the foundations: housing strategy for England (2011)
- Fair Society, Healthy Lives (2010)

- Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England (2010)
- Environmental Noise Regulations (2006)

Implications for the Local Plan and SA

2.44 The Local Plan needs to consider the requirements for infrastructure as this has the potential to have a significant impact on the environment, and it should be prepared to ensure that the population has access to sustainable low carbon infrastructure and services and facilities and that there is sufficient capacity within them to serve the increased population. This should include healthcare, education and open space.

2.45 Local Plans offer the opportunity to maximise the wellbeing benefits of well designed local green spaces. The Local Plan should help to ensure that the provision of open space and green infrastructure is of sufficient quality as well as being sufficient in quantity to meet the needs of the plan area. Incorporated in the plan area in an appropriate manner these types of provisions will encourage healthy and active lifestyles, create fairer, safer and more inclusive communities, and improve the sustainable transport network including active travel networks.

2.46 The provision of an appropriate level of housing over the plan period will help address issues of disparity in terms of access to decent housing. The provision of new housing should be considerate of local needs with regards to housing size, tenure and type, including the needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople.

2.47 The SA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SA objectives relating to health and wellbeing, social inclusion, housing and sustainable transport.

Environment (biodiversity/geodiversity, landscape and soils)

2.48 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- The Environment Improvement Plan (2023)
- Working with Nature (2022)
- Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022)
- The Environment Act (2021)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019)
- Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations (2015)
- Biodiversity offsetting in England Green Paper (2013)
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)
- Defra right of way circular (01/09) (2011)
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2010)
- Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (2009)
- England Biodiversity Strategy Climate Change Adaptation Principles (2008)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)
- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949)

Implications for the Local Plan and SA

2.49 The Local Plan should be prepared to limit the potential for adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity as well as important landscapes (including those that are designated) and higher value soils. The Local Plan should help to ensure that ecological features and biodiversity are managed in an appropriate manner, protected and enhanced and that opportunities for habitat restoration or creation are encouraged. The Local Plan should also help to ensure that environmental pollution is minimised in order to protect land and soils and ensure the efficient extraction of minerals. The Local Plan should also help to ensure that designated and valued landscapes are protected and enhanced, and that development should be sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

2.50 The plan should also take into account non-designated landscapes identified as particularly sensitive to development and non-designated habitats which form part of wider ecological network. The Local Plan also presents opportunities to promote the achievement of net gain in biodiversity.

2.51 In terms of the location of development, the Local Plan can encourage the re-use of brownfield land and protect more valuable agricultural soils from development. The allocation of new sites for development and updated planning policy can also be used to achieve better habitat connectivity through the provision of new green infrastructure and the requirement for biodiversity net gain.

2.52 The SA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SA objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, character of landscapes and townscapes, green infrastructure and contaminated land.

Historic environment

2.53 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Historic England Corporate Plan (2023-26)
- Heritage Statement (2017)
- Sustainability Appraisal and Strategy Environmental Assessment: Historic England Advice Note 8 (2016)
- Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England (2010)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)
- Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act (1953)

Implications for the Local Plan and SA

2.54 The potential impact of new development on the historic environment, including local character as well as designated and non-designated heritage assets and their respective settings, should inform the preparation of the Local Plan. The Local Plan should set out a positive strategy for conserving, enhancing and enjoying heritage assets and their settings, including wider historic townscapes and landscapes. The Local Plan can help to realise the wider benefits of historic environment enhancements which include contributions to wellbeing and the economy. Particular regard may be given to protecting heritage assets which have been identified as being 'at risk' (both at the national and local levels). Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plans to address these issues and site options should be considered with regard for related issues.

2.55 The SA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SA objectives relating to the historic environment and the character of landscapes and townscapes.

Water and air

2.56 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Environment Act (2021)
- National Chalk Streams Strategy Chalk Stream Strategy (2021)
- Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources (2020)
- Clean Air Strategy (2019)
- Environmental Noise Regulations (2018)
- Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2018
- Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations (2017)
- UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations (2017)
- Drought response: our framework for England (Environment Agency, 2017)
- Managing Water Abstraction (2016)
- Environmental Permitting Regulations (2016)
- Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations (2015)
- Water White Paper (2012)
- National Policy Statement for Waste Water (2012)
- Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010)
- Flood and Water Management Act (2010)
- Groundwater (England and Wales) Regulations (2009)
- Flood Risk Regulations (2009)
- Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England (2008)

- Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2007)
- Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2003)
- Environmental Protection Act (1990)

Implications for the Local Plan and SA

2.57 Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plans to promote the efficient use of water and limit all types of pollution including water and air pollution. They should also seek to limit pressure on the wastewater treatment (WwT) infrastructure and water supply. The allocation of sites for development should take account of areas which are of highest sensitivity in relation to these issues, including Source Protection Zones (SPZs) and Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). To limit the potential for air quality issues to be intensified as development is delivered over the plan period, local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plan to factor in the contribution that specific site options can make to achieving modal shift and limiting the need for residents to travel.

2.58 The SA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SA objectives relating to air pollution, water quality and waste management.

Economic growth

2.59 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- The Growth Plan (2022)
- Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth (2021)
- Agricultural Transition Plan (2021 to 2024)
- Agriculture Act (2020)
- UK Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2018)

- LEP Network response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper Consultation (2017)
- National Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016-2021)

Implications for the Local Plan and SA

2.60 The Local Plan should allocate land to support the projected level of economic growth required over the plan period. Furthermore, the Local Plan should set out policies to promote sustainable economic and employment growth to benefit all members of the community and reduce disparity in the plan area. This should include support for the infrastructure required for the economy to function successfully. Policies should also be included in the Local Plan to promote the viability of Town Centres as well as Local Centres. Employment sites should be located to enable local people to be able to access the new employment opportunities.

2.61 The SA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SA objectives relating to economic growth and employment.

Transport

2.62 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Report to Parliament (2022)
- Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021)
- Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)
- The Road to Zero (2018)
- Transport Investment Strategy (2017)
- Highways England Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan (2017)

- Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration (2013)

Implications for the Local Plan and SA

2.63 The potential for reducing the need to travel, limiting congestion and associated benefits for air quality and climate change as well as public health should inform the preparation of the policies for the Local Plan and its site allocations. The Local Plan should also encourage walking and cycling as alternative modes of transport by providing safe and attractive walking and cycling infrastructure, as well as recognise the multiple benefits they bring in terms of physical and mental health, reducing carbon emissions and reducing air pollution. Furthermore, the selection of site options for development should be informed by issues such as the potential for access to new and existing public transport nodes and active transport routes as well as specific highways capacity issues. The selection of individual site options should also be informed by their proximity to essential services and facilities and jobs which is likely to influence the need for residents to regularly travel long distances.

2.64 The SA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SA objectives relating to the mitigation of climate change, improving air quality, public health and wellbeing, and the provision of sustainable transport.

Chapter 3

Baseline Information

3.1 Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely sustainability effects of a plan and helps to identify key sustainability issues and means of dealing with them.

3.2 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires information to be provided on:

- the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment;
- the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
- any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 2009/147/EC [the 'Birds Directive'] and 92/43/EEC [the 'Habitats Directive'].

3.3 This section presents the relevant baseline information for Braintree District. Data referred to have been chosen primarily for regularity and consistency of collection, to enable trends in the baseline situation to be established, and also to enable subsequent monitoring of potential sustainability effects.

Population, health and wellbeing

3.4 The population of Braintree District was 155,200 residents in 2021, a 5.5% increase on the 147,100 residents recorded in the district in 2011 [See reference 31]. It has the fourth largest population of the local authority areas in Essex. The percentage of population increase in Braintree from 2011 in 2021 is lower than the increase experienced by England (6.6%), and Essex (8.1%), as well as for the regional (8.3%) during the same time. By 2043, it is expected that the population in the district will reach 161,799 [See reference 32].

3.5 Braintree District is the 16th least densely populated of the East England's 45 local authority areas, with a population density of 254 residents per square kilometre.

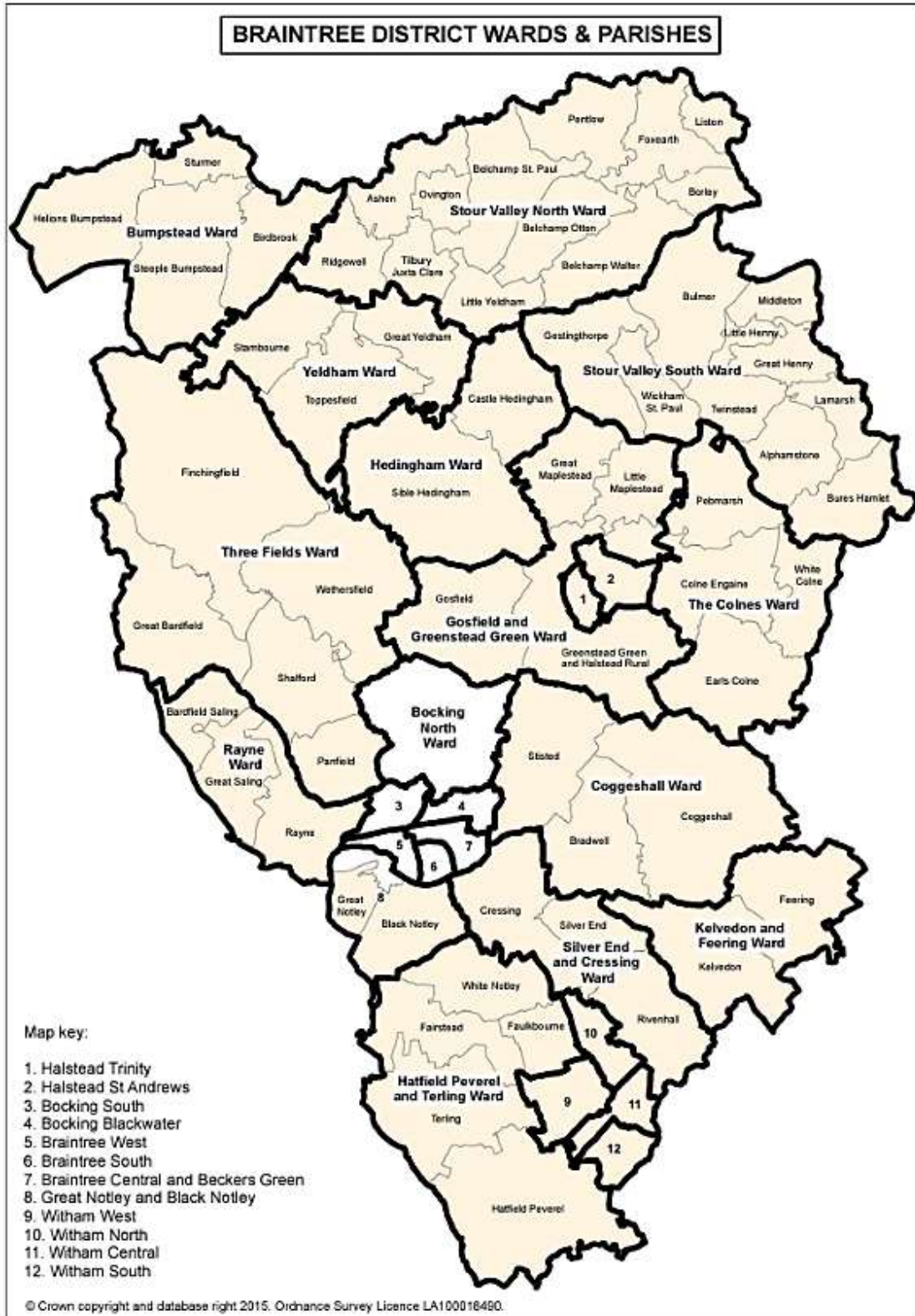
3.6 There are 65,000 households in Braintree [See reference 33]. The population in Braintree District is spread across 26 wards. Bocking Blackwater has the highest population of the 26 wards, with 10,299 residents. **Table 3.2** below presents the population change between 2011 and 2021 by ward in Braintree District. The largest settlements of Braintree town, Witham and Halstead are divided into a number of different wards as shown in **Figure 3.1** later in this section. As shown in the table, much of the population growth between 2011 and 2021 has occurred at the main settlements of Braintree town, Witham (with the exception of Waltham West) and Halstead. Witham Central displayed the highest population increase between 2011 and 2021, with an increase of 950 people. Sizeable growth has also occurred at Bocking (a suburb village at the northern edge of Braintree town) and Silver End and Cressing (containing the villages of Silver End, Cressing and Rivenhall), Hedingham (containing the adjoining villages of Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham) and Gosfield and Greenstead Green (containing the villages with the same names as well as the rural area surrounding Halstead).

Table 3.1: Estimated populations by ward in Braintree District for 2011 and 2021 [See reference 34]

Ward	Population in 2011	Population in 2021	Population change
Bocking Blackwater	9,924	10,299	375
Great Notley and Black Notley	9,929	10,100	171
Braintree Central & Beckers Green	9,554	9,584	30
Witham North	6,839	7,483	644
Halstead Trinity	6,382	7,071	689
Silver End and Cressing	6,252	7,048	796
Witham West	6,960	6,798	-162
Bocking South	6,304	6,755	451
Witham Central	5,778	6,728	950
Braintree South	6,043	6,558	780
Halstead St Andrew's	5,897	6,485	588
Witham South	5,776	6,386	610
Braintree West	5,810	6,167	357
Hedingham	5,195	6,015	820
The Colnes	5,811	6,003	192
Hatfield Peverel & Terling	5,952	5,887	-65
Coggeshall	5,898	5,879	-19
Three Fields	5,555	5,752	197

Ward	Population in 2011	Population in 2021	Population change
Kelvedon and Feering	5,622	5,749	127
Bocking North	5,161	5,221	60
Stour Valley South	2,936	3,014	78
Stour Valley North	2,745	2,923	178
Rayne	2,774	2,887	113
Bumpstead	2,955	2,880	-75
Yeldham	2,760	2,859	99
Gosfield and Greenstead Green	2,272	2,736	464

Figure 3.1: Braintree District wards and parishes [See reference 35]

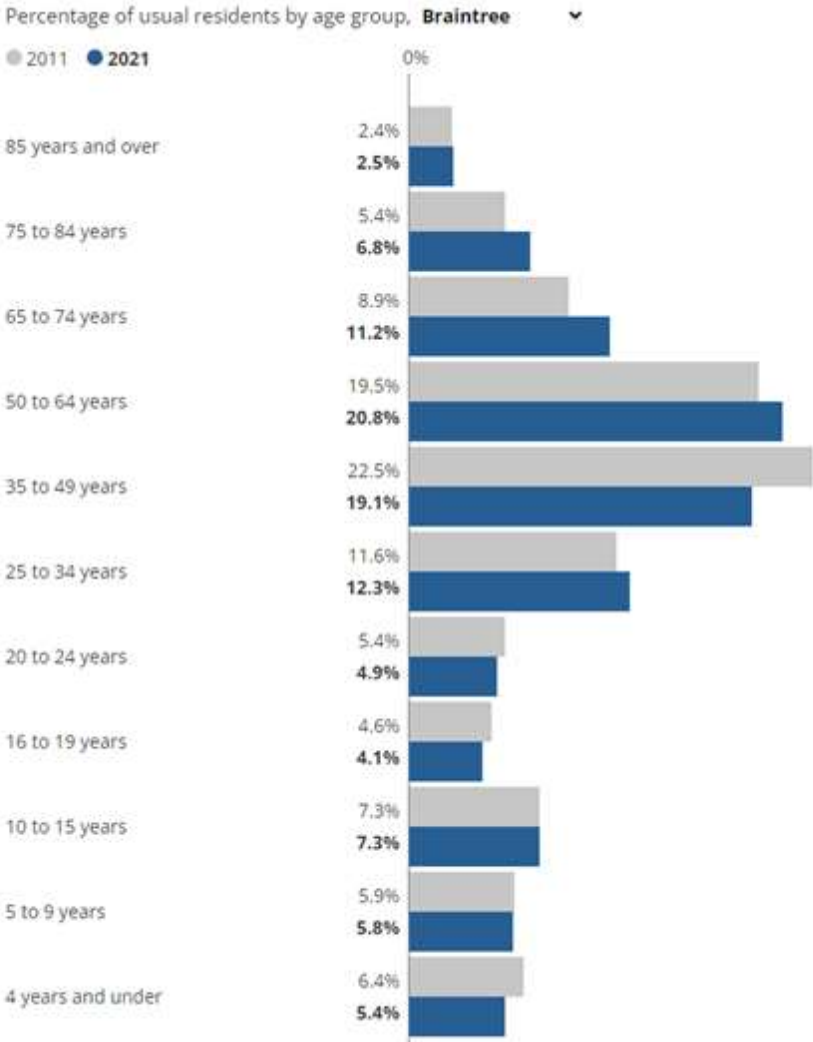


3.7 The population of Braintree is ageing. From 2011 to 2021, there was a growth in the proportion of residents in all age categories from 50 years and older, while all age categories 24 years and younger saw a decrease as illustrated by **Figure 3.2**. Between the last two censuses, the average (median) age of Braintree increased by two years, from 41 to 43 years of age. The area had a higher average (median) age than the East of England as a whole in 2021 (41 years) and a higher average (median) age than England (40 years).

3.8 The Old Age Dependency Ratio for Braintree is 327.0 which is substantially higher than the UK average (288.0). This refers to the number of people aged State Pension age (SPA) and over for every 1,000 people aged between 16 years and up to the SPA [**See reference 36**].

Figure 3.2: Percentage of residents by age group 2011-2021

[See reference 37]



Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

3.9 According to the 2021 Census, the largest ethnic group in Braintree is ‘White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British’, with 94.7% of residents identifying as such. The proportion of residents who identify as being part of this group decreased by 2.0% from 2011 to 2021. In 2021, 1.7% of Braintree residents identified as ‘Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh’; a 0.3% increase from 2011. In 2021, 1.9% of Braintree residents identified their ethnic group as ‘Mixed or Multiple’, up from 0.7% in 2011. This 0.7% change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area. **Table 3.1** below

shows the breakdown of Braintree's population by ethnic group as per the 2021 Census.

Table 3.2: Braintree population by ethnic group (2021) [See reference 38]

Ethnic group	% of population
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	1.7
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	1.2
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1.9
White	94.7
Other ethnic groups	0.5

3.10 In Braintree, the percentage of households comprising a couple with dependent children fell from 22.4% in 2011 to 20.9% in 2021. During the same period, the percentage of households comprising a couple without children in Braintree fell from 20.4% to 18.6%, while the percentage of households comprising a couple with only non-dependent children increased from 6.7% to 7.3%. Furthermore, the percentage of households including a lone parent in Braintree increased from 9.8% to 9.9% during this period [See reference 39].

Housing

3.11 The median house price in Braintree District as of May 2024 is £324,591. There was a relatively modest increase of 0.9% from the median house price of £321,674 in June 2023 and a substantial rise of 53.7% over the past decade. This price makes homes in Braintree more affordable compared to Essex, where the median house price is £359,370, although less affordable compared to the East of England, where the median house price is £237,500. It is also less affordable than England and Wales as a whole, for which a median house

price of £297,739 is recorded [See reference 40]. Braintree's median property price-to-earnings ratio is 8.9, lower than the regional figure (9.2), but higher than the national figure (8.0) [See reference 41]. This shows that considering earnings in Braintree and those at the regional and national levels, housing is more affordable than within the wider region, but less affordable than within the country as a whole.

3.12 In 2021, 15.1% of Braintree households rented privately, up from 13.2% in 2011. Meanwhile, 16.3% lived in socially rented housing, slightly down from 16.5% in 2011. Homeownership (outright or with a mortgage) fell from 68.6% to 67.8%. This surpassing homeownership rates in the East of England (66.2%) and England (62.3%). The decline in the proportion of residents who own their home between 2011 and 2021 was less pronounced in Braintree (0.8%) compared to the East of England (2.4%) and England overall (2.0%) [See reference 42].

3.13 The last published Braintree District Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) from 2016 [See reference 43] provides evidence on the potential supply of housing across Braintree District. The SHLAA showed that 3194ha of land was available for residential development within the district on 344 sites. 1942ha of this land are greenfield sites, 1142ha are mixed greenfield/brownfield and 110ha is purely brownfield sites.

3.14 Braintree District Council includes a windfall allowance of 75 dwellings per year in the adopted Section 2 Local Plan. Over the period since the Local Plan base date (2013-2022) the median average completions from the windfall permissions was 6 in Monitoring Year 1; 42 in Year 2; 54 in Year 3; 51 in Year 4 and 8 in Year 5.

3.15 The net dwellings completions in Braintree per year are displayed in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3: Net dwelling completions per year (2013/14 – 2022/23) [See reference 44]

Year	Net dwelling completions
2013/14	182
2014/15	409
2015/16	523
2016/17	291
2017/18	492
2018/19	534
2019/20	883
2020/21	847
2021/22	1,081
2022/23	1,088
Total	6,330

3.16 As shown in **Table 3.3**, housing delivery in recent years (from 2019/20 up to 2022/23) has exceeded the annual target of 716 dwellings set out for the district in the North Essex Authorities’ Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan for the 2013 to 2033 plan period [See reference 45]. However, low delivery rates in the early years of the plan period mean that overall, from 2013 to 2023 there was a cumulative shortfall of 787 dwellings measured against this annual target. The calculation of the shortfall is summarised in **Table 3.4**.

Table 3.4: Calculation of the shortfall (2013-23) [See reference 46]

Calculation of the shortfall	
Net supply of homes 2013-2022, C3 Use Class	6,330
Net additional rooms C2 Use Class 2013-2022	78
Equivalent contribution to dwelling supply from C2 Use Class 2013-2022 (after applying ratio of 1.8)	43
Net total housing supply 2013-2022	6,373
Pro-rata target 2013-2022 at 716 X 10	7,160
Shortfall at end March 2022	787

3.17 The high delivery rates achieved in recent years have reduced the cumulative shortfall. In the year 2021, the shortfall decreased from 1,517 dwellings to 1,169 in 2022, and 787 in 2023, indicating that Braintree District is on course to eliminate the shortfall within five years.

3.18 The adopted Local Plan requires the completion of 14,320 homes in Braintree by 2033 and that 30% of these homes should be delivered as affordable housing sites where 10 properties or more are built. From 2017 to 2022 Braintree District saw 1,159 affordable homes completed, averaging 232 a year. In 2020-2021 the annual target to build 250 new affordable homes was exceeded, and 417 properties were completed. Braintree District Council have developed a Healthy Housing Strategy to promote homes that enhance resident’s health and well-being. The objectives of the strategy include the delivery of affordable homes, providing housing that meets the specific needs of residents and enhancing existing properties [See reference 47].

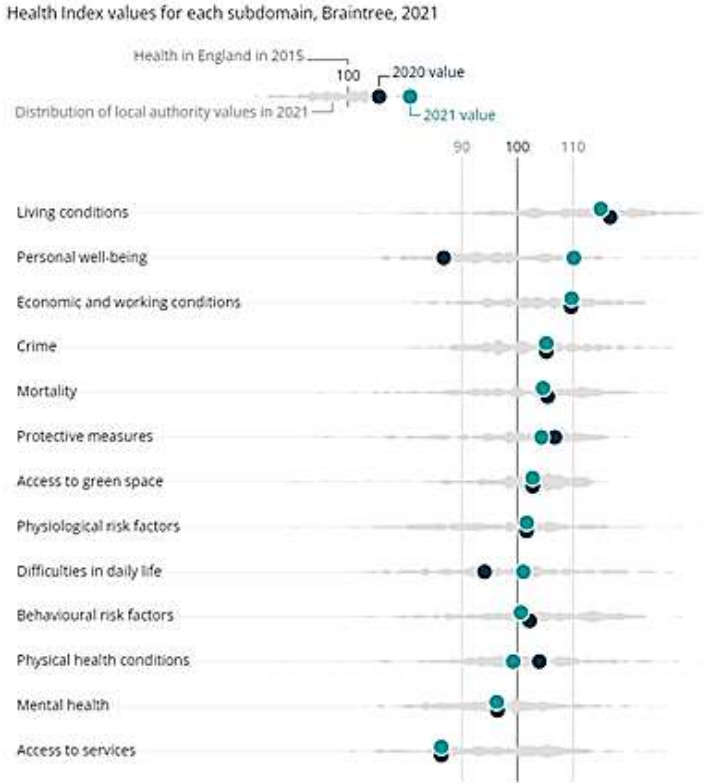
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

3.19 The 2021 Census reported that there were 155 people in the district who define their ethnic group as 'White, Gypsy or Irish Traveller'; 67 people who define their ethnic group as 'White Roma', and one person who defines their ethnic group as 'Other, Gypsy or Romany'. The Council's evidence base on Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson's has identified a need of 26 pitches to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers between 2016 and 2033. An additional need of 6 plots have been identified for Travelling Showpeople for the same period [\[See reference 48\]](#).

Health and wellbeing

3.20 The Health Index for England is a new measure of the health of the nation. It uses a broad definition of health to provide a single value for the health of each local authority area that can be broken down into various measures within three broad domains: health outcomes; health-related behaviours and personal circumstances; and wider drivers of health that relate to the places where people live. Based on the latest update to the Health Index reporting in the 2021 Census, Braintree has an index score of 106.5. The figure increased by 2.2 points compared to the previous year. The score is ranked average among local authority areas in England [\[See reference 49\]](#). As presented in **Figure 3.3**, health in Braintree is strongest for measures relating to the 'living conditions' subdomain, which looks at air pollution, household overcrowding, noise complaints, road safety, and rough sleeping. Braintree's worst score is in relation to 'access to services'.

Figure 3.3: Health Index values for each subdomain in Braintree (2021) [See reference 50]



Source: Health Index for England from the Office for National Statistics

3.21 Based on the 2021 Census, 47.4% of Braintree residents described their health as "very good", an increase from 45.9% reported in 2011. Those describing their health as "good" fell from 36.3% to 35.7%. In 2021, 6.6% of Braintree residents were identified as being "disabled and limited a lot", thereby facing significant restrictions in daily activities and participation due to impairments. This figure decreased from 7.8% in 2011 [See reference 51]. It should be noted however that the 2021 Census was conducted during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which may have influenced how people perceived and rated their health, affecting how people chose to respond.

3.22 Life expectancy for males in Braintree District is 80.2 years which is higher than both the regional (79.3 years) and national average (79.3 years). Life expectancy for females in Braintree District is 83.2 years which is the same as

the national average, but lower than the regional average (83.8 years) [See reference 52].

3.23 Further to this, Braintree District's mortality for individuals under 75 years old, stemming from all causes in 2022 was 312.9 per 100,000. This figure is lower than both the regional rate of 342.3 per 100,000 and national rate of 342.3 per 100,000. The mortality rate for individuals under 75 years old, stemming from all circulatory diseases in 2022 for Braintree was 73.8 per 100,000. This figure is lower than both the regional rate of 77.8 per 100,000 and national rate of 77.8 per 100,000.

3.24 Based on indicators reported by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities [See reference 53], the health of the population in Braintree District is generally better than the England average. The only indicators that are significantly worse than the Essex or the national average are 'killed and seriously injured rate on roads', 'emergency hospital admission rates for hip fractures', 'percentage of breastfeeding initiatives', 'smoking prevalence in adults', and 'estimated dementia diagnosis rate'.

Access to services and facilities

3.25 In the Health Index [See reference 54], Braintree District received a relatively low score of 86.3 compared to other local authorities in the 'access to services' subdomain in 2021. The district scored much higher in the 'access to green spaces' subdomain at 102.8. In 2021, the national score for access to services was 100.3, whilst the average for access to green spaces was 99.9. More information about the travel times to key services and facilities by sustainable modes and car in the district is provided in the 'transport and accessibility' section of this report.

Open space, sports and recreation

3.26 Provision of open space in the district varies across wards and typologies (allotments, amenity green space, park and recreation ground, play space, accessible natural green space) with some meeting quantity and quality standards and some falling below. There is insufficient youth provision across the majority of Braintree wards (with the exception of Witham West Ward and Yeldham Ward), whereas natural green space is in sufficient supply across all wards. Park and recreation grounds (public and private combined) are in sufficient supply across over half of the wards, whereas all other typologies (with the exception of natural green space) are insufficient across the majority of wards. In relation to the quality of open spaces in the district, a majority of households rated the quality of outdoor facilities and open spaces in the district as average or better, though "average" was the most common rating. However, there were significant levels of dissatisfaction with specific facilities: 48% rated facilities for teenagers as poor or very poor, and at least 35% rated tennis courts, bowling greens, and artificial turf pitches as poor or worse. Conversely, 56% of households rated parks and recreation grounds highly in terms of quality [\[See reference 55\]](#).

3.27 Reporting by Sport England [\[See reference 56\]](#) shows that:

- 20.5% of adults were classed as 'inactive' with less than 30 minutes of recorded activity a week in November 2022-23. This compares to 31.4% in November 20-21 and 25.3% in November 2021-22.
- In November 2022-23, 12.8% of adults were reported as fairly active (30-149 minutes of activity) and 66.7% were reported as active (150 minutes or more of activity).

Crime

3.28 As of December 2023, Braintree district had a crime rate of 66.51 per 1,000 population, which is lower than the Essex force area average of 85.27 per 1,000. Braintree district also has lower-than-average rate for all crime types

compared to other areas in the Essex force area [\[See reference 57\]](#). Considering the level of crime within the district itself, 288 crimes were reported in Braintree town in May 2024, a decrease from 297 crimes in April 2024. Violence and sexual offences make up the highest proportion of recorded offences in the district, followed by vehicle crime and criminal damage and arson [\[See reference 58\]](#).

3.29 There are two LSOAs in the district within the 20% most deprived in the country in relation to the crime domain in the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). This is an increase compared to 2015 when just one LSOAs was in the 20% most deprived. These LSOAs fall within the wards of Witham Central and Witham North [\[See reference 59\]](#). There are no LSOAs within the 10% most deprived domain for crime.

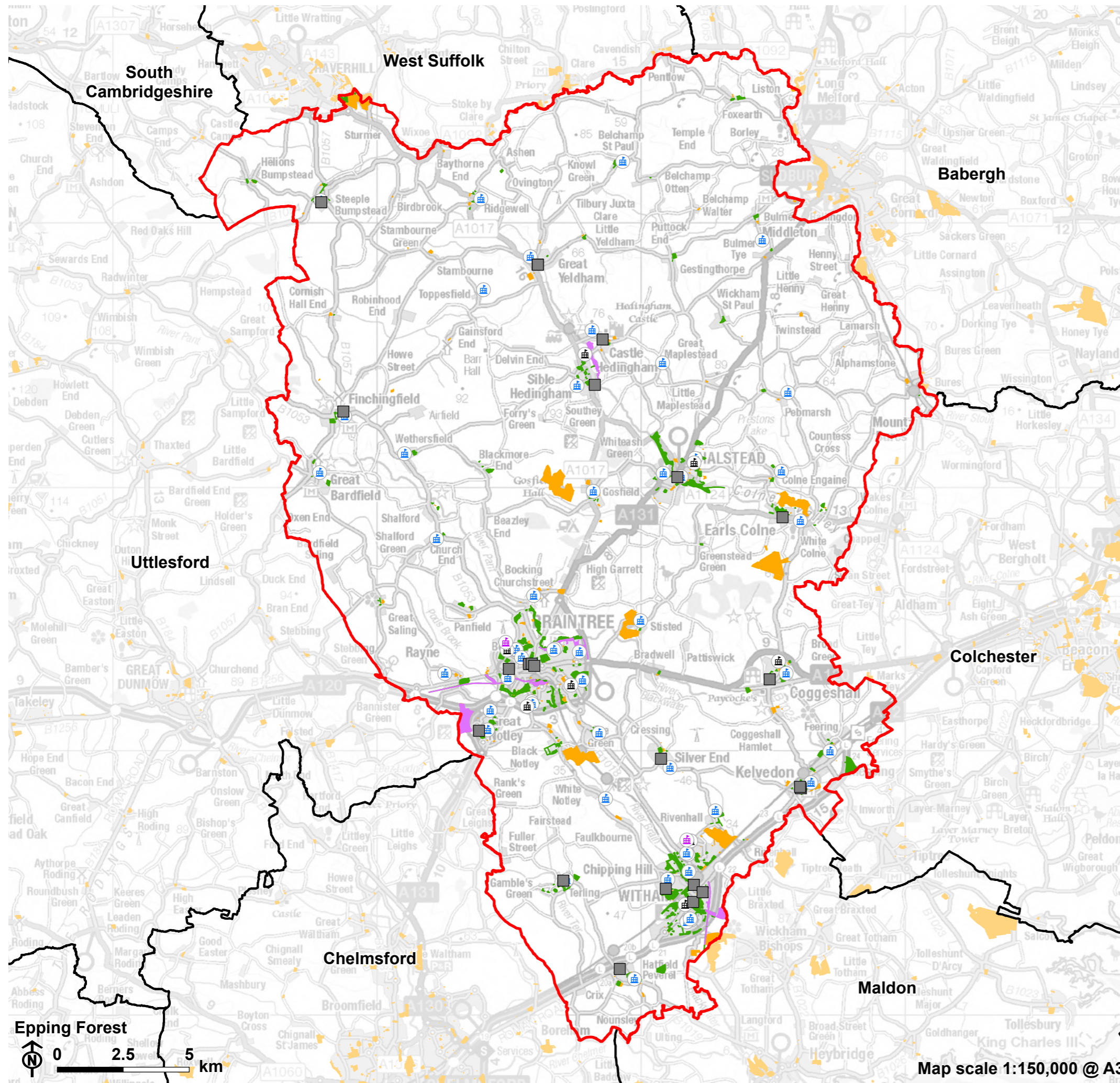
Education

3.30 There are 52 primary, infants and nursery schools, eight secondary schools and three special schools (The Edith Borthwick School, Chatten Free School and Southview School) in Braintree district [\[See reference 60\]](#).

3.31 The Colchester Institute Braintree Campus is found in the north of Braintree town and is the Institute's second largest campus. While the Braintree Campus serves as a significant education hub, the district lags behind Colchester and Chelmsford in terms of provision of tertiary education facilities, such as universities, and post-16 institutions. As such, there is potential for students in Braintree to have to travel out of the district to access tertiary education facilities. The location of schools and other services and facilities within the district is displayed in **Figure 3.4**.



Figure 3.4: Services and facilities in Braintree District



- Braintree District boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- GP surgery
- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Special school
- Openspace
- Proposed openspace
- Sports/Recreation facility

Epping Forest
0 2.5 5 km

Map scale 1:150,000 @ A3

3.32 There is a significant demand for school places in Essex. The total number of pupils by 2030/31 will reach 131,635 primary school pupils and 99,693 secondary school pupils (including sixth form). The district is anticipated to experience significant capacity issues in its primary schools from 2025 onwards, particularly in Witham/Rivenhall, Kelvedon/Feering, Braintree Town & Surrounds, Earls Colne/Colne Engaine, Cressing/Silver End, and Hatfield Peverel/Terling. To manage demand, expansion projects are in the pipeline and new primary schools will be built on the Lodge Farm development and Panfield Lane development through S106 agreements [\[See reference 61\]](#).

3.33 According to the latest labour market statistics (January to December 2023) [\[See reference 62\]](#), Braintree District has a higher-than-average proportion of people with RQF1 qualifications but a lower proportion of people with RQF2, RQF3 and RQF4 qualifications compared to the regional and national averages. Braintree District has more people with no qualifications (18.4%) compared to the regional (15.9%) and national averages (18.2%). Braintree District is in the lowest 20% of local authority areas in England and Wales in relation to qualification levels [\[See reference 63\]](#).

3.34 Educational attainment is particularly poor in four LSOAs which are classified as being within the 10% most deprived in the country in relation to the education, skills and training domain in the English IMD. These lie within the wards of Halstead Trinity, Bocking North, Braintree Central and Beckes Green and Bocking South. There are also an additional eight LSOAs within the 20% most deprived in the country in relation to the education deprivation domain [\[See reference 64\]](#).

Deprivation

3.35 The IMD uses Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) to measure deprivation at local authority and county level. The seven distinct domains of deprivation (Income; Employment; Health Deprivation and Disability: Education and Skills Training; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living

Environment) which when weighted and combined from the IMD 2019 have been mapped for the district (see **Figure 3.5**).

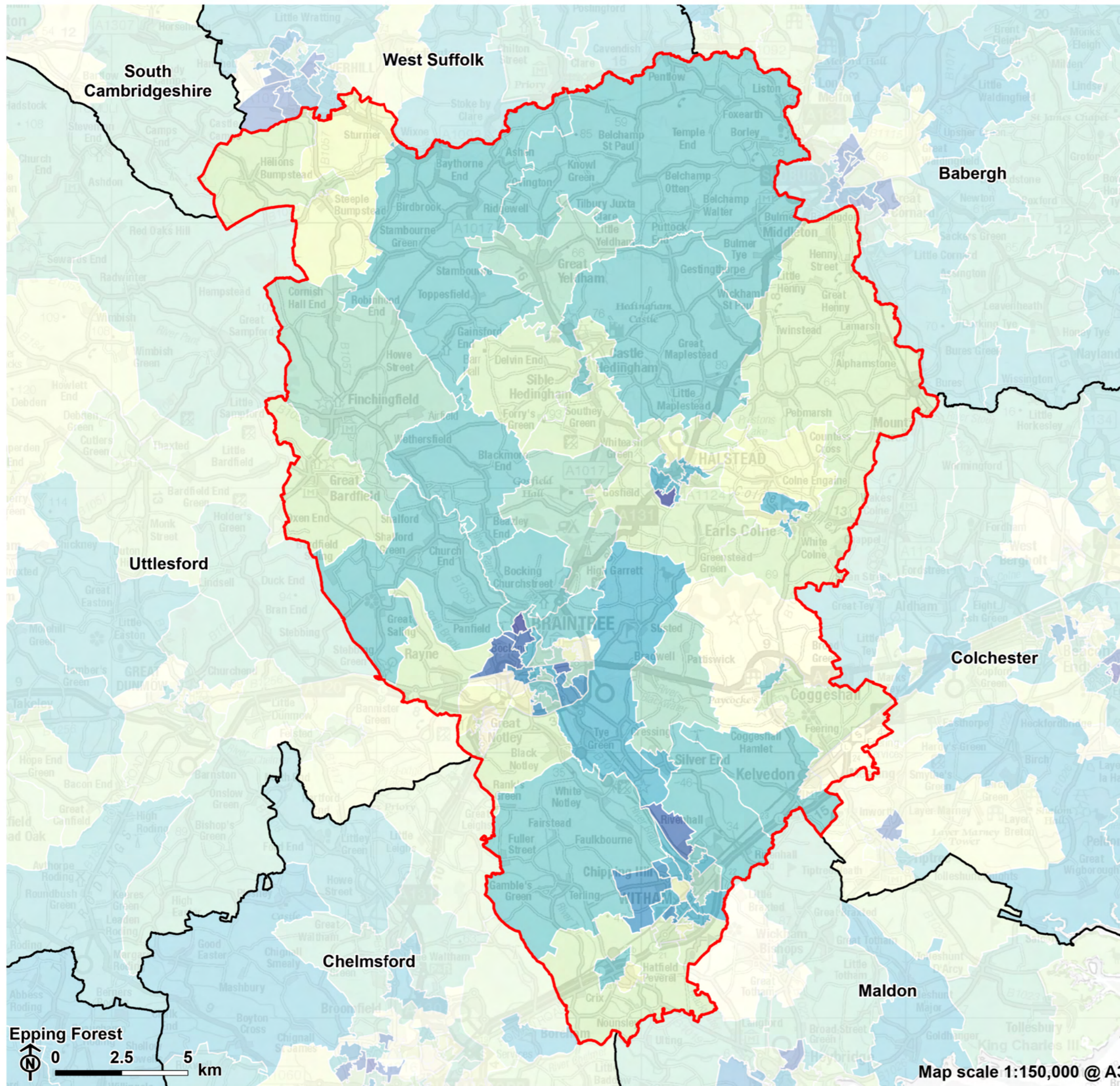
3.36 The 2019 IMD reveals that Braintree District was the 194th most deprived local authority area out of 317 local authority areas in the country, which is an increase from its rank as 203th in 2015. Braintree District ranks 7th in comparison to 12 other Essex authorities in terms of average score, with Tendring, Basildon, Harlow, Colchester, Castle Point and Epping Forest the more deprived Essex authorities.

3.37 According to the English IMD 2019 [[See reference 65](#)], out of the 87 Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the district, two LSOAs are in the 20% most deprived (overall when considering all domains) in the country in the wards of Bocking North and Halstead Trinity. No LSOAs in Braintree fall within the 10% most deprived in the country. Four additional LSOAs fall within the 30% most deprived in the country, while seven additional LSOAs are within the 40% most deprived in the country. In the 2015 IMD there were also two LSOAs within the 20% most deprived in the country.

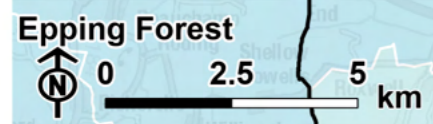
3.38 The LSOA within the Bocking North ward remained within the 20% most deprived from 2015 to 2019, however, the LSOA in the Halstead Trinity ward was not amongst the 20% most deprived in 2015. In 2015 one LSOA in the Braintree Central and Beckers Green ward fell within the 20% most deprived in the country, however this ward has since moved out this classification. Since the 2015 IMD, the number of LSOAs in the 30% category has fallen from six to four and the number of LSOAs in the 40% category has remained the same.



Figure 3.5: Indices of multiple deprivation (Braintree District and surroundings)



- Braintree District boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019**
- 0 - 10% (most deprived)
- 10 - 20%
- 20 - 30%
- 30 - 40%
- 40 - 50%
- 50 - 60%
- 60 - 70%
- 70 - 80%
- 80 - 90%
- 90 - 100% (least deprived)



Map scale 1:150,000 @ A3

Economy and employment

3.39 Braintree plays an important role in the North Essex sub-region, producing £3.26 billion per annum and accounting for 28% of all economic production in North Essex and 9% of economic production across Essex [See reference 66]. The February 2024 Regional Economic Forecast noted that the UK experienced a challenging year in 2023 due to high inflation and continued increases in interest rates, with the economy ending the year in a recession [See reference 67]. This was reflected in relatively weak performance across the regions and nations of the UK. Despite this, the East of England achieved 0.3% GVA growth, placing it joint-third among UK regions. The region's economy is projected to grow by 2.1% annually from 2024 to 2026, on par with the predicted average UK growth for the same period. This is anticipated to be driven by strong knowledge-based sectors such as information and communications, administrative support, and professional services [See reference 68].

3.40 As of March 2024, 72.4% of the population of Braintree were in employment, 4.1% were unemployed, and 27.6% of the population were economically inactive. The reported figure for those in employment for the East of England for the same period was 80.1%, and for England was also 78.6% [See reference 69].

3.41 In 2022, 68.5% of total employees were full-time in Braintree District, and 31.5% were part-time. Full-time employment is slightly higher than the regional average of 68.3%, and lower national average of 68.8%. The proportion of part-time workers is slightly lower than the regional average of 31.7% and national average of 31.2%.

3.42 Braintree District has a diverse economic profile with several key sectors contributing to local employment. Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles is a significant part of the district's economy, comprising 18.5% of employee jobs. This is followed by manufacturing, which

contributes 11.1% of employee jobs. Each of the following sectors – Construction; Administrative and Support Service Activities; and Human Health and Social Work Activities – contributes the third largest proportion (9.3%) of employee jobs respectively [See reference 70].

Table 3.5: Employee jobs by industry 2022 [See reference 71]

Employee Jobs by Industry	Braintree (%)	East of England	Great Britain (%)
Mining and Quarrying	0.1	0.0	0.2
Manufacturing	11.1	7.4	7.6
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	0.0	0.2	0.4
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	2.8	0.8	0.7
Construction	9.3	6.7	4.9
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	18.5	15.5	14
Transportation and storage	4.2	5.6	5
Accommodation and food service activities	7.4	7.9	8
Information and communication	2.3	3.6	4.6
Financial and insurance activities	2.8	2.4	3.3

Employee Jobs by Industry	Braintree (%)	East of England	Great Britain (%)
Real estate activities	1.9	1.9	1.9
Professional, scientific and technical, activities	6.5	8.0	9.1
Administrative and support service activities	9.3	11.0	9
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	2.8	3.5	4.7
Education	7.4	8.7	8.6
Human health and social work activities	9.3	12.4	13.5
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.9	2.2	2.4
Other service activities	1.5	1.7	2.0

3.43 The district’s main towns (Braintree, Witham and Halstead) are critical components of the district’s overall economy, supporting 55% of employment across the district. Braintree town and Witham are the two largest centres in the district (supporting 14,780 and 11,325 jobs respectively) and have a range of strengths in wholesale and retail, construction and manufacturing. Further to this, 45% of employment opportunities in the district come from more rural areas [\[See reference 72\]](#).

3.44 In 2021, the job density in Braintree District was 0.69, which is below both the regional average of 0.84 and the national average of 0.85. This represents a

decline from 0.73 in 2020. Job density measures the ratio of jobs to the working-age population, with a job density of 1 representing the fact that there is a single job available for every person of working age. A lower figure indicates fewer available jobs per resident. Braintree's job density is lower than that of neighbouring districts such as Chelmsford and Colchester [\[See reference 73\]](#).

3.45 In 2023, gross weekly pay in Braintree District was around £695.20, which is lower than the average for the East of England of £705.70, but higher than the national average, £682.60. Full-time earnings in the district have stagnated since 2016, mirroring stagnant productivity growth. Workplace-based earnings are 16% higher than resident-based earnings, indicating that many residents commute to higher-paying jobs outside the district in areas like Chelmsford, Colchester, and London [\[See reference 74\]](#).

3.46 As of 2023, Braintree had 6,595 businesses, with 89.2% being micro-sized. Business start-up rates in the district are lower than both Essex and national levels, with around 100 new businesses per 1,000 active enterprises in 2020, which is 20% below the national rate. Despite stable business closure rates, the number of businesses declined in 2020, likely due to pandemic-related interventions such as the furlough scheme and business loans, which kept many businesses afloat and may have also contributed to the decline in new business births during that year [\[See reference 75\]](#).

3.47 Business survival rates in the district are strong, with 45% of newly-established businesses surviving their first five years in business. This is above average for Essex (43%) and nationally (39%), suggesting that access to localised business support plays an important factor in supporting the survival of local businesses [\[See reference 76\]](#).

3.48 A variety of programmes operate across Braintree District and Essex to support local businesses and promote sustainable job creation. Braintree District Council secured £1.036 million of grant funding for these types of schemes through the Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022, and a further £589,191 has been allocated to Braintree District Council through the Rural England Prosperity Fund, as an appendage to the Shared Prosperity Fund to tackle rural

deprivation [\[See reference 77\]](#). This funding will help start and expand local businesses, improve community facilities, boost tourism, and support rural business growth with new products and services. Additionally, Braintree District has significant potential to achieve further economic growth through several innovation assets including:

- I-Construct Innovation Hub, a centre of excellence for construction innovation;
- Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park, a 50,000 sq ft business park comprising hi-tech, industrial, office and logistics space; and
- The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult manufacturing centre.

3.49 The Council aims to maximise these opportunities and develop business clusters around these sites [\[See reference 78\]](#).

3.50 The North Essex Economic Board, which includes Braintree District Council, is a partnership of local authorities in the area working together to drive economic growth. The Board offers fully funded support programs for business survival and expansion, including apprenticeships. In the longer term, the North Essex Economic Board is committed to promoting wider economic growth and investment across the geographical region [\[See reference 79\]](#).

3.51 The Council's 2015 Employment Land Needs Assessment [\[See reference 80\]](#) calculated the additional need for employment space in the District over the Local Plan period 2015-2033 and made a number of detailed recommendations to help support the local economy. Key points included the following:

- At the time of writing there was approximately 223,300sqm of office floorspace in Braintree District located mainly in the three town centres: Braintree, Witham and Halstead. Witham was the most predominant office location in the District. It was estimated that there was additional net demand of between 53,400sqm to 66,800sqm of office floorspace up to 2033.
- There was a total of 304.6ha of employment land in Braintree District, of which it was assumed that around 297.6ha is for industrial uses. The

majority of industrial land (56.6%) was located at three large industrial areas: Springwood Industrial Estate (Braintree), Witham Industrial Estates and Bluebridge Industrial Estate (Halstead). It was estimated that demand for industrial floorspace ranges between 3,400sqm and 18,400sqm to 2033 (manufacturing plus warehousing floorspace demand).

3.52 Since the publication of the study, Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park at Land West of the A120 at Great Notley is now coming forward and is a flagship modern employment site for Braintree District. The Council approved a Local Development Order in April 2020; the LDO provided planning permission for specific types of development on the site including employment uses, a hotel and a central facilities hub in a high quality environment [\[See reference 81\]](#).

3.53 Between 2016 – 2021, a total of 73,750 sqm of non-residential floorspace was completed [\[See reference 82\]](#) as shown in **Table 3.6**. This floorspace comprises of E: commercial, business and service; g: light industry; B2: general industrial; and B8: storage and distribution, although these categories are not separately distinguished.

Table 3.6: Non residential floorspace completed between 2016 - 2021 [\[See reference 83\]](#)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Overall change 2016/21
Floorspace completed sqm	3,918	14,909	23,272	16,057	15,594	73,750
Floorspace Losses sqm	1,587	9,019	18,102	8,048	7,67	44,623
Net change in floorspace sqm	2,331	5,890	5,170	8,009	7,827	29,227

3.54 According to the Braintree District Retail Study, there are 55 vacant shop units within the three main town centres of Braintree town, Witham and

Halstead which equates to an overall vacancy rate of 9.9%. This is below the Experian Goad national average of (11.2%). Halstead has the highest vacancy rate (just over 13%), above the national average [See reference 84]. Retail performance as measured by unit vacancies and town centre footfall has potential to decline in Braintree District as result of several factors including the prominence of online shopping and the economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transport and accessibility

3.55 Braintree District has good connectivity to the national transport network. The A120 and A12 pass through Braintree, providing access to the M11, and other major routes, as displayed in **Figure 3.6**. This figure also shows the railway stations and bus stops in the district. As described later in this section some of the bus stops in the district are served less frequently than others with some only benefiting from services operating four times daily or less.

3.56 The A120 connects the district to the M11, which in turn links to London and the Midlands, whilst the A12 travels to London to the south west and Colchester, Ipswich and the eastern coast to the north east. This strategic positioning supports local businesses, enhances accessibility for residents, and strengthens Braintree's integration within the wider regional and national transport infrastructure.

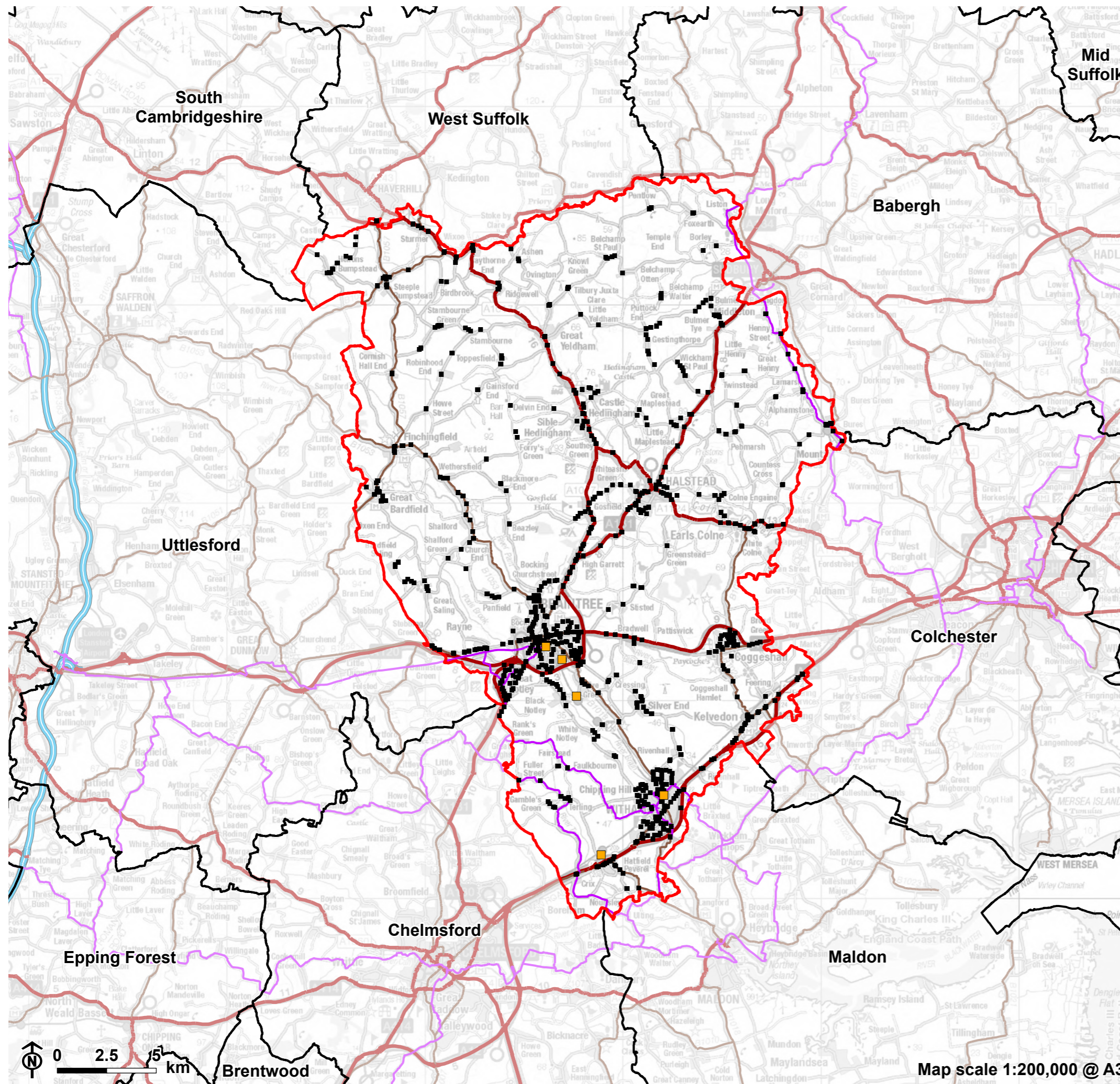
3.57 Braintree's strategic connectivity with surrounding districts and London is essential for accessing employment and services. The district is well-positioned for commuters traveling to major employment hubs such as those within Chelmsford, which includes key sites like Chelmsford Business Park, Springfield, Dukes Park Industrial Estate, and Widford Industrial Estate [See reference 85]. Colchester, a significant regional centre, offers a wide range of retail outlets, cultural facilities, and educational institutions. London, with its high-level professional roles and extensive cultural attraction, attracts commuters seeking specialised opportunities and experiences. Additionally, major employers such as Stansted Airport in nearby Uttlesford contribute to









Chapter 3

regional economic activity and job growth. This well-developed transport infrastructure not only supports Braintree's local economy but also enhances its role within the broader regional and national economy, facilitating both local employment and commuting to external opportunities.



Figure 3.6: Transport network in Braintree District and surroundings



-  Braintree District boundary
-  Neighbouring local authority
-  Bus stop
-  Railway station
-  National Cycle Network
-  A Road
-  B Road
-  Motorway

Map scale 1:200,000 @ A3

3.58 Accessibility by public transport or walking to key services and educational facilities is generally better within and in close proximity to the three main towns of Braintree, Halstead and Witham than other parts of the district. Just over half of residents live in these three main urban areas. Many residents not located within these settlements are in more rural locations where the private car is often the main means of transport. Partly reflective of this, car ownership rates are higher in Braintree (at 86.3%) than the regional (83.2%) and national average (76.5%) [\[See reference 86\]](#).

3.59 Public transport networks in the towns of the district are relatively strong during the day on weekdays but during the evening and in rural areas, the availability of public transport is more limited. For example, several services operate infrequently including the 132 service from Braintree to Colchester, 320 service from Great Notley to Braintree and Colchester, 370 service from Chelmsford to Braintree and Halstead and SB28 service from Stisted to Braintree which operate less than four times per day [\[See reference 87\]](#). Bus services operate more regularly between the more developed areas in Braintree town and there are relatively frequent services which extend to surrounding towns and villages, including Halstead and Witham. Bus services in Braintree also connect to neighbouring areas such as Colchester and Chelmsford. Regular express buses from the station in Braintree town provide connections to Stansted Airport. Key operators include Arriva, First Essex Buses, Stephenson's of Essex, and DaRT services.

3.60 The DaRT services 3 and 299 provide demand responsive transport in rural areas of north east Braintree and west Braintree as well as west and north Uttlesford and Epping Forest [\[See reference 88\]](#). DigiGo shared public transport service provides on-demand travel in parts of Essex including parts of west and south Braintree District [\[See reference 89\]](#).

3.61 Braintree town benefits from two railway stations: Braintree and Braintree Freeport. There are several other railway stations in the district including those at Cressing, White Notley, Kelvedon, Bures and Hatfield Peverel. However, rail services between Braintree town and London are

relatively infrequent, being constrained by its location on a single track branch line. This can make it difficult for those without access to a car to access key services and facilities, including for the less well-off and the district's growing elderly population.

3.62 National Cycle Routes 16 and 50 pass into the district. Route 16 connects Route 13 near Stansted via Great Dunmow, Braintree and Witham and continues to the intersection of Route 1 near Great Totham. Route 50 passes to the south of Hatfield Peverel in the district providing connections to National Cycle Network Link Routes that provide access to the wider network.

3.63 However, in places the cycle network in the district is fragmented, with poor connectivity, lack of signage and abrupt route endings, particularly in the north of the district and in some parts of Braintree town centre. Cycling infrastructure is largely concentrated in the south of the district, specifically in and around the settlements of Braintree town, Halstead and Witham. While these areas have some infrastructure it is not integrated as a coherent network with few clearly defined routes. The existing situation does not encourage or support short local journeys by bicycle. Cycle access to rail stations within the district is limited with only Braintree having a clearly defined route from the west along Flich Way. The district is largely rural and contains many roads which accommodate low flows of traffic, but allow for vehicles to travel at the national speed limit. The higher speed limits at these locations may discourage cyclists, despite the lack of traffic relative to the urban areas. Overall, cycling levels in the District are around the mid-point for Essex, and the propensity to cycle within the District is reasonable, suggesting that it is possible that improved cycling facilities and encouragement of cycling will lead to a greater uptake in the number of people cycling [\[See reference 90\]](#), [\[See reference 91\]](#).

3.64 Around one fifth of those who use employment centres in the district are unable to access them by public transport or walking [\[See reference 92\]](#). More than 80% of the population of Braintree District lives within 30 minutes travel time by public transport or walking to of each of five key services: primary school, secondary school, employment site, retail centre, GP surgery. The proportion of residents living within 15 minutes travel time of these services is as follows:

- Primary schools 79%,
- GP surgeries 64%, Retail centres 62%,
- Employment sites 59%; and
- Secondary schools 41%.

3.65 According to the Department for Transport, Braintree District residents have slightly longer travel times to local services compared to the Essex average (19.4 minutes). At 23.7 minutes, Braintree District has the joint third highest average travel time by public transport or walking to reach eight key services of the local authorities in the county. Average times to GP surgeries are estimated at just under 14 minutes, whilst for hospitals this is 60 minutes and are the fourth and third highest times in Essex. Access to a car reduces these travel times significantly to 8.5 minutes for GP surgeries and 30 minutes to hospitals. [\[See reference 93\]](#).

3.66 Data from the Essex County Bus Service Improvement Plan [\[See reference 94\]](#) indicates that services have an overall satisfaction score of 86.0%. This score is 23rd out of the 31 authorities who took part in the satisfaction survey. The figure for Essex is 9.0% lower than the top score. The average score across all authorities is 89.2%, 3.2% above the Essex level.

3.67 Travel to work data is available and this gives an indication of the modes used for trips made by residents of the district. The high rate of commuting to work by car, reflects the more rural nature of the district and the dependency of residents in more rural locations on higher order centres for access to jobs and services and facilities.

3.68 Travel to work data taken from the 2021 Census (**Figure 3.7**) indicates that 1.1% of the resident population of Braintree District travel to work by bus, which is much lower than the national average of 4.3% and regional average of 2%. The commuting figures (**Figure 3.8**) show that 23.7% of the resident population travel less than 10km to work. There has been a noticeable shift towards working from home during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 38.8% of the resident population in employment in Braintree District working

mainly from home, although this is lower than the regional average of 31.9%. Additionally, 21.2% of residents in Braintree commute between 10km and 30km, which is significantly higher than the national average of 14.4% [\[See reference 95\]](#). The district's strong connectivity to neighbouring authorities and employment hubs, such as Chelmsford, Uttlesford, Colchester and Stansted Airport is facilitated by key routes like the A120 and A12, which provide access to major highways including the M11. This robust network supports longer commuting, even though the data does not specify exact destinations.

3.69 Stansted Airport is located within Uttlesford District but it is a major employer for Braintree District residents and it is therefore a major cause of out-commuting, with potential negative effects on road congestion and road traffic-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The airport plans to address these issues by improving the attractiveness of public transport to the airport for both staff and passengers, for example offering discounted travel opportunities and working with bus, coach and rail operators to provide scheduled services that match working patterns where possible [\[See reference 96\]](#).

3.70 Based on 2021 census data, 54,686 Braintree residents work within the district. This includes 35,384 who work from home and 19,302 who commute locally. Additionally, 11,932 people travel into Braintree for employment, the largest number – 3,031 – coming from Colchester. In terms of outflow, a total of 21,595 residents travel out of the district for work. 2,736 residents commute to Colchester, 3,584 to Uttlesford, and 5,405 to Chelmsford for work. This data underscores Braintree's relatively strong local employment base but also the need for a substantial proportion of residents to travel to other locations for work. The district's good connectivity to employment hubs in areas such as Chelmsford, Colchester, and Stansted Airport supports the level of out commuting recorded [\[See reference 97\]](#).

3.71 The Economic Growth Strategy [\[See reference 98\]](#) identifies a number of major infrastructure and growth schemes inside and outside the district that could impact the relatively high levels of commuting out from the district. These include:

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- Freeport East – At Felixstowe and Harwich, the new Freeport will deliver a secure customs zone for businesses importing and exporting. Plans to develop two green hubs that would create 13,500 jobs via £500m investment are expected within the next 10 years.
- New overhead and underground powerline schemes and renewable energy generation.
- New road building schemes such as the A12 in the district and the Lower Thames Crossing outside of the district.
- Stansted Expansion – Investment of £600m to increase the airport's capacity to 43 million passengers per year will be made as well as the development of its own business park on site.
- Bradwell B and Sizewell C Nuclear Power Stations.
- Significant housing growth outside of the district, including new Garden Communities at Harlow, Colchester borders, and Chelmsford

Figure 3.7: Method of travel to workplace in Braintree District
[See reference 99]

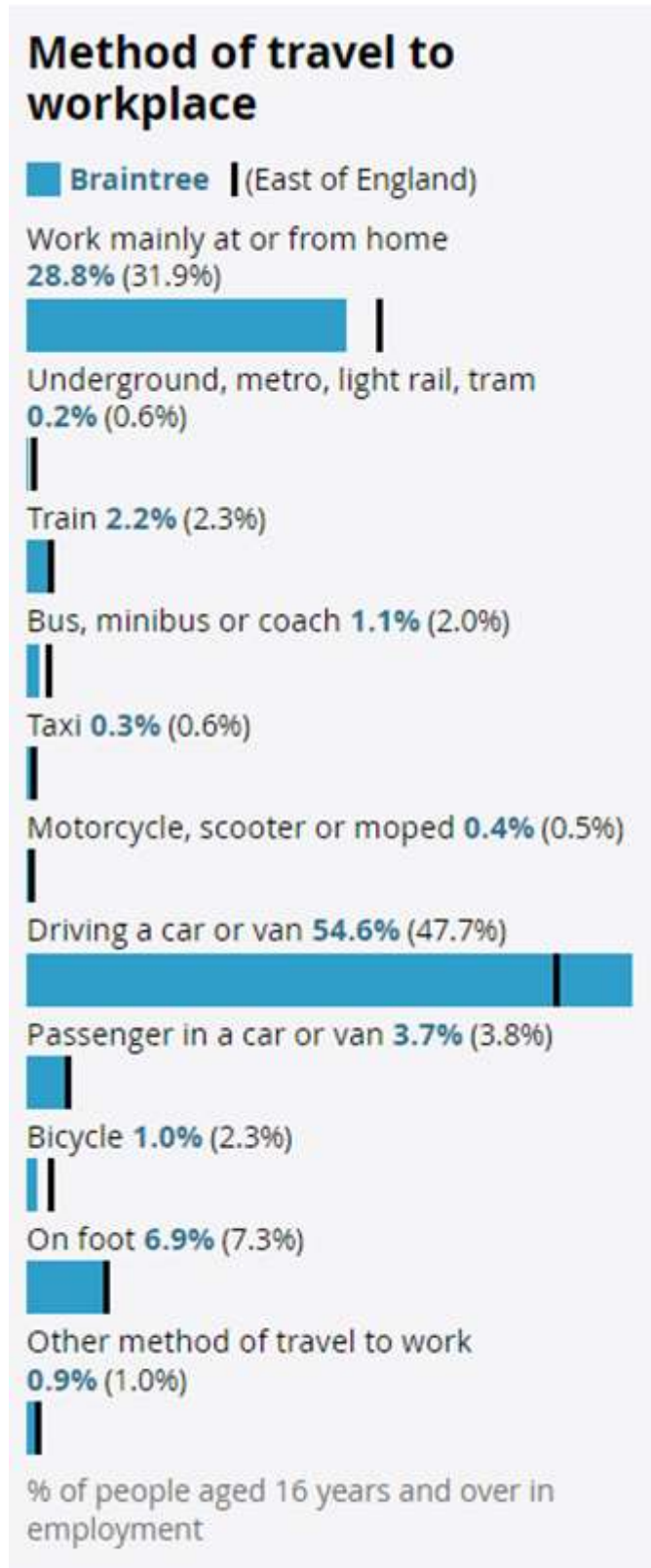
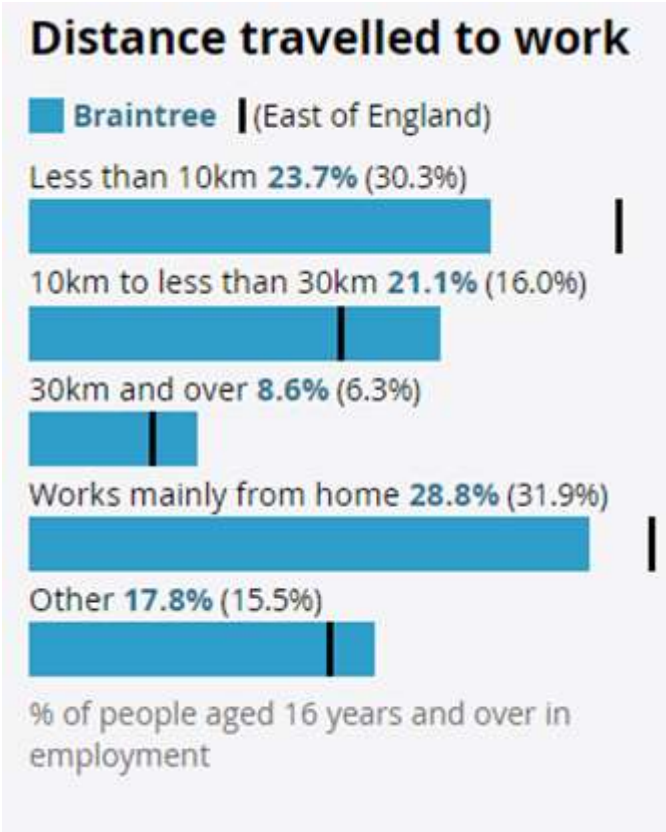


Figure 3.8: Distance travelled to work in Braintree District [See reference 100]



Air, land and water

Air Quality

3.72 There are currently no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared in Braintree District. The main air quality issues in the district relate to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from vehicles travelling on the A12, A131 and A120 with monitoring occurring along these routes and routes that lead directly to them [See reference 101]. The three main towns are Braintree, Halstead and Witham and these areas see traffic flows through them due to both commercial and residential development in the surroundings. Within the towns and larger

villages there is the potential for elevated NO₂ levels close to road junctions and air pollutant monitoring is focussed on these locations.

3.73 There is no current regulatory standard applied to PM_{2.5} (for local authorities in England) to require action to reduce emissions or concentrations of fine particulate air pollution, although efforts to reduce PM₁₀ and NO_x emissions typically help to lower PM_{2.5} levels. The Public Health Outcomes Framework introduced a PM_{2.5} indicator reflecting the 'fraction of adult mortality attributed to particulate air pollution.' In 2020, Braintree reported a level of 5.7% against this indicator, which is comparable to the East of England region average of 5.8%, and England average of 5.6%. In 2020 PM_{2.5} levels were reported as 7.1 µg/m³ in Braintree which is higher than the national figure of 6.0 µg/m³ [See reference 102]. During the reporting period up to 2020, figures for PM_{2.5} were substantially reduced for Braintree District and at the national level as a result of reduced travelling experienced during COVID-19. According to the latest Air Quality Annual Status Report for Braintree, there are 20 NO₂ diffusion tubes monitoring air quality [See reference 103]. These monitor air quality within the three main towns of Halstead, Braintree and Witham and within the parishes of Bradwell, Rivenhall, Kelvedon and Hatfield Peverel. Even though transport is considered the most significant source of pollution, no sites exceed the air quality objective level of 40µg/m³ at any points of relevant exposure, that being at the facades of residential property. Following a reduction of air pollutants levels during the pandemic for the year 2020 levels increased during 2021 although they have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

3.74 AQMAs are present in the neighbouring authorities to Braintree District:

■ Babergh District Council:

- Sudbury AQMA – an area encompassing part of Cross Street, Sudbury.

■ Colchester City Council:

- Brook Street.
- Mersea Road.
- Osborne Street and St. John's Street.

- Maldon District Council:
 - Maldon District Council AQMA number 1 – a designated area incorporating the stretch of road and properties between Anchorage Hill and Bull Lane, Maldon.
- West Suffolk Council:
 - Great Barton AQMA – this designated area incorporates Gatehouse Cottage and 1 to 8 The Street (A143), in the Parish of Great Barton, Suffolk.
 - Sicklesmere Road Bury St Edmunds AQMA 2018 – this designated area incorporates 2 and 7 Sicklesmere Road and 28 Southgate House, Rougham Road, in the Parish of Bury St Edmunds (Southgate Ward).

3.75 It is recognised that air quality does not respect administrative or political boundaries and that there is potential for the occurrence of cross boundary impacts on neighbouring AQMAs. Development in Braintree District has potential to impact the AQMAs present in neighbouring authorities as a result of traffic growth. Most notably the Sudbury AQMA lies along the A131 which connects to Halstead and is within 1.1km of the district boundary.

Geology and Minerals

3.76 The Essex Minerals Local Plan (2012 – 2029) [\[See reference 104\]](#) estimates the quantity of minerals across the county and plans for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates over the coming years to help meet housing and infrastructure needs.

3.77 The assessment identifies that the aggregate supply to the administrative area comprises various minerals, including:

- Aggregate minerals such as sand, gravel, crushed rock, and other bulk materials used by the construction industry;

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- Silica sand;
- Brick clay;
- Brickearth;
- And chalk.

3.78 Aggregates are both imported into Essex (hard rock, and sand and gravel), and exported (sand and gravel, primarily to London). Essex is the largest producer and consumer of sand and gravel in the East of England. The county has 20 permitted sand and gravel sites, one silica sand site, two brick clay and one chalk site. Essex also features two marine wharves and four rail depots capable of handling aggregate. Construction, demolition and excavation waste is also recycled at 29 dedicated and 15 active aggregate recycling sites.

3.79 Seven sites within Braintree District have been identified as preferred or reserved sites for primary mineral extraction of sand and gravel in the Essex Minerals Plan. These include five sites at Bradwell Quarry, Rivenhall Airfield; one site at Broadfield Farm, Rayne; and one site on land at Colemans Farm.

3.80 There are no geological SSSIs or Local Geological Sites in Braintree District. However, Geo Essex identify 20 other sites noted for their geological importance, including: Bulmer Brickworks (manufacture of traditional, hand-made bricks for historic buildings); Bures Pit (disused sand and gravel pit); Site of Witham Spa (spa in 18th century) [\[See reference 105\]](#).

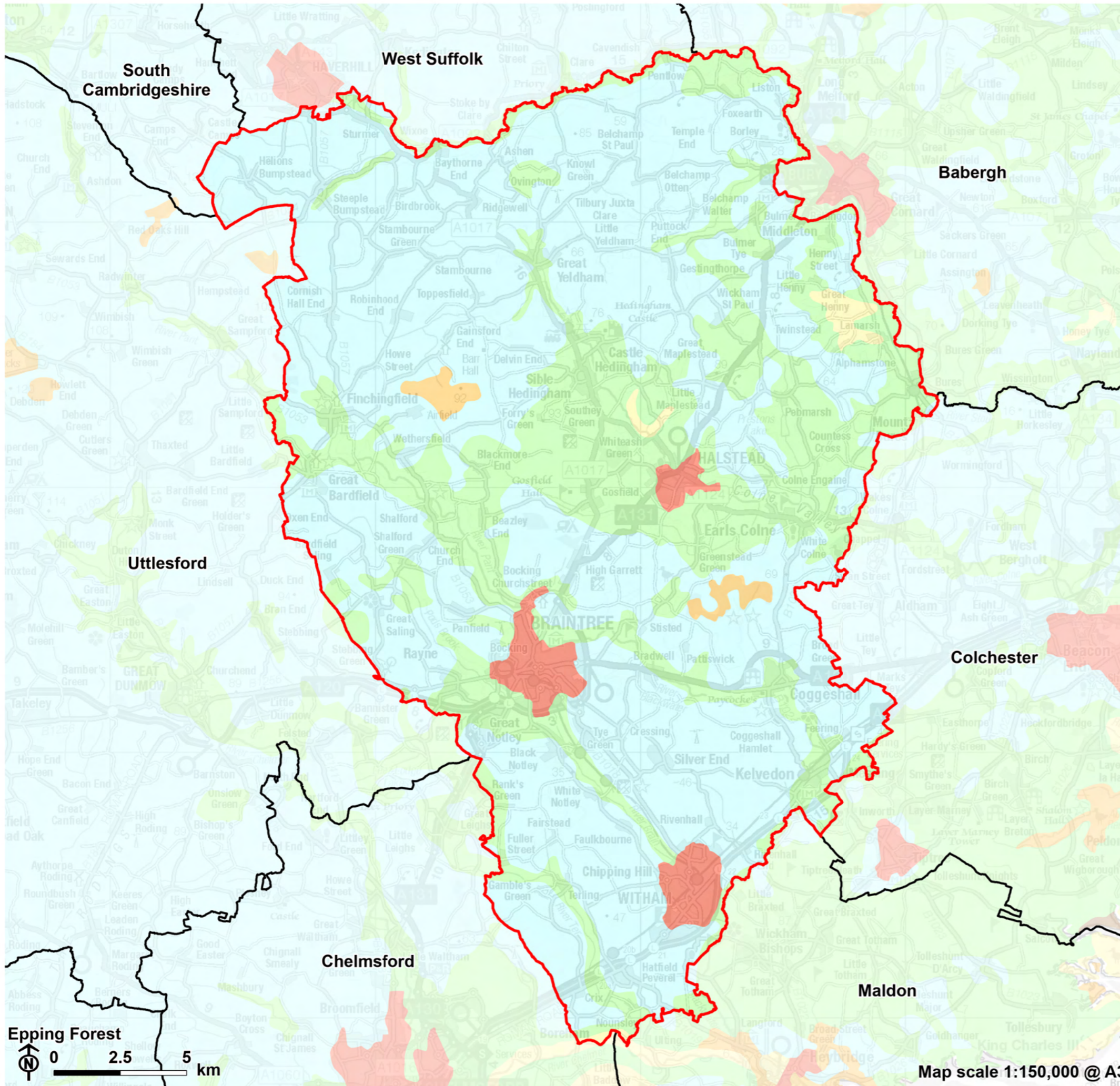
Soil

3.81 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system [\[See reference 106\]](#) provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations to agricultural use. The principal factors influencing agricultural production are soil wetness, drought and erosion. These factors, together with interactions between them, form the basis for classifying land use into one of five grades, where 1 describes land as excellent (land of high agricultural quality and potential) and 5

describes land as very poor (land of low agricultural quality and potential). Land falling outside these scores is deemed to be 'primarily in non-agricultural use', or 'predominantly in urban use'. Grade 3 can be further separated into grades 3a and 3b, although this requires further local surveys and therefore such data is only available for small areas. Grades 1, 2 and 3a are considered to be best and most versatile agricultural land.

3.82 The majority of agricultural land in Braintree District is classified as Grade 2 or 3, with 65.8% (40,243 hectares) of agricultural land classified as Grade 2 and 29.9% (18,304 hectares) as Grade 3 [\[See reference 107\]](#). Areas of Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land are interspersed with each other away from the main settlements of the plan area. The breakdown of the district in relation to its soil classification is shown in **Figure 3.9**.

Figure 3.9: Agricultural land classification in Braintree District and surroundings



- Braintree District boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Agricultural Land Classification**
- Grade 1 (excellent)
- Grade 2 (very good)
- Grade 3 (good to moderate)
- Grade 4 (poor)
- Grade 5 (very poor)
- Non agricultural
- Urban

Epping Forest
0 2.5 5 km

Map scale 1:150,000 @ A3

Contaminated Land

3.83 The existence of large historical manufacturing industries in the Braintree District, has led to some degree of contamination of sites through associated industrial processes, or activities that are now defunct. Contamination of land can have adverse impacts on health and wellbeing as well as damaging wildlife and contributing to pollution of water bodies. Currently, there are 916 entries on Braintree District Council's contaminated land register [\[See reference 108\]](#). In 2021, there were 37 sites on the Brownfield Register totalling 20.8ha of previously developed land in the District [\[See reference 109\]](#).

Waste

3.84 In Braintree District, Braintree District Council is the authority responsible for waste collection while Essex County Council is responsible for waste disposal.

3.85 Essex County and Southend-on-Sea have adopted a waste plan to cover that area. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017 – 2032) [\[See reference 110\]](#) stipulates that there is a total of 186 waste management facilities across the plan area, with an estimated capacity of 22,602,560 tonnes. This includes 116 waste transfer facilities, with an estimated capacity of 1,776,928 tonnes, as well as 12 disposal landfills, which have a estimated capacity of 17,964,802 tonnes. Local Authority Collected Waste, making up approximately 20% of the total amount of waste created in the Plan area, is managed through a network of sites which comprises of the Mechanical Biological Treatment Facility at Tovi EcoPark, a network of Recycling Centres for Household Waste and six supporting municipal waste transfer stations, which includes Cordons Farm in Braintree. Braintree has one main household waste and recycling centre [\[See reference 111\]](#).

3.86 In Braintree District, about 60,361 tonnes of household waste was recorded in 2022-23 – down from 64,039 tonnes in 2021-22. Of the household

waste collected in 2022-23, 26,588 tonnes were sent for reuse, recycling or composting – meaning the area had a recycling rate of 44.05%. This is a decrease of 3.02% from the previous year, although this is higher than the national rate of 43.4% [\[See reference 112\]](#).

Water

3.87 The main water courses running through Braintree District are the Rivers Blackwater, Colne, Brain, Pant, Stour and Ter. Braintree District contains major aquifers within the northern half of the District, together with scattered minor aquifers in the south of the district.

3.88 Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) set out how the Environment Agency will manage the water resources of a catchment and contribute to implementing the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Overall, Essex CAMS area is heavily abstracted with further licensing most likely only available at high flows. Looking in more detail at the CAMS river catchments within the District, the resource availability during the lowest flow times of the year (Q95 flows) is detailed in **Table 3.7**.

Table 3.7: Water resource availability in CAMS catchments intersecting Braintree District [\[See reference 113\]](#)

CAMS catchment intersecting Braintree District	Water resource availability
Stour	'Water not available' in almost all of catchment
Colner & Tendring	'Water not available' in all of catchment upstream of Colchester
Blackwater	'Water not available' in all of catchment except for small portion at the Essex coast

CAMS catchment intersecting Braintree District	Water resource availability
Chelmer	'Water not available' in almost all of catchment

3.89 The 'water not available' CAMS status across the District indicates that recent actual river flows are below the Environmental Flow Indicator (EFI), the flow required to support a healthy ecology. In these areas, no further consumptive licences will be granted although unused capacity may exist within abstraction licences that have already been granted.

3.90 Essex falls within the Anglian River Basin District. The Anglian River Basin District is subdivided into catchment areas and the Combined Essex catchment area lies within the counties of Essex and Suffolk, as well as a small part of Cambridgeshire. Current water quality in Essex is described in the Anglian River Basin Management Plan [\[See reference 114\]](#).

3.91 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (2017) looks at the ecological and chemical health of both groundwater and surface water with the aim of achieving 'good ecological status' and 'good chemical status' by 2027, and to ensure that there is no deterioration from existing statuses. The current overall, ecological and chemical WFD status or potential of each of the water bodies within the Combined Essex catchment associated with Braintree District is shown in **Table 3.8**. These water bodies lie within the operational catchments of Chelmer, Blackwater, Colne Essex, and Stour OC.

Table 3.8: Water quality in Braintree District's waterbodies [\[See reference 115\]](#)

Waterbody name	Current ecological status	Current chemical status
Ter	Moderate	Fail

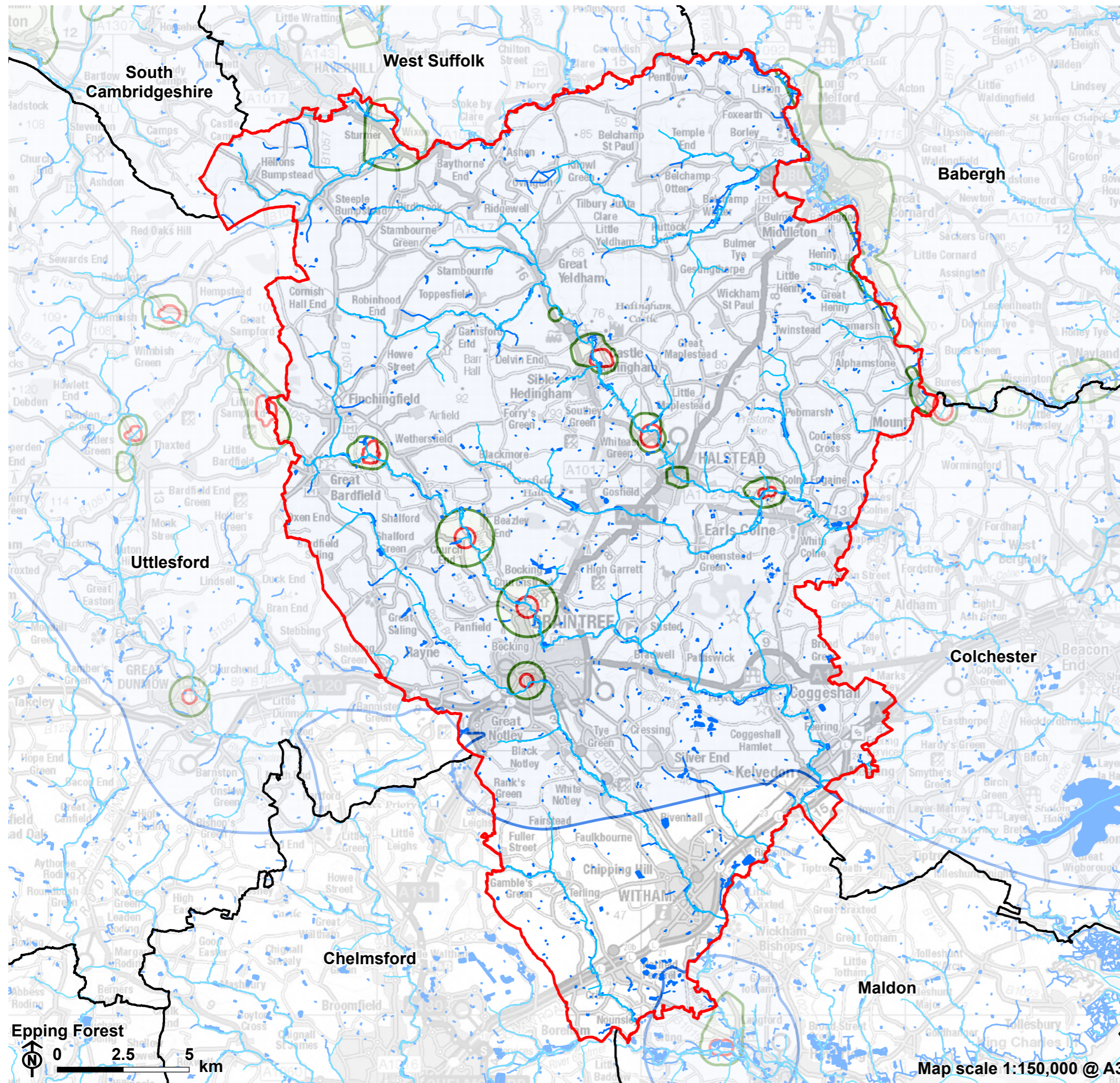
Waterbody name	Current ecological status	Current chemical status
Domsey Brook	Good	Fail
River Chelmer (confluence with Can)	Poor	Fail
Pant	Moderate	Fail
Brain	Moderate	Fail
Boreham Tributary	Good	Fail
River Blackwater	Moderate	Fail
Bourne Brook	Poor	Fail
Colne (Gt. Yeldham - Doe's Corner)	Poor	Fail
Colne (d/s Doe's Corner)	Moderate	Fail
Toppesfield Brook	Moderate	Fail
Pebmarsh Brook	Good	Fail
Belchamp Brook	Moderate	Fail
Stour (Wixoe - Lamarsh)	Moderate	Fail








3.92 This shows that, in 2022, sections of rivers within Braintree were recorded as having poor water quality. All rivers within Braintree District are failing in terms of achieving good chemical status. Note that this is an issue that is not confined to the district and no English rivers are currently reported as achieving this objective.

3.93 Source Protection Zones are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites, and they provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality by constraining the proximity of an activity that can impact the quality of drinking water. Much of the north of the district is covered by a Source Protection Zone and there are areas of Source Protection Zones 1 and 2 towards Braintree town and Halstead. The Source Protection Zones and watercourses in the district are presented in **Figure 3.10**.



Figure 3.10: Watercourses and Source Protection Zones (SPZ) in Braintree District and surroundings



-  Braintree District boundary
-  Neighbouring local authority
-  Watercourse
-  Waterbody
- Source protection zone**
-  Zone I - inner protection zone
-  Zone II - outer protection zone
-  Zone III - total catchment

Epping Forest
0 2.5 5 km

Map scale 1:150,000 @ A3

3.94 Braintree District Council's most recent Water Cycle Study (WCS) [See reference 116] assesses planned future development of the district with regards to water supply capacity, wastewater capacity and environmental capacity. The WCS identifies that in total, 14 Water Recycling Centres (WRCs) serve the proposed future development across the district. The WRCs that are likely to require changes to permits that control discharge and potential infrastructure upgrades include:

- Bocking
- Braintree
- Coggeshall
- White Notley

3.95 The WCS shows that to accommodate development in the adopted Local Plan improvements to Bocking, Coggeshall and White Notley WRCs are possible using wastewater treatment technologies (conventional). However, Braintree WRC will require more advanced treatment technologies (non-conventional) to ensure future development can be accepted without significantly compromising water quality targets in the River Basin.

3.96 It is important to note that significant water stress was identified in the district and in the wider Anglian Water Services area, as well as limitations on water available in local water resources. Hence there are key drivers requiring that water demand is managed in the district for all new development in order to achieve long-term sustainability in terms of water resources.

Flood Risk

3.97 The risk of flooding posed to properties within the district arises from a number of different sources including river flooding, sewer and surface water flooding.

3.98 The dominant fluvial systems within the district are the River Blackwater, the River Brain and the River Colne. These rivers run close to a number of settlements. The River Brain flows through the towns of Braintree and Witham. The River Blackwater flows through Braintree town, Coggeshall, Kelvedon and to the south of Witham. The confluence of the Rivers Brain and Blackwater is situated to the south east of Witham town centre. The River Colne flows through Great Yeldham, Sible Hedingham and Halstead.

3.99 The large majority of the district falls within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low probability of flooding from fluvial sources. However, due to the lowland nature of the landscape, floodplains associated with principal watercourses are broad. There are large extents of Flood Zone 2 and 3 around Sible Hedingham, Halstead, Earls Colne, Braintree town, Coggeshall, and Witham [\[See reference 117\]](#). The most significant flood events reported to have affected the district occurred in 2001 and 2009. The risk of flooding is likely to be intensified due to climate change.

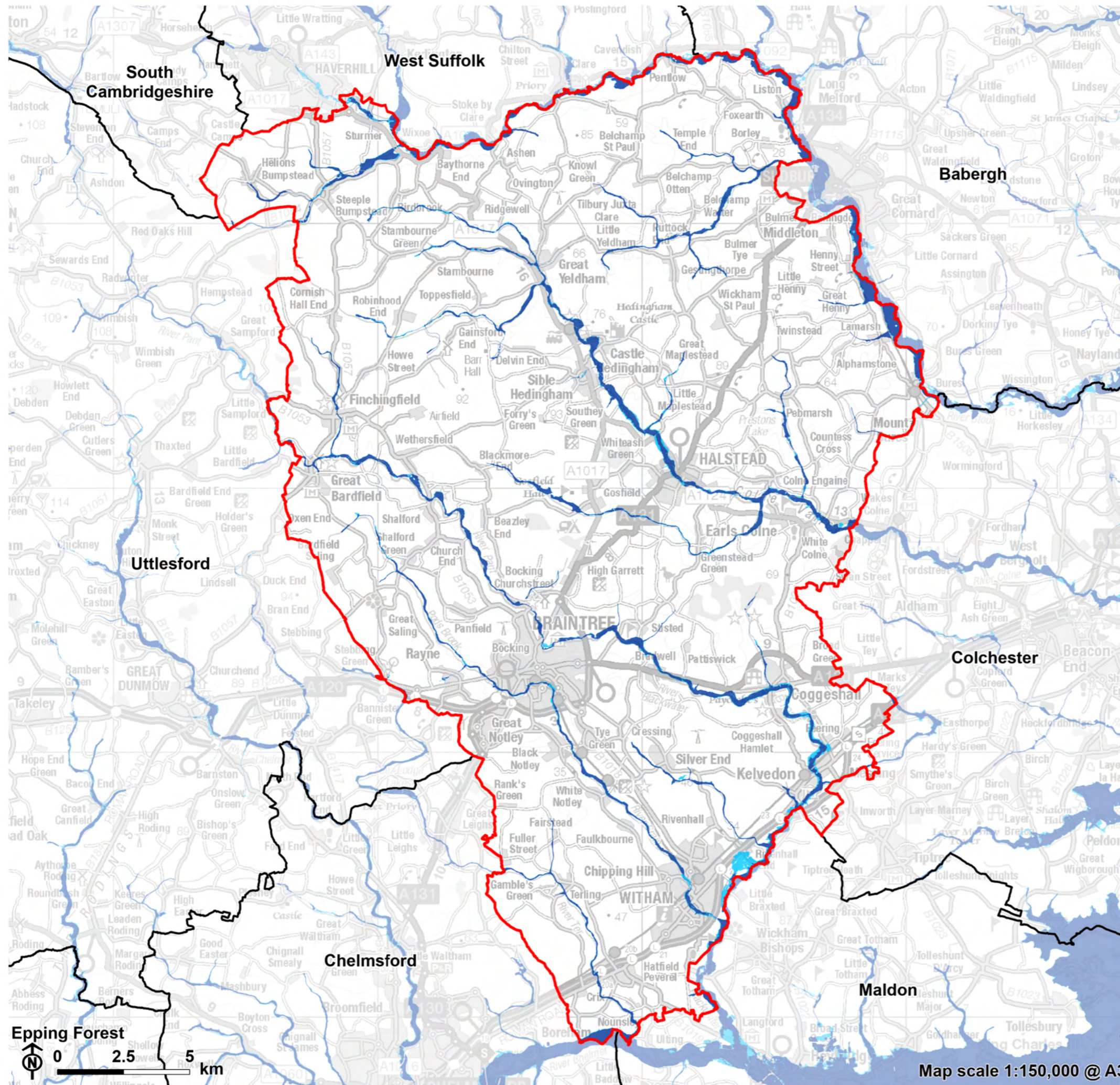
3.100 Surface water flooding can occur from sewers, drains, or groundwater and from runoff from land, small watercourses and ditches because of heavy rainfall. The effect of climate change on surface water flood risk is predicted to increase the intensity and likelihood of summer rainfall events, meaning surface water flooding may become more severe and more frequent in the future. An increase in rainfall intensity of 20% and 40% was applied in the Braintree and Witham Surface Water Management Plan to account for the projected impacts of climate change based on updated guidance provided by the Environment Agency, which takes account of the uncertainty in climate change projections [\[See reference 118\]](#).

3.101 Based on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Surface Water (FMfSW), the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) identified clusters of areas where surface water poses a potential flood risk. Two of the clusters identified within the County of Essex were centred on Braintree town and Witham, with over 2,000 and 1,000 people respectively predicted to be at risk of surface water flooding [\[See reference 119\]](#).

3.102 The Level 1 SFRA Update found no indication that groundwater flooding forms a significant risk within the district. A large proportion of the district is underlain by London Clay, including all of the main settlements. This forms an impenetrable barrier to groundwater at depth, limiting the risk from this source **[See reference 120]**. **Figure 3.11** shows the areas of flood risk in Braintree District.



Figure 3.11: Flood risk in Braintree District and surroundings



- Braintree District boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Flood Map for Planning**
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3



Map scale 1:150,000 @ A3

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

3.103 Climate change presents a global risk, with a range of different social, economic and environmental impacts that are likely to be felt within Braintree District across numerous receptors. A key challenge in protecting the environment is to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change. The consequences include predictions of warmer, drier summers and wetter winters with more severe weather events all year as well resulting in higher sea levels and increased river flooding. A strong response is required from planning to ensure appropriate action can be taken to help species and habitats adapt and to enable the agricultural sector to continue to deliver diverse, affordable and good quality produce.

3.104 There has been a general trend towards warmer average temperatures in recent years with the most recent decade (2012–2021) being on average 0.2°C warmer than the 1991–2020 average and 1.0°C warmer than 1961–1990. All the top ten warmest years for the UK in the series from 1884 have occurred this century [\[See reference 121\]](#).

3.105 Heavy rainfall and flooding events have been demonstrated to have increased potential to occur in the UK as the climate has generally become wetter. For example, for the most recent decade (2012 to 2021) UK summers have been on average 6% wetter than between 1991 and 2020 and 15% wetter than between 1961 and 1990, whilst winters have been 10% to 26% wetter [\[See reference 122\]](#).

3.106 With 2022 recorded as the warmest year on record, July and August experienced especially dry months and drought conditions were declared across parts of England and Wales. In total, the rainfall for 2022 was 1,051 mm – this is 90% of the average for the period from 1991 to 2020 [\[See reference](#)

123]. The UK encountered more sun across 2022 than the average year. England experienced the sunniest January in 2023 **[See reference 124].**

3.107 The Paris Agreement **[See reference 125]** is a legally binding international treaty involving 196 Parties. The overarching goal of this agreement is to limit global warming increasing to 1.5°C by the end of the century. Achieving this goal still requires multiple actions but since 2016 when the agreement was established, low-carbon solutions and new markets for climate resilience have been sparked.

3.108 The IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report (2023) highlights that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are predicted to continue into 2030 making it likely that the global warming threshold of 1.5°C, will be exceeded. As a result of this, climate hazards are considered more likely such as increased incidences of heatwaves, droughts, increased global monsoon precipitation, tropical storms, very wet and very dry weather. The planets natural land and ocean carbon sinks are expected to become less effective, sea levels will rise, become more acidic and experience deoxygenation amongst other climate events **[See reference 126].**

3.109 The Tyndall Centre has undertaken work to calculate the ‘fair’ contribution of local authorities towards the Paris Agreement. Based on the analysis undertaken the following recommendations have been made for Braintree District **[See reference 127]:**

- Stay within a maximum cumulative carbon dioxide emissions budget of 4.6 million tonnes (MtCO₂) for the period of 2020 to 2100. At 2017 CO₂ emission levels, Braintree would use this entire budget within 7 years from 2020.
- Initiate an immediate programme of CO₂ mitigation to deliver cuts in emissions averaging a minimum of -13.2% per year to deliver a Paris aligned carbon budget. These annual reductions in emissions require national and local action, and could be part of a wider collaboration with other local authorities.
- Reach zero or near zero carbon no later than 2042. This report provides an indicative CO₂ reduction pathway that stays within the recommended

maximum carbon budget of 4.6 MtCO₂. At 2042 5% of the budget remains. This represents very low levels of residual CO₂ emissions by this time, or the Authority may opt to forgo these residual emissions and cut emissions to zero at this point. Earlier years for reaching zero CO₂ emissions are also within the recommended budget, provided that interim budgets with lower cumulative CO₂ emissions are also adopted.

3.110 Braintree District declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and subsequently prepared a Climate Change Strategy [\[See reference 128\]](#) for the period 2021 to 2030, with the following aims:

- To make the Council activities carbon neutral as far as practical by 2030.
- Support partners, residents and local businesses to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.
- Build resilient communities that adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

3.111 The Government regularly publishes Local Authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics. This data shows that emissions for Braintree District between 2005 and 2022 fell from 7.5t per capita to 4.2t per capita [\[See reference 129\]](#). Per capita emissions in the plan area within the scope of influence of the local authority show that emissions generally declined each year, with the exceptions of 2010 and 2012, when emissions increased. This is shown in **Table 3.9**.

Table 3.9: Carbon dioxide emissions estimates in Braintree District [\[See reference 130\]](#)

Year	Total Emissions (kilotonnes (kt))	Per Capita Emissions (tonnes (t))
2005	1,041.2	7.5

Year	Total Emissions (kilotonnes (kt))	Per Capita Emissions (tonnes (t))
2006	1,026.6	7.3
2007	1,009.0	7.1
2008	988.9	6.9
2009	925.4	6.4
2010	955.1	6.5
2011	876.7	5.9
2012	917.8	6.2
2013	884.3	5.9
2014	824.9	5.5
2015	804.1	5.3
2016	769.4	5.1
2017	742.9	4.9
2018	731.5	4.8
2019	711.9	4.6
2020	647.9	4.2
2021	687.3	4.4
2022	669.0	4.2

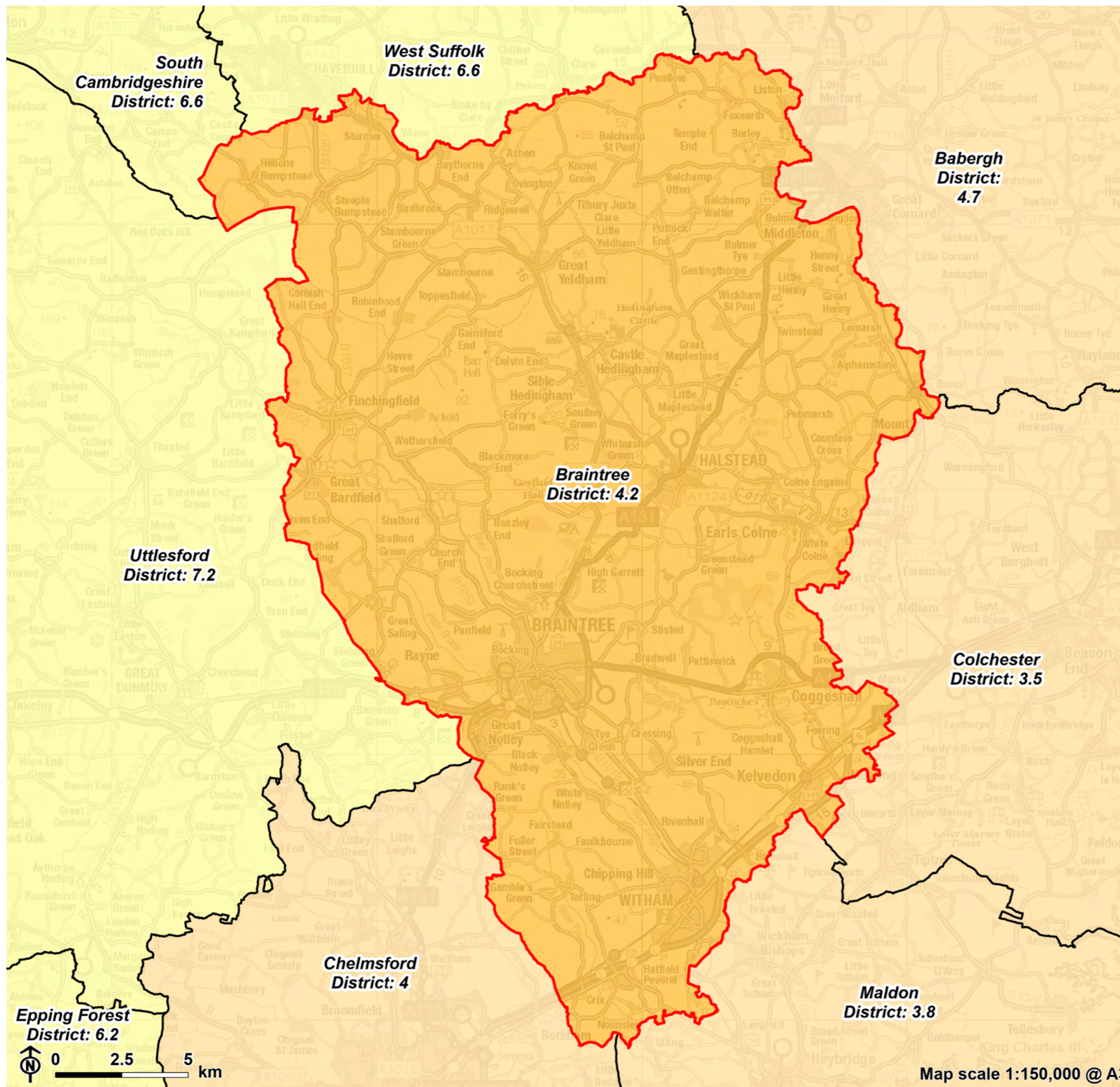
3.112 In Braintree District, the main contributor of emissions is from transport and domestic sources. Between 2005 and 2022, the levels of emissions from transport and domestic sources have dropped significantly for the district, by 16.24% and 46.48%, respectively. This is shown in **Table 3.10**.

Table 3.10: Changes in carbon dioxide emissions by sector for Braintree District between 2005 and 2022 [See reference 131]

Source of emissions	Total emissions in kt (2005)	Total emissions in kt (2022)
Industry	151.8	81.0
Commercial	95.3	47.7
Public Sector	33.8	14.1
Domestic	357.3	191.2
Transport	362.7	303.8
Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry	4.4	6.2
Agriculture	35.7	24.9
Total	1,041.2	669.0

3.113 Compared to neighbouring Local Authorities, Braintree District demonstrates similar per capita CO₂ emissions to Chelmsford, Colchester, and Babergh, and displays much lower per capita CO₂ emissions compared to Uttlesford and West Suffolk, as presented in **Figure 3.12**.

Figure 3.12: Braintree District compared to neighbouring authorities



- Braintree District boundary
 - Neighbouring local authority
- UK local authority CO2 emissions 2022 (tonnes per person)**
- 0 - 4.9
 - 5 - 9.9

Overall energy consumption

3.114 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy produced the following consumption figures for Braintree District in 2021 **[See reference 132]**. These figures are presented as ktoe (kilotonnes of oil equivalent):

- All fuels – A total of 255.9 ktoe across domestic, transport and industrial and commercial use.
- Coal – A total of 4.0 ktoe predominantly through industrial and domestic use.
- Manufactured fuels – A total of 1.3 ktoe through domestic and industrial use.
- Petroleum – A total of 117.9 ktoe predominantly from road transport.
- Gas – A total of 71.4 ktoe predominantly through domestic use.
- Electricity – A total of 44.2 ktoe through domestic and industrial and commercial use.
- Bioenergy and wastes – A total of 17.1 ktoe predominantly from road transport.

3.115 Table 3.11 below highlights the energy consumption for Braintree District between 2005 to 2021 by type. With the exception of bioenergy and wastes, which saw a 677.3% increase between 2005 and 2021, all energy types saw a decrease in consumption between 2005 and 2021.

Table 3.11: Energy Consumption in Braintree District by Type
 [See reference 133]

Energy Type	Energy Consumption in Ktoe (2005)	Energy Consumption in Ktoe (2021)
Coal	4.5	4.0
Manufactured Fuels	2.6	1.3
Petroleum	134.0	117.9
Gas	93.3	71.4
Electricity	56.1	44.2
Bioenergy and Wastes	2.2	17.1
Total	292.8	255.9

Renewable Energy

3.116 Renewable energy is recognised as an important contributor to reducing reliance on energy from fossil fuels which make a substantial contribution to climate change.

3.117 Within the East of England, in 2022, there was a total of 145,281 sites that were capable of generating energy from wind, solar, wave, hydro and biomass renewable sources. This accounts for 11.5% of all renewable energy sites in the UK. In 2022, the West Midlands generated a total of 17,010.9 GWh (Gigawatt hours) of renewable energy. This is 447.31% of renewable energy generation that was achieved in 2011. In 2022, a total of 2,970 photovoltaic panels and 11 onshore wind turbines were installed in Braintree [See reference 134].

3.118 Braintree’s Climate Change Strategy highlights the importance of renewable energy, stating increasing the proportion of energy from renewable sources is a priority for the Council. The Council has recently implemented

various initiatives to reduce carbon emissions, including facilitating energy-saving measures like boilers, solar panels, and insulation, which has stopped around 1,000 tonnes of carbon entering the atmosphere. 0.5MW of solar power are located on local authority buildings in the district [\[See reference 135\]](#).

Green Infrastructure

3.119 Green infrastructure has a range of benefits, for example: promoting healthier living, improving air quality and water quality, encouraging walking and cycling, but in particular it can help with climate change mitigation and adaptation by storing carbon, improving biodiversity and ecological resilience to climate change and lessening the impacts of climate change such as flooding, extreme heat and drought.

3.120 Essex County Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy outlines the existing green infrastructure within Braintree, highlighting its significance for biodiversity and habitat networks [\[See reference 136\]](#). The strategy identifies that Braintree District benefits from the following areas of green infrastructure:

- Parks and gardens: 5.1ha
- Natural and semi-natural open spaces: 51.4ha
- Ancient woodlands: 12.7ha
- Coastal features: 0.1ha
- Greenways: 4.8ha
- Outdoor sports facilities: 6.2ha
- Amenity green spaces: 0.1ha
- Cemeteries and church yards: 0.7ha
- Allotments, community gardens and city farms: 1.4ha
- Open spaces and premises: 4.5ha
- Reservoirs, lakes and ponds: 0.3ha

■ Waterways: 0.0ha

3.121 The total area covered by green infrastructure in Braintree District amounts to 87.3ha. This is similar to other Essex authorities such as Colchester, with 87.0ha, and Uttlesford, with 78.9ha [\[See reference 137\]](#).

3.122 Key components of green infrastructure in Braintree District include elements of the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area (NCA), which falls within the southern and eastern part of the district and is characterised by its wooded arable countryside. As noted in the Braintree Climate Change Strategy, the Council seeks to continue to develop green infrastructure, increasing the network of natural and semi-natural areas across the district, and increase the range of ecosystems in both rural and urban settings.

3.123 The Council supports the enhancement of green infrastructure networks through the community tree and bulb planting scheme. This scheme provides native tree whips and bulbs to Parish and Town Councils, local community and voluntary groups, schools, colleges, and charities. Between October 2021 and March 2022, 850 trees and 41,600 bulbs were planted across the district. Additionally, more were planted on council-owned land, bringing the overall total to 18,700 native trees and 73,000 bulbs [\[See reference 138\]](#).

3.124 In order to help offset carbon emissions, Essex County Council initiated the Essex Forest Initiative in 2019, committing to planting £1 million worth of trees over the next five years. This included planting 375,000 trees, over 150 hectares. So far, the initiative has exceeded its targets for the first 4 years, making a total of 412,503 trees, 100ha, and 51,028 hedgerows. The trees have been planted across Essex, which includes Braintree, and other districts [\[See reference 139\]](#).

Biodiversity

3.125 There are no international biodiversity designations (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites) in Braintree District. However, potential pathways exist for development within the District to affect a variety of such sites beyond the District boundary. Most of these are on or near the Essex/Suffolk coast and estuaries and are designated for a range of wetland and coastal habitats and bird species. Further to this, new residential developments in much of the District, (the 'zone of influence') are likely to have a direct effect on designated parts of the Essex coastline. For developments within the zone of influence, the Council already has to assess the impact of new development on designated areas and protect designated areas from the impact of increased visitor numbers. The Council has worked with 11 other Essex authorities and the Bird Aware Essex Coast initiative to develop a single approach to manage visitor impact - the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). The potential effects of the Local Plan on the internationally designated sites will be considered in detail through a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and its findings reflected, as relevant, in the SA.

3.126 There are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in Braintree District:

- Belcher's and Broadfield Woods
- Bovingdon Hall Woods
- Chalkney Wood
- Glemsford Pits

3.127 The condition of the SSSIs at Belcher's and Broadfield Woods, and Glemsford Pits is assessed as unfavourable but recovering (100%). Chalkney Wood and Bovingdon Hall Woods are generally in favourable condition (100% and 93% respectively). The 7% of Bovingdon Hall Woods assessed as being in 'unfavourable – no change' condition is due to inappropriate deer

grazing/browsing rather than development pressure. There are no SSSIs designated for their geological diversity or Local Geological Sites in the District.

3.128 There are no National Nature Reserves (NNRs) located in Braintree, however there are nine Local Nature Reserves (LNRs):

- Bocking Blackwater LNR;
- Gosfield Sandpits LNR;
- Cuckoo Wood LNR;
- Colne Valley LNR (dismantled Railway);
- Brickfield and Long Meadow LNR;
- Brockwell Meadows LNR;
- Whetmead LNR;
- Hoppit Mead LNR; and,
- The Railway Walks LNR (on the border with Babergh)

3.129 There are 253 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) scattered throughout Braintree District, with many concentrated in the centre of the district. These non-statutory nature conservation sites which along with the statutory sites play a key role in helping conserve the district's biodiversity in both urban and rural locations [[See reference 140](#)].

3.130 Roadside verges, if sensitively managed, can benefit the biodiversity not only of the verges themselves but also the wider countryside by acting as corridors interlinking fragmented or isolated habitats. These areas are often remnants of larger grassland areas such as old hay meadows that have been lost due to agricultural intensification or development pressures. With this in mind, in the 1970s, Essex County Council Highways Agency, Nature Conservancy Council and Essex Wildlife Trust identified a number of important verges, which were subsequently designated as Special Roadside Nature Reserves. Once designated, wooden posts are erected on the verges with

warning plaques and arrows. There are over 100 special verges designated in Essex and these are reviewed annually [\[See reference 141\]](#).

3.131 There are no Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) in Braintree District.

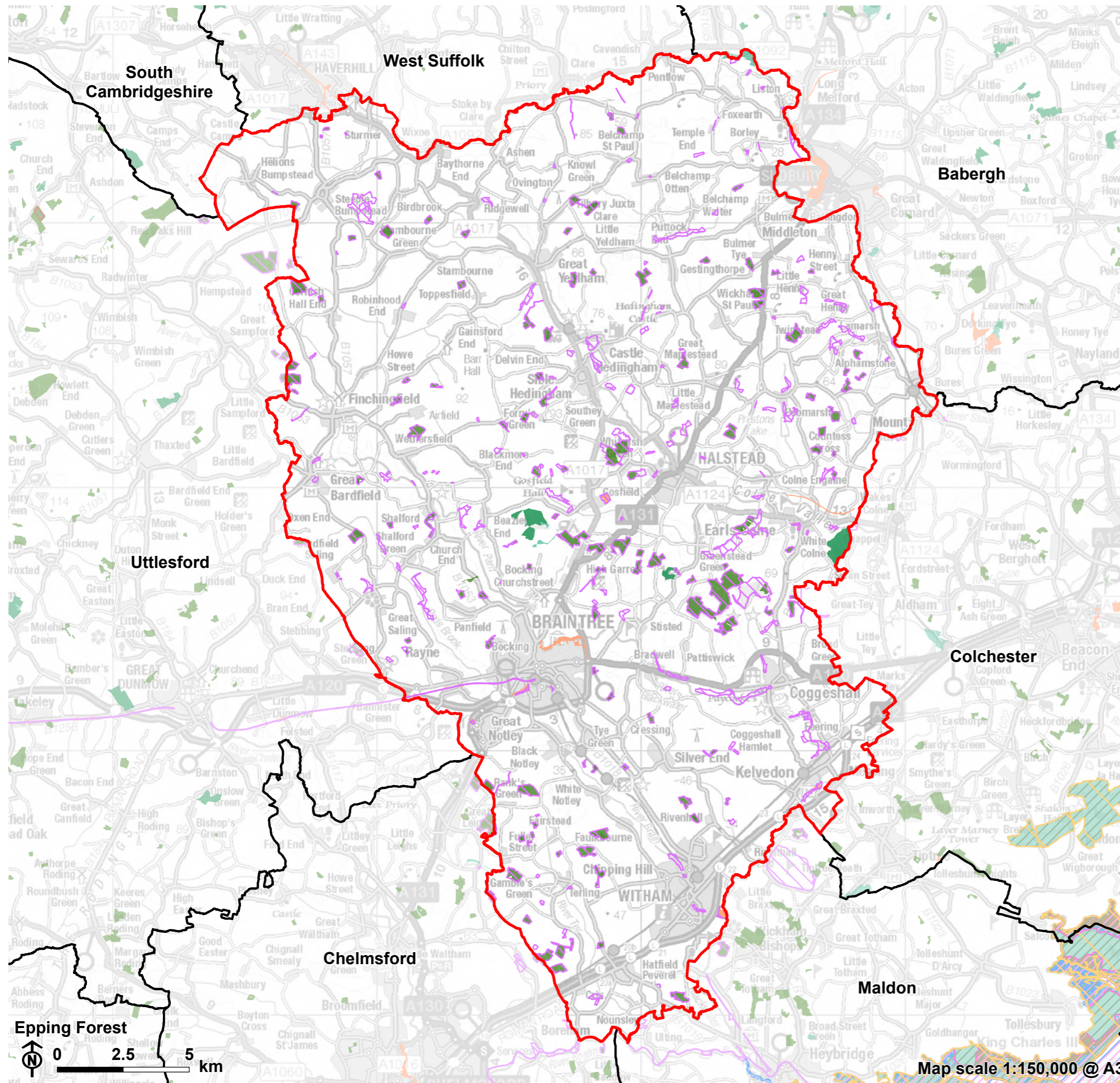
3.132 Essex County Council, is leading the delivery of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Greater Essex, including Thurrock and Southend. The strategy outlines key biodiversity priorities, noting that it will map areas of importance for biodiversity and areas where nature recovery has been taken, as well as describe the strategy area and its opportunities, and identify potential measures for achieving agreed priorities. Development of the Essex LNRS began in August 2022 and continues to involve collaboration with experts and stakeholders across Essex [\[See reference 142\]](#).

3.133 With regards to geodiversity, Braintree District has over forty geological sites, Local Geological Sites, historic sites, and potential Local Geological Sites. In relation to Local Geological Sites specifically, the district contains the Alphamstone Church and Finchingfield Boulder [\[See reference 143\]](#).

3.134 The location of Braintree District's designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets is presented in **Figure 3.13**.



Figure 3.13: Designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets in Braintree District and surroundings



- Braintree District boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Ancient woodland
- Ramsar Site
- Special Area of Conservation
- Special Protection Area
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- Marine Conservation Zone

Historic environment

3.135 According to Historic England's most recent Local Authority Profile for Braintree [See reference 144], Braintree has 40 Scheduled Monuments, eight Registered Parks and Gardens, and 3,191 Listed Buildings, the majority of which are Grade II. Listed buildings within the district are fairly widely spread.

3.136 There are 37 Conservation Areas within the district and of these, 15 of which have management plans in place, which set out desired actions to deal with detracting elements. Action plans have been put in place for Silver End, Bulmer, Cressing, Finchingfield, Sible Hedingham, Witham Town Centre Newland Street and Pebmarsh [See reference 145].

3.137 According to the national Heritage at Risk Register maintained by Historic England in 2023 there are five sites on the Heritage at Risk Register [See reference 146]. The site names, designations and locations are presented in the table below.

Table 3.12: Braintree District Heritage at Risk [See reference 147]

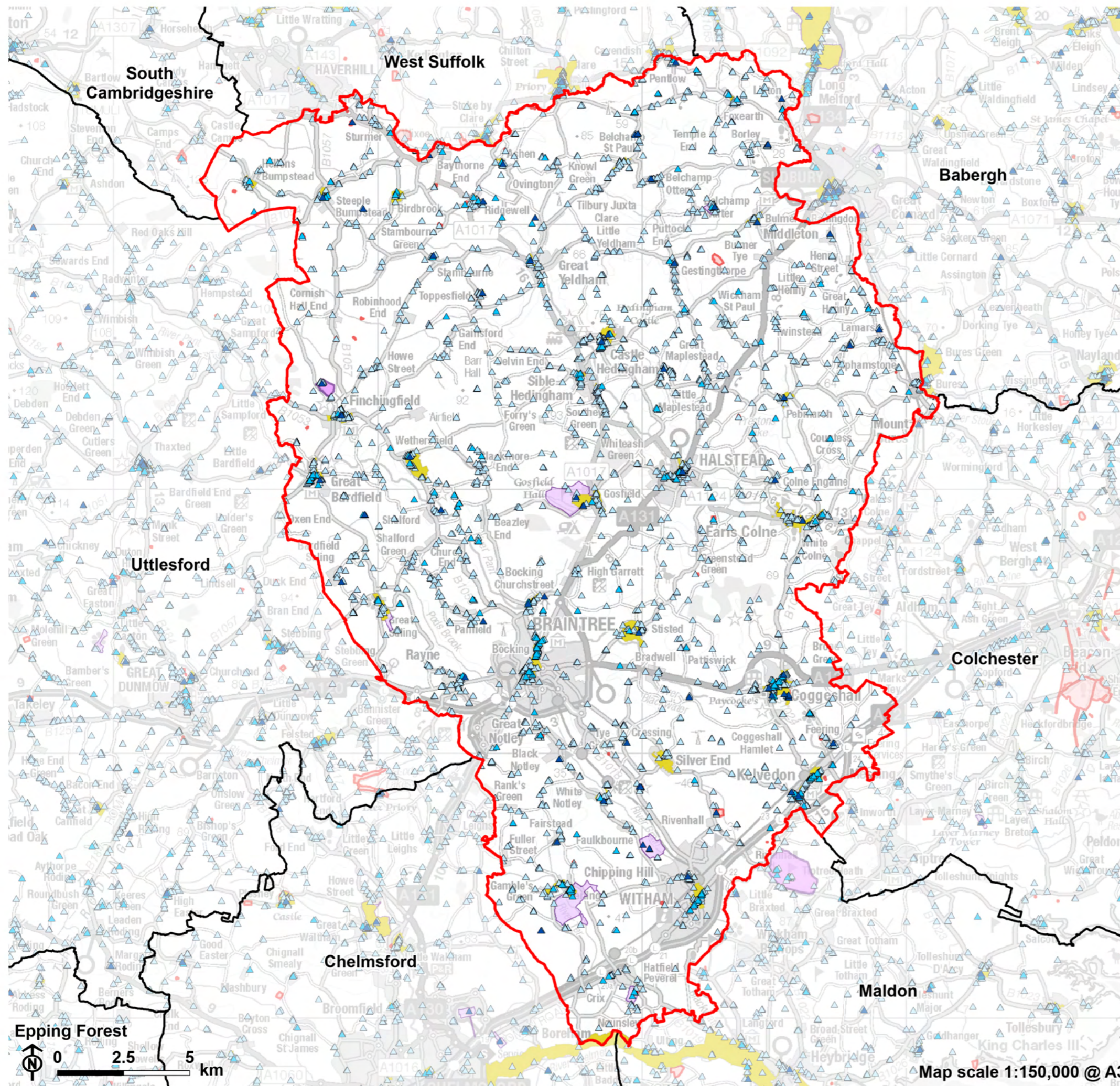
Site Name	Designation	Condition	Location
Codham Mill and Mill House	Listed Building, Grade II*	Poor	Codham's Lane, Wethersfield
Church of St Mary	Listed Place of Worship, Grade II*	Poor	Church Road, Ovington
Circular crop mark at Ferriers Farm	Scheduled Monument	Extensive significant problems	Ferriers Farm, 190m south west of Hill Farm, Bures Hamlet

Site Name	Designation	Condition	Location
Sible Hedingham South	Conservation Area including 46 Listed Buildings	Poor	Swan Street, Sible Hedingham
Silver End	Conservation Area, including 22 Listed Buildings	Poor	Between Braintree and Witham

3.138 Heritage assets in the district are presented in **Figure 3.14**.

3.139 The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) [\[See reference 148\]](#) provides a record of heritage assets in Essex from the earliest occupation of the area, through to the Cold War. It contains approximately 46,572 archaeological records for the county, of which 7,138 relate to Braintree District.

Figure 3.14: Designated heritage assets in Braintree District and surroundings



- Braintree District boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Conservation area
- Scheduled monument
- Registered Parks and Gardens**
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II
- Listed building**
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II

Map scale 1:150,000 @ A3

Landscape and townscape

3.140 Braintree District is an area of undulating countryside, bordered by the River Stour valley to the north. The area contains the upper reaches of the River Colne and the River Pant/Blackwater, as well as many smaller streams and tributaries creating a landscape of gentle slopes and small valleys [See reference 149]. The historic features of this landscape and of the urban areas described below are potentially sensitive to development.

3.141 The main towns of the district comprise Braintree, Witham, and Halstead, all of which are medieval market towns, some having their origins in Roman times. The rural settlement pattern was historically very dispersed, comprising church/hall complexes, manors, farms, moated sites and small hamlets strung out along extensive network of linear and triangular greens, the latter located at road junctions. Post-1950s boundary loss varies widely [See reference 150].

3.142 The River Stour and River Colne valley bottoms are characterised by extensive meadows or meadow pasture. The higher ground between them is characterised by a complex mix of pre-18th century irregular fields of probable of medieval origin or older and common arable field enclosed by agreement largely before the mid-19th century. The Upper Pant/Blackwater valley, and the area to the southwest of Braintree town, are characterised by pre-18th century irregular fields. The Coggeshall area is complex, comprising a mix of pre-18th century irregular fields and pre-18th century co-axial fields. The southern part of the district has a more complex fieldscape with a mixture of irregular and regular fields, including some coaxial fields, and enclosed heathlands and commons. The area around Gosfield is notable for its Ancient Woodland and a number of large landscaped parks, some of which are medieval in origin, including Gosfield Hall, Gosfield Place and Marks Hall Park [See reference 151].

3.143 There is no National Landscapes in the district. However, the Dedham Vale National Landscape is within 1.2km of the district boundary to the east by

the village of Bures. It was an aspiration since 2009 of the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Partnership (a grouping of around 26 organisations with an interest in the area) to extend the nationally designated National Landscape boundary. The Partnership wanted to see the National Landscape boundary moved upstream to include the land to the north west some of which falls within Braintree District. The Partnership commissioned a report to identify the special qualities of the area in question (the Stour Valley project area [\[See reference 152\]](#)).

3.144 The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan was published in 2016 and covers the period up until 2021 [\[See reference 153\]](#). The plan expresses an aspiration to extend the AONB boundary into Braintree. The 2021 – 2026 Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan notes also notes this ambition [\[See reference 154\]](#).

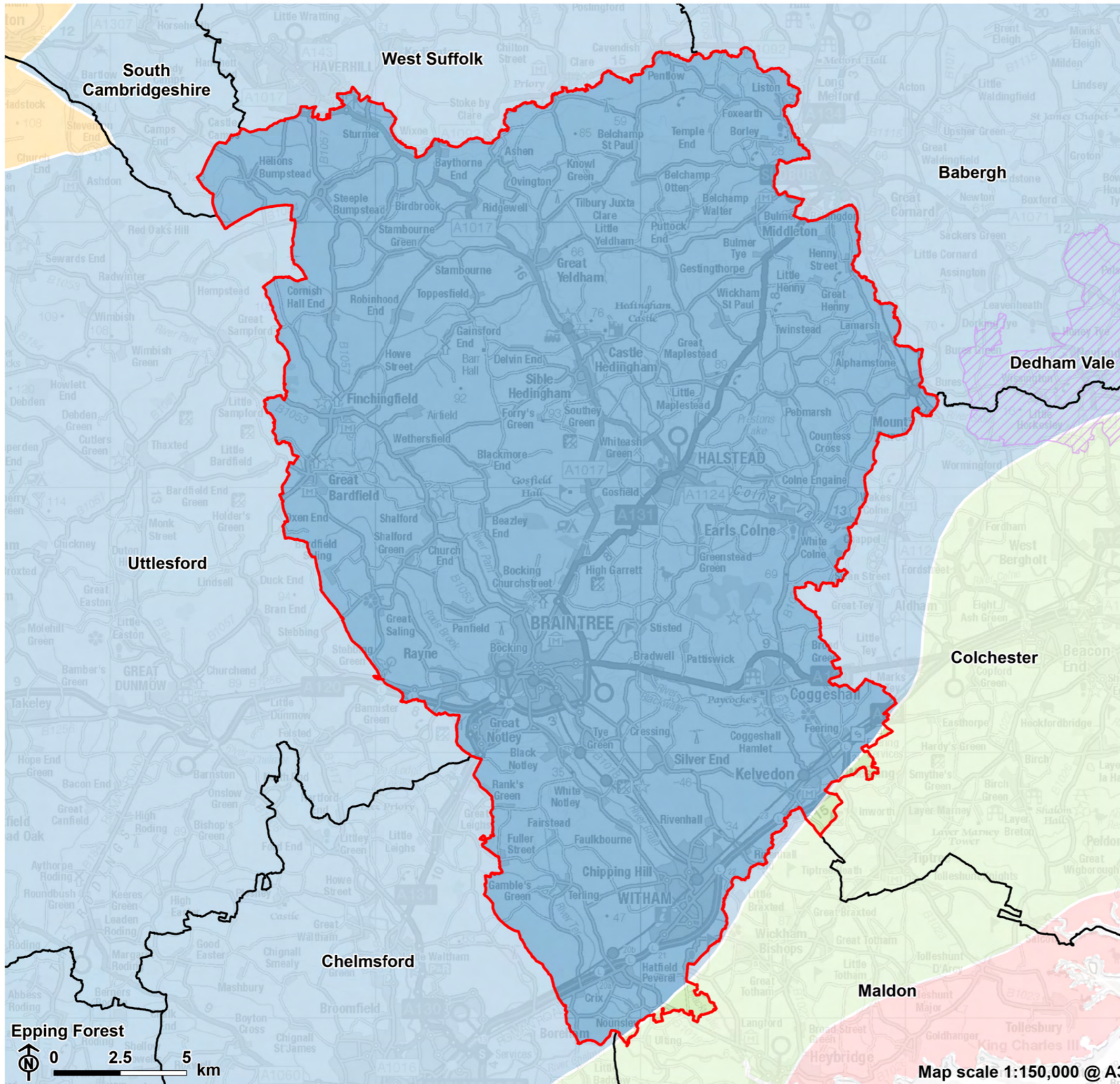
3.145 Braintree District lies within the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area (NCA) [\[See reference 155\]](#), as presented in **Figure 3.12**. The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment [\[See reference 156\]](#) identified three Landscape Character Types in the district: River Valley Landscapes, Farmland Plateau Landscapes, and Wooded Farmland Landscapes, as shown in **Figure 3.15**.

3.146 The Landscape Partnership completed an updated Landscape Character Assessment: Capacity Analysis for Braintree District [\[See reference 157\]](#). It assesses the capacity of the landscape to accommodate new development around nine settlements, namely Braintree (together with the various satellite settlements and surrounding smaller villages), Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Halstead, Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon and Feering, Sible Hedingham, Silver End and Witham. The Overall Capacity Profile score identifies each 'parcel's' capacity based on five ranges 'Low' (27 - 33.5 homes), 'Medium-Low' (34 - 40.5 homes), 'Medium' (41 - 47.5 homes), 'Medium-High' (48 - 54.5 homes) and High (55 - 61.5 homes).

3.147 The number of Protected Lanes in Braintree District has decreased since they were originally designated mostly due to changes in agricultural practice

but also because of road improvements [\[See reference 158\]](#). The open character, nature conservation importance and recreational importance of the floodplains of the River Stour, Colne, Brain, Pent, Blackwater, Ter Valley and their tributaries and the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation are potentially sensitive to inappropriate development close to these watercourses [\[See reference 159\]](#).

Figure 3.15: Landscape character and designation in Braintree District and surroundings



- Braintree District boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- National Landscape
- National Character Area**
- 81: Greater Thames Estuary
- 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
- 87: East Anglian Chalk
- 111: Northern Thames Basin

Difficulties and data limitations

3.148 The SEA Regulations, Schedule 2(8) require the Environmental Report to include:

- "...a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information".

3.149 At this stage, given the content and purpose of the SA Scoping Report, it is considered appropriate to note the following data limitations which were identified as the report was prepared:

- Some data is out of date as it was prepared to support the adopted or withdrawn Local Plan and will be updated as part of the evidence base for the new plan but is not yet available.
- No recent data was available about the breakdown of all journeys made in Braintree District in terms of the modes used (this was last recorded in the 2011 Census).
- Some information is only available at the county or regional scale.

3.150 Where data limitations have been identified, if relevant updates sources become available at a later stage of the SA process, they will be used to update the baseline information informing the appraisal work.

Chapter 4

Key sustainability issues and likely evolution without the Local Plan

4.1 Analysis of the baseline information in **Chapter 3** has enabled a number of key sustainability issues facing Braintree District to be identified. Identification of the key sustainability issues and consideration of how these issues might develop over time if the new Local Plan is not implemented help to meet Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations which requires information to be provided on:

- "the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment [*baseline information presented in Chapter 3*] and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan" [*summarised in this chapter*]
- "any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan" [*interpreted as 'key sustainability issues' and summarised in this chapter*]

4.2 Key sustainability issues for Braintree were previously identified through the 2017 Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Braintree District Publication Draft Section 2 Local Plan, as well as the 2022 Sustainability Appraisal of the Main Modifications to the Braintree District Section 2 Local Plan. These issues have been considered as a starting point but have been fully reviewed and updated during the preparation of this SA Scoping Report for the new Local Plan, in light of the updated policy review and latest baseline information. The current set of key sustainability issues for Braintree is presented below.

4.3 The requirement of the SEA Regulations for consideration to be given to the likely evolution of the environment (as well as society and economy) in the plan area (i.e. Braintree District) if the new Local Plan was not to be implemented, is also presented in relation to each of the key sustainability issues.

4.4 In general, the current trends in relation to the various social, economic and environmental issues affecting Braintree would be more likely to continue without the implementation of the new Local Plan, although the policies in the adopted Braintree Local Plan would still go some way towards addressing many of the issues. In most cases, the new Local Plan offers opportunities to directly and strongly affect existing trends in a positive way, through an up-to-date plan which reflects the requirements of the NPPF.

4.5 Key sustainability issues in Braintree (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Regulations) are set out below.

4.6 Braintree has **an ageing population**, with a higher proportion of older people, particularly those aged 50 years and old. At the same time, the proportion of residents aged 24 years and younger is falling. This is reflected in the higher Old Age Dependency Ratio recorded for Braintree than what is applicable to the national level. The change in population make up may result in **pressure on the ability to access and capacity of local services and facilities**, such as GP surgeries and hospitals. This is particularly concerning given the district's relatively low score of 86.3 in the 2021 'access to services' subdomain in relation to the Heath Index, highlighting the difficulty residents face in reaching certain essential services. The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to improve access to and increase availability of such services and facilities. Without the new Local Plan there is likely to be an increasing strain on services and facilities which do not meet local demand.

4.7 There is a **need for affordable housing** in Braintree District. Although the median price of dwellings is currently lower than the county average, it is higher than the regional and national average. Furthermore, the price-to-earnings ratio for the district is higher than the national figure. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to facilitate and expedite the delivery of affordable housing as well as to support the provision of a more appropriate mix of new homes to meet the needs of a growing population. Without the new Local Plan local house prices in district are likely to continue to increase, exacerbating the unaffordability of housing for many people, including older people who may need to downsize and younger people who are trying to purchase their first property.

4.8 The district has a lower proportion of people with RQF2, RQF3 and RQF4 qualifications compared to the regional and national averages. The new Local Plan presents the opportunity to improve the **provision and accessibility of high-quality education and training facilities** in the district. Without the new Local Plan, these educational and training improvements may not be realised, potentially perpetuating the current disparities.

4.9 Braintree District is not generally deprived; the 2019 IMD reveals that Braintree District is the 194th most deprived local authority area out of 317. The district is reported to be slightly more deprived compared to other local authority areas given that it ranked 203rd in 2015. **Pockets of deprivation** exist across the district, with two LSOAs in the wards of Bocking North and Halstead Trinity falling within the 20% most deprived areas nationally. Additionally, four additional LSOAs fall within the 30% most deprived in the country and seven additional LSOAs are within the 40% most deprived in the country. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to reduce the level of deprivation in areas through appropriately planned growth and regeneration. This includes through the provision of new services and facilities and appropriate open space. Without the new Local Plan, deprivation is less likely to be effectively tackled.

4.10 Weekly pay by place of work in Braintree District is lower than average weekly pay for the region but higher than the national figure. Furthermore, workplace-based earnings are higher than resident-based earnings, highlighting that a significant number of **workers commute from the district to higher salaried jobs elsewhere**. Many residents travel between 10km and 30km to their place of work. The plan area has strong connections to the local authority areas of Colchester, Uttlesford and Chelmsford for commuting. There is regular net flow of commuters out of the district. The new Local Plan offers the opportunity to attract higher-paying employers to the area, improving local job opportunities and increasing weekly pay. This could help to encourage residents to live in the plan area and address the ageing of the local population. Without the new Local Plan, these improvements in job opportunities and average pay may not occur, and the trend of workers out-commuting for better-paying jobs will likely continue.

4.11 There are **vacant shops** within the main town centres of Braintree, Witham, and Halstead, although the rate across these settlements is lower than the Experian Goad national average. However, the vacancy rate reported for Halstead town centre is higher than the national average. The new Local Plan offers the opportunity to revitalise these commercial areas by encouraging supporting appropriate town centre and complementary uses. Without the new Local Plan, these areas may continue to suffer from higher vacancy rates and reduced consumer activity. It is likely that role of online shopping and long terms effects of COVID-19 will continue to influence the role of town centres in the district regardless of the emergence of the new Local Plan.

4.12 Braintree District benefits from several railway stations as well as bus services within its larger settlements. However, due to the district being predominantly rural, **many residents are dependent on the private car** to access services, facilities and jobs. The new Local Plan presents an opportunity to address the issue of car dependency by promoting sustainable development locations, and prioritising areas that are well-connected by public transport and active travel infrastructure. Without the new Local Plan, development is more likely to come forward at less connected locations and locations where there is limited potential to support improvements for sustainable transport.

4.13 No sites in Braintree currently exceed the air quality objective level in relation to NO₂. However, the main air quality issues in the district relate to **NO₂ from vehicles travelling on the A12, A131 and A120** with monitoring currently taking place on these routes and roads that link to them. Following a reduction of air pollutants levels during the pandemic for the year 2020, levels increased during 2021 although they have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Without the new Local Plan, there is increased potential for air quality issues to worsen, given the likelihood of a less sustainable distribution of development resulting and increasing numbers of journeys being made by private vehicle. The new Plan provides the opportunity to address this issue by supporting development at more sustainable locations and promoting sustainable travel. The development of the plan can also ensure that the potential air quality impacts associated with new housing and employment growth are assessed and managed accordingly.

4.14 The majority of the district is **comprised of Grade 2 agricultural land, with large pockets of Grade 3 agricultural land**. Without the new Local Plan, there is a risk that these valuable agricultural lands will be developed, limiting continued agricultural activities and food production. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to protect these high-quality agricultural lands from development, ensuring the preservation of land for farming, food production, and maintaining the agricultural heritage of the district.

4.15 Although Braintree District has a **higher average recycling rate** than nationally, the recycling rate has shown a slightly decrease in the most recent year of reporting. Furthermore, a growing population will place increased pressure on waste management facilities and there will be a requirement to meet these growing needs. The new Local Plan provides some opportunity to adopt up to date policies seeking to minimise waste, increase re-use and recycling (although the provision of infrastructure for waste management will mostly be achieved via the Waste Local Plan). It will also provide an opportunity to deliver adequate space in new developments for waste facilities capable of accommodating recyclable waste.

4.16 Many of the district's watercourses are suffering from **low water quality**, with chemical quality conditions having failed in 2019. Just three water bodies that flow into the district have achieved a 'good' ecological status (Domesy Brook, Boreham Tributary and Pebmarsh Brook), with the remainder of moderate or poor ecological status. Without the new Local Plan, water quality is likely to continue declining, further harming ecosystems and biodiversity, and posing significant health risks to the community. The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to implement targeted measures to improve water quality.

4.17 There are a number of areas within Braintree District which are at **risk of flooding** (particularly around Sible Hedingham, Halstead, Earls Colne, Braintree town, Coggeshall, and Witham). Without the new Local Plan, flood risk will continue to affect the district through increased and higher intensity flooding. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to plan strategically to locate new development in areas at lower risk from flooding as well as in areas that will not increase flood risk for existing development. Through the plan new policy can also be incorporated to ensure the design of development can

appropriately address the increased potential for flood risk in the event of climate change.

4.18 More extreme weather conditions (including hot, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters are expected as a result of ongoing and **accelerating climate change**, which have the potential for adverse effects on human health and the natural environment. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to update the district's approach to mitigating and adapting to the effects of the changing climate and associated weather events. This can include through policy for the promotion of energy from low carbon sources, addressing embodied carbon, more sustainable design choices and the delivery of green infrastructure. Without the new Local Plan, these issues are likely to be less well addressed.

4.19 The district is identified as being under **significant water stress**. There is a need for water demand to be managed in the district for all new development in order to achieve long term sustainability in terms of water resources. The new Local Plan can incorporate policies to support sustainable water use at new developments. It can also reflect evidence of the need for water related infrastructure when considering the best location for development sites. Without the new Local Plan, these water resources are considered more likely to come under pressure if new evidence is not reflected in policy.

4.20 Braintree District **contains or is in close proximity to a number of both designated and non-designated natural habitats and species**. This includes those designated for their international (SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites), national (SSSIs) and local (LNRs and LWSs) importance. Internationally designated sites outside of the District are sensitive to the effects of development within it, including the impact of increased visitor numbers. Not all SSSIs in the district are in favourable condition. The new Local Plan provides an opportunity for new development to come forward at the most appropriate locations in order to avoid detrimental impacts on biodiversity assets, and in some cases to enhance biodiversity through retention and creation of greenspaces within developments. Its policies also provide an opportunity to ensure that the effects of the Local Plan that cannot be avoided in this way are adequately mitigated and that biodiversity net gain is secured.

4.21 Braintree District has a number of heritage assets (including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens) with **five assets on the Heritage at Risk Register**. The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to draw on the most up to date evidence to ensure that new development is sited and designed so as to conserve, enhance and encourage enjoyment of the historic environment as well as improve accessibility and interpretation of it. Without the new Local Plan, the historic environment is less likely to be protected and enhanced and the condition of assets at risk may worsen.

4.22 Braintree District falls within **South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area (NCA)**. The district's eastern edge lies close to the Dedham Vale National Landscape. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to take into account the most recent landscape-related evidence and to ensure that sensitive landscapes and townscapes are protected and enhanced, with development being located and designed to take account of the variation in character and sensitivity across Braintree District. Without the new Local Plan, this issue is less likely to be addressed as it is more likely that piecemeal and ad-hoc developments would come forward.

Chapter 5

SA framework and method

5.1 The approach being taken to the SA of the Braintree Local Plan is based on current good practice and the guidance on SA/SEA set out in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

5.2 The development of a set of SA objectives (known as the SA framework) is a recognised way in which the likely environmental and sustainability effects of a plan can be described, analysed and compared.

5.3 The proposed SA framework for the Braintree Local Plan is presented below. The previous SA framework for the adopted Braintree Local Plan was used as a starting point to inform the preparation of this SA framework, although it has been amended and updated to take into account the analysis of international, national and local policy objectives, the baseline information, and the current key sustainability issues identified for Braintree.

5.4 The SA framework comprises a series of SA objectives against which the sustainability of the Local Plan will be appraised. The appraisal of the Local Plan options, policies and site allocations against these SA objectives will be guided in part by the appraisal questions accompanying each objective. The questions included in the framework are not exhaustive, and some may be more relevant to certain elements of the Local Plan than others.

5.5 All of the topics specifically required by the SEA Regulations (set out in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations) are clearly addressed by the headline SA objectives, as listed under each SA objective below.

SA Objective 1: Create safe environments which help to address deprivation, improve quality of life and community cohesion.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it support access to, improvements to or supply of community facilities for the local population including for young people?
- Will it increase cultural activities or suitable development to stimulate them?
- Will it seek to reduce deprivation and inequalities between areas and support cultural identity and social inclusion?
- Will there be measures to increase the safety and security of new development and public realm?
- Will it promote diversity?
- Will it support the integration of new neighbourhoods with existing neighbourhoods?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Population
- Human health
- Material assets

SA Objective 2: Provide decent, affordable and safe homes for all.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups?
- Will it respond to the needs of an ageing population?
- Will it support the provision of appropriate affordable housing including in rural areas?
- Will it provide additional capacity in care homes?
- Will it promote an increase in social housing?
- Will new housing be supported by adequate local employment opportunities?
- Will it support development of a high quality housing stock including homes that are adapted to a changing climate?
- Will it provide sufficient housing to meet existing and future housing need?
- Will it meet the needs of the travelling community and showpeople?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Population
- Human health
- Material assets

SA Objective 3: Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it improve access to high quality health facilities?
- Will it increase access to sport and recreation facilities and/or open space?
- Will it encourage access by walking or cycling, and will it increase the overall rates of walking and cycling?
- Will it help to limit pollutions that might adversely affect human health?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Population
- Human health

SA Objective 4: Promote the vitality and viability of services and facilities and centres throughout the district.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it promote and enhance the viability of existing centres by focusing development in these areas?
- Will it support retailing in town centres be enhanced in areas of identified need?
- Will it help bring vacant units in town centres back into appropriate use?

- Will it support increases to the amount of retail and non-commercial office floorspace in the district?
- Will it protect and enhance the ability of the district's settlements to meet the day to day needs arising with these settlements and from the wider rural areas they serve?
- Will it help prevent loss of retail and other services in rural areas?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Population
- Material assets

SA Objective 5: Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it support small businesses to grow and encourage business innovation?
- Will it make land and property available for business development?
- Will it provide a range of suitable employment sites to meet the needs of varying sizes and types of businesses?
- Will it enhance the District's potential for tourism?
- Will it encourage the rural economy and diversification of it, while minimising impacts on the rural environment?
- Will it limit the potential for development having an adverse impact on employment for existing facilities?
- Will it support increased broadband coverage / bandwidth, especially in rural areas?

- Will it encourage higher skilled economic sectors in the district?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Population
- Human health
- Material assets

SA Objective 6: Increase participation in and improve access to education, training and opportunities for lifelong learning.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it increase educational attainment amongst young people?
- Will it reduce the number of working age residents who have no, or lower level qualifications?
- Will it improve access to and support appropriate expansion of existing educational facilities and/or create more educational facilities?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Population
- Material assets

SA Objective 7: Conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to indigenous BAP priority species?
- Will it protect and enhance designated sites of nature conservation and/or geological importance?
- Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi natural habitats?
- Will it provide appropriate opportunities for people to access wildlife and open green spaces?
- Will it maintain and enhance the connectivity of habitats, their ability to deliver ecosystem services or their resilience to climate change?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Biodiversity
- Flora and fauna

SA Objective 8: Reduce the need to travel and promote active travel and more sustainable transport choices.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it increase and/or improve the availability, usability and viability of sustainable transport modes, including public transport?
- Will it seek to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation (such as walking and cycling) over travel by private vehicle?
- Will it improve rural public transport?
- Will it lead to the integration of transport modes?
- Does it seek to increase the uptake of public transport through parking standards at destinations?
- Will it assist in reducing the number of road casualties and ensure ease of pedestrian movement especially for the disabled?
- Will it contribute positively to reduce social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, services and leisure facilities for all, including for those without a car?
- Does it seek to concentrate development and facilities in town centres or where access via sustainable travel is greatest?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Air
- Climatic factors
- Population
- Human health

SA Objective 9: Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings?
- Will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance (scheduled or unscheduled) and their setting?
- Will it enhance the range and quality of the public realm and open spaces?
- Will it encourage the use of high-quality design principles to respect local character?
- Will it offer opportunities to bring heritage assets back into active use in appropriate ways?
- Will it safeguard historic views and valuable skylines of settlements?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

SA Objective 10: Reduce contributions to climate change.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it reduce greenhouse gas emissions from domestic, commercial and industrial sources?
- Will it ensure new development is low carbon / carbon neutral?

- Will it increase energy efficiency in new developments?
- Will it increase the use and development of renewable energy?
- Will it promote the use of nature-based solutions (e.g. woodland creation and peatland restoration) to contribute towards climate change mitigation?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Climatic factors
- Population
- Human health

SA Objective 11: Support adaptation to the effects of climate change.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it ensure new developments and residents are able to withstand extreme weather events (e.g. heatwaves, drought, intense storms)?
- Will it encourage more green infrastructure including street trees, green roofs and walls in urban areas?
- Will it promote the use of nature-based solutions (e.g. wetland restoration) to contribute towards climate change adaptation?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Climatic factors
- Population
- Human health

SA Objective 12: Improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage capacity.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it help support improvements to and prevent the deterioration of the quality of water bodies?
- Will it ensure that there is sufficient water resource and supporting infrastructure available (including for sewerage) to support new development?
- Will it ensure the reinforcement of wastewater treatment works or the provision of alternatives (where required) to support growth?
- Will it minimise inappropriate development in Source Protection Zones?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Water
- Climatic factors

SA Objective 13: Reduce and manage the risk of flooding.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it promote the inclusion of SuDS in new developments?
- Will it help to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding (fluvial, surface water, groundwater)?

- Will it help to avoid increasing flood risk (fluvial, surface water, groundwater) in areas away from initial development?
- Will it support the provision and maintenance of flood defences?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Water
- Climatic factors

SA Objective 14: Improve air quality.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it reduce emissions of key pollutants?
- Will it improve, or not detrimentally affect air quality along the A12 or A120?
- Will it support the achievement of National Air Quality Standards at relevant points?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Air

SA Objective 15: Maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it support development that is designed to enhance the existing street scene creating a better cultural heritage & public realm?
- Will it support the conservation and enhancement of the district's landscape character?
- Will it help to further the purposes of the National Character Areas?
- Will it prioritise development on previously developed land over greenfield land?
- Will it support the positive use and visual enhancement of degraded land or derelict buildings?
- Will it support development to would help protect against a disruption in current field boundaries?
- Will it protect against rural expansion or development outside development boundaries/limits that might otherwise increase coalescence between neighbouring settlements?
- Will it support development that is of the scale / density that is in keeping with the local townscape / landscape?
- Will it limit light pollution and help to conserve or enhance dark skies?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Landscape
- Material assets

SA Objective 16: Minimise waste and increase resource efficiency.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it reduce household and commercial waste?
- Will it maximise the recovery, re-use and recycling of waste and reduce the proportion of waste sent to landfill?
- Will it encourage the prudent use of mineral resources?
- Will it reduce consumption of materials and resources and safeguard Braintree's these for future use?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Waste

SA Objective 17: Safeguard and enhance the quality of soil.

Appraisal Questions

- Will it avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land?
- Will it prevent soil pollution, including during construction and development?
- Will it support the remediation of contaminated land, avoiding environmental pollution or exposure of occupiers or neighbouring land uses to unacceptable health risk?

- Will it prioritise development on previously developed land over greenfield land thereby contribute to a reduction in the amount of derelict and degraded land?
- Will it support the achievement of appropriate densities of development and bringing disused buildings back into use?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Soil
- Material assets

Use of the SA framework

5.6 The SA will be undertaken in close collaboration with the Braintree District Council officers responsible for drafting the new Local Plan in order to fully integrate the SA process with the production of the plan.

5.7 Strategic policies and site allocations, including the reasonable alternative options, will be appraised against the SA objectives in the SA framework, with symbols being attributed to each policy or site option to indicate their likely effects on each SA objective. Where a potential positive or negative effect is uncertain, a question mark will be added to the relevant symbol (e.g. +? or -?) and the symbol will be colour coded in line with the potential positive, negligible or negative effect (e.g. green, yellow, orange, etc.).

5.8 The likely effects of options need to be determined and their significance assessed, which inevitably requires a series of judgments to be made. The appraisal will attempt to differentiate between the most significant effects and other more minor effects through the use of the symbols. The dividing line in making a decision about the significance of an effect is often quite small. Where either (++) or (--) will be used to distinguish significant effects from more minor effects (+ or -) this will be because the effect of an option or policy on the SA objective in question is considered to be of such magnitude that it will have a

noticeable and measurable effect taking into account other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

5.9 The findings of the SA will be presented using colour coded symbols showing the likely effect of each option against each of the SA objectives along with a concise justification for the effect identified. It may be possible to group the appraisal of strategic and development management policies by theme. The key to the SA symbols is shown in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: SA Framework symbols and colour coding

Symbol and colour code	Description
++	Significant positive effect likely
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely
+	Minor positive effect likely
++/--	Mixed significant positive and negative effects likely
+/-	Mixed minor positive and negative effects likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
0	Negligible effect likely
?	Uncertain effect

5.10 In relation to the appraisal of the site options, detailed sets of site assessment criteria have been developed and will be applied during the next stage of the SA. These criteria are presented in **Appendix B**. The criteria relate

specifically to residential and employment site options. Once the full list of site options to be appraised is worked up, if other types of site options are identified it may be appropriate to develop assessment criteria for those site types. The site assessment criteria set out clear parameters within which certain SA effects would be identified, based on factors such as the distance of site options from features such as biodiversity designations, public transport links and areas of high landscape sensitivity. The criteria, where required, may be updated at future stages on the SA to draw on the most recent evidence sources. The site assessment criteria can be applied through the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data where appropriate.

5.11 In determining the significance of the effects of the options for potential inclusion in the new Local Plan it will be important to bear in mind the relationship of the Local Plan with the other documents in the planning system such as the NPPF and other national policy approaches, and regulatory requirements, as these may provide additional safeguards or mitigation of potentially significant adverse effects.

Reasonable Alternatives

5.12 The SA must appraise not only the preferred options for inclusion in the Local Plan but also 'reasonable alternatives' to these options. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal. Part (b) of Regulation 12(2) of the SEA Regulations notes that reasonable alternatives will take into account the objectives of the plan, as well as its geographical scope. Therefore, alternatives that do not meet the objectives of national policy, local objectives or are outside the plan area are unlikely to be reasonable.

5.13 Developing options for a plan is an iterative process, usually involving a number of consultations with the public and stakeholders. Consultation responses and the SA can help to identify where there may be other 'reasonable alternatives' to the options being considered for a plan.

5.14 The SA findings are not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred option to take forward in a plan. Indeed, there will often be an equal number of positive or negative effects identified by the SA for each option, such that it is not possible to rank them based on sustainability performance in order to select a preferred option. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability and conformity with national policy will also be taken into account. Future iterations of the SA will describe how the appraisal of options has been taken into consideration when developing the draft Braintree Local Plan.

Chapter 6

Consultation and next steps

6.1 In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the views of the three statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) are being sought in relation to the scope and level of detail to be included in this SA Scoping Report.

6.2 Consultees are in particular requested to consider the following:

- Whether the scope of the SA is appropriate as set out considering the role of the Braintree Local Plan to help meet and manage Braintree's needs.
- Whether there are any additional plans, policies or programmes that are relevant to the SA that should be included (see **Chapter 2** and **Appendix A**).
- Whether the baseline information provided is robust and comprehensive and provides a suitable baseline for the SA of the new Local Plan (see **Chapter 3**).
- Whether there are any additional key sustainability issues relevant to the new Local Plan that should be included (see **Chapter 4**).
- Whether the SA framework (see **Chapter 5**) is appropriate and includes a suitable set of SA objectives for assessing the effects of the options included within the new Local Plan as well as reasonable alternatives.

6.3 Responses from consultees will be reviewed and appropriate amendments made to the information contained in the Scoping Report, including the baseline information, policy context and SA framework where necessary.

6.4 As the Local Plan is drafted, it will be subject to SA using the SA framework presented in **Chapter 5**. A full SA Report (incorporating the next stages of the SA process) will then be produced and made available to other stakeholders and the general public for wider consultation alongside the emerging Local

Chapter 6

Plan. This will include any amendments to the Scoping work arising from the consultation with consultees on this report.

LUC

August 2024

Appendix A

Review of plans, policies and programmes

A.1 2022 Convention on Biological Diversity [\[See reference 160\]](#) – COP15 Kunming-Montreal adopted the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework” (GBF), including four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030.

A.2 The Glasgow Pact (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021) - Nations adopted the Glasgow Climate Pact [\[See reference 161\]](#). The package of decisions consists of a range of agreed items, including strengthened efforts to build resilience to climate change, to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to provide the necessary finance for both. Nations reaffirmed their duty to fulfil the pledge of providing \$100 billion annually from developed to developing countries. And they collectively agreed to work to reduce the gap between existing emission reduction plans and what is required to reduce emissions. They also agreed to phase down unabated coal power and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels.

A.3 United Nations Declaration on Forests and Land Use (COP26 Declaration) (2021) [\[See reference 162\]](#): international commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.

A.4 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) [\[See reference 163\]](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

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A.5 The United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the 'Aarhus Convention') (1998) [\[See reference 164\]](#) establishes a number of rights of the public (individuals and their associations) with regard to the environment. The Parties to the Convention are required to make the necessary provisions so that public authorities (at national, regional or local level) will contribute to these rights to become effective.

A.6 The United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Declaration) (2002) [\[See reference 165\]](#) sets a broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

A.7 The United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015) [\[See reference 166\]](#) is an international agreement to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

A.8 The International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) (1976) [\[See reference 167\]](#) is an international agreement with the aim of conserving and managing the use of wetlands and their resources.

A.9 The European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (1979) [\[See reference 168\]](#) aims to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats, to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to regulate the exploitation of those species (including migratory species).

A.10 The International Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) [\[See reference 169\]](#) is an international commitment to biodiversity conservation through national strategies and action plans.

A.11 The European Habitats Directive (1992) [\[See reference 170\]](#), together with the Birds Directive, sets the standard for nature conservation across the

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EU and enables all 27 Member States to work together within the same strong legislative framework in order to protect the most vulnerable species and habitat types across their entire natural range within the EU. It also established the Natura 2000 network.

A.12 The European Birds Directive (2009) [\[See reference 171\]](#) requires the maintenance of all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state in the European territory at a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational requirements.

A.13 The United Nations Declaration on Forests (New York Declaration) (2014) [\[See reference 172\]](#) sets out international commitment to cut natural forest loss by 2020 and end loss by 2030.

A.14 The Valletta Treaty (1992) [\[See reference 173\]](#), formerly the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revisited), aims to protect the European archaeological heritage “as a source of European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study”.

A.15 The United Nations (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention (1972) [\[See reference 174\]](#) promotes co-operation among nations to protect heritage around the world that is of such outstanding universal value that its conservation is important for current and future generations.

A.16 The European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985) [\[See reference 175\]](#) defines ‘architectural heritage’ and requires that the signatories maintain an inventory of it and take statutory measures to ensure its protection. Conservation policies are also required to be integrated into planning systems and other spheres of government influence as per the text of the convention.

A.17 The European Landscape Convention (2002) [\[See reference 176\]](#) promotes landscape protection, management and planning. The Convention is

aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes and raising awareness of the value of a living landscape.

National Plans and Programmes (beyond the NPPF) of Most Relevance for the Local Plan

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

A.18 The Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (2023) **[See reference 177]** explains how the government intends to meet its legally-binding climate goals, setting out a package of quantified and unquantified proposals and policies, and associated timescales and delivery risks this also includes:

- wider matters in connection with carbon budgets
- the contribution of these proposals and policies to sustainable development
- the impact the package has on sectors of the economy

A.19 Powering up Britain (2023) **[See reference 178]** sets out the department's approach to energy security and net zero, and acts as an introduction to Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan, and Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan.

A.20 The Environment Improvement Plan 2023 **[See reference 179]** for England is the first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how they will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of our goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help us restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country.

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A.21 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 [See reference 180] outlines the UK government and devolved administrations' position on the key climate change risks and opportunities that the UK faces today. The risk assessment considers sixty-one UK-wide climate risks and opportunities cutting across multiple sectors of the economy and prioritises the following eight risk areas for action in the next two years:

- risks to the viability and diversity of terrestrial and freshwater habitats and species from multiple hazards
- risks to soil health from increased flooding and drought
- risks to natural carbon stores and sequestration from multiple hazards
- risks to crops, livestock and commercial trees from multiple climate hazards
- risks to supply of food, goods and vital services due to climate-related collapse of supply chains and distribution networks
- risks to people and the economy from climate-related failure of the power system
- risks to human health, wellbeing and productivity from increased exposure to heat in homes and other buildings
- multiple risks to the UK from climate change impacts overseas

A.22 The British Energy Security Strategy (2022) [See reference 181] sets out how the UK will enhance its energy security, setting out plans for future deployment of wind, new nuclear, solar and hydrogen, and for supporting the production of domestic oil and gas in the nearer term. The strategy builds on the Prime Minister's 'Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution', and the 'Net zero strategy'. Key aims and commitments include:

- New commitments to supercharge clean energy and accelerate deployment, which could see 95% of Great Britain's electricity set to be low carbon by 2030.
- Supporting over 40,000 more jobs in clean industries, totalling 480,000 jobs by 2030.

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- Accelerated expansion of nuclear, wind, solar, hydrogen, oil and gas, including delivering the equivalent to one nuclear reactor a year instead of one a decade.
- Offshore wind – Aim of providing up to 50GW by 2030, of which 5GW is planned to be from floating offshore wind in deeper seas. This is aimed to be underpinned by new planning reforms to cut the approval times for new offshore wind farms from 4 years to 1 year and an overall streamlining which will aim to reduce the time it takes for new projects to reach construction stages while improving the environment.
- Oil and gas – A licensing round for new North Sea oil and gas projects is planned to launch in Autumn, with a new taskforce providing bespoke support to new developments.
- Onshore wind – The Government plans to consult on developing partnerships with a limited number of supportive communities who wish to host new onshore wind infrastructure in return for guaranteed lower energy bills.
- Heat pump manufacturing – The Government aim to run a Heat Pump Investment Accelerator Competition in 2022 worth up to £30 million to make British heat pumps, with hopes to reduce demand for gas.

A.23 It is anticipated that following the 2024 general election, the British Energy Security Strategy, based on the former Prime Minister's 'Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution' and the 'Net Zero Strategy' may undergo several changes influenced by the new government's priorities, and evolving economic and technological conditions.

A.24 The Environment Act 2021 [[See reference 182](#)] sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. The Environment Act will deliver:

- Long-term targets to improve air quality biodiversity, water, and waste reduction and resource efficiency.
- A target on ambient PM2.5 concentrations.

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- A target to halt the decline of nature by 2030.
- Environmental Improvement Plans, including interim targets.
- A cycle of environmental monitoring and reporting.
- Environmental Principles embedded in domestic policy making.
- Office for Environmental Protection to uphold environmental law.

A.25 The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021) [\[See reference 183\]](#) sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet net zero targets by 2050. It sets out strategies to keep the UK on track with carbon budgets, outlines the National Determined Contribution (NDC) and sets out the vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050. Its focus includes:

- Policies and proposals for reducing emissions across the economy in key sectors (power, fuel supply and hydrogen, industry, heat and buildings, transport, natural gas and waste).
- Policies and proposals for supporting transition across the economy through innovation, green investment, green jobs, embedding net-zero in government, local climate action, empowering people and businesses, and international leadership and collaboration.

A.26 The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy (2021) [\[See reference 184\]](#) aims to support existing industry to decarbonise and encourage the growth of new, low carbon industries to protect and create skilled jobs and businesses in the UK encouraging long-term investment in home-grown decarbonisation technology. The strategy builds in the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and sets out the government's vision for building a competitive, greener future for the manufacturing and construction sector and is part of the government's path to net zero by 2050. The strategy aims to reduce emissions by two-thirds in just 15 years and support up to 80,000 jobs over the next thirty years and includes measures to produce 20 terawatt hours of the UK industry's energy supply from low carbon alternatives by 2030. It also aims to introduce new rules on measuring the energy and carbon performance of the UK's largest commercial and industrial buildings, providing potential savings to businesses of around £2 billion per year in energy costs in 2030 and aiming to

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reduce annual carbon emissions by over 2 million tonnes - approximately 10% of their current emissions. Other key commitments within the Strategy include:

- The use of carbon pricing to drive changes in industry to focus on emissions in business and investment decisions.
- To establish a policy framework to accelerate the switch from fossil fuels to low carbon alternatives such as hydrogen, electricity, or biomass.
- New product standards, enabling manufacturers to clearly distinguish their products from high carbon competitors.
- To ensure the land planning regime is fit for building low carbon infrastructure.
- Support the skills transition so that the UK workforce benefits from the creation of new green jobs.
- An expectation that at least 3 megatons of CO₂ is captured within industry per year by 2030.
- That by 2050, there will be zero avoidable waste of materials across heavy industries.

A.27 The Heat and Buildings Strategy (2021) [\[See reference 185\]](#) sets out the government's plan to significantly cut carbon emissions from the UK's 30 million homes and workplaces. This strategy aims to provide a clear direction of travel for the 2020s, set out the strategic decisions that need to be taken this decade, and demonstrate how the UK plans to meet its carbon targets and remain on track for net zero by 2050. Key aims of the strategy include:

- Reduce direct emissions from public sector buildings by 75% against a 2017 baseline by the end of carbon budget 6.
- Significantly reduce energy consumption of commercial, and industrial buildings by 2030.
- Phase out the installation of new natural gas boilers beyond 2035.
- Significantly grow the supply chain for heat pumps to 2028: from installing around 35,000 hydronic heat pumps a year to a minimum market capacity of 600,000 per year by 2028.

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- Reduce the costs of installing a heat pump by at least 25-50% by 2025 and to ensure heat pumps are no more expensive to buy and run than gas boilers by 2030.
- Achieve 30-fold increase in heat pumps manufactured and sold within the UK by the end of the decade.
- Grow the market for heat pumps notably via a £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme to support households who want to switch with £5,000 grants.
- Improve heat pump appeal by continuing to invest in research and innovation, with the £60 million Net Zero Innovation Portfolio 'Heat Pump Ready' Programme supporting the development of innovation across the sector.
- Ensure all new buildings in England are ready for Net Zero from 2025. To enable this, new standards will be introduced through legislation to ensure new homes and buildings will be fitted with low-carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency.
- Establish large-scale trials of hydrogen for heating, including a neighbourhood trial by 2023.
- Ensure as many fuel poor homes in England, as reasonably practicable, achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of band C by the end of 2030.
- Support social housing, low income and fuel poor households via boosting funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Home Upgrade Grant, which aim to improve the energy performance of low income households' homes, support low carbon heat installations and build the green retrofitting sector to benefit all homeowners.
- Scale up low-carbon heat network deployment and to enable local areas to deploy heat network zoning- Heat Network Transformation Programme of £338 million (over 2022/23 to 2024/25).

A.28 The UK Hydrogen Strategy (2021) [See reference 186] sets out the approach to developing a substantial low carbon hydrogen sector in the UK and to meet the ambition for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. The Strategy outlines the role of hydrogen in meeting net zero targets,

the existing opportunity within the UK, a strategic framework, a roadmap for the economy, and the UK Government's commitments for a hydrogen economy. The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations (2021).

A.29 The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations (2021) [See reference 187] seek to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, reducing their carbon emissions and lessening the impact of climate change. The Regulations require the adoption of a standard methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance, reported through Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Certificates.

A.30 The Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future (2020) [See reference 188] builds on the Prime Minister's Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. The white paper addresses the transformation of the UK's energy system, promoting high-skilled jobs and clean, resilient economic growth during its transition to net-zero emissions by 2050. Key aims of the paper include:

- Supporting green jobs – The government aims to support up to 220,000 jobs in the next 10 years.
- Transforming the energy system – To transform its electricity grid for net-zero, the white paper highlights how this will involve changing the way the country heats its homes, how people travel, doubling the electricity use, and harnessing renewable energy supplies.
- Keeping bills affordable – The government aims to do this by making the energy retail market “truly competitive”. This will include offering people a method of switching to a cheaper energy tariff and testing automatically switching consumers to fairer deals to tackle “loyalty penalties”.
- Generating emission-free electricity by 2050 – The government aims to have “overwhelmingly decarbonised power” in the 2030s in order to generate emission-free electricity by 2050.
- Establishing UK Emissions Trading Scheme – The government aims to establish a UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) from 1 January 2021 to replace the current EU ETS at the end of the Brexit Transition Period.

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- Exploring new nuclear financing options – The government is continuing to explore a range of financing options for new nuclear with developers including the Regulated Asset Base (RAB) funding model.
- Further commitments to offshore wind – The white paper lays out plans to scale up its offshore wind fleet to 40 gigawatts (GW) by 2030, including 1GW of floating wind, enough to power every home in the country.
- Carbon capture and storage investments – Including £1bn worth of investments in state-of-the-art CCS in four industrial clusters by 2030. With four low-carbon clusters set up by 2030, and at least one fully net-zero cluster by 2040.
- Kick-starting the hydrogen economy – The government plans to work with industry to aim for 5GW of production by 2030, backed up by a new £240m net-zero Hydrogen Fund for low-carbon hydrogen production.
- Investing in electric vehicle charge points – The government plans to invest £1.3bn to accelerate the rollout of charge points for electric vehicles as well as up to £1bn to support the electrification of cars.
- Supporting the lowest paid with their bills – The government aims to support those with lower incomes through a £6.7bn package of measures that could save families in old inefficient homes up to £400.
- Moving away from fossil fuel boilers – The government aims, by the mid-2030s, for all newly installed heating systems to be low-carbon or to be appliances that it is confident can be converted to a clean fuel supply.
- Supporting North Sea oil and gas transition – The white paper notes the importance of supporting the North Sea oil and gas transition for the people and communities most affected by the move away from fossil fuels. The government aims to achieve this by ensuring that the expertise of the oil and gas sector be drawn on in developing CCS and hydrogen production to provide new green jobs for the future.

A.31 National Infrastructure Strategy: Fairer, faster greener (2020) [See reference 189] sets out plans to transform UK infrastructure in order to level up the country, strengthen the Union and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. This

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will be enabled by clear support for private investment and through a comprehensive set of reforms to the way infrastructure is delivered.

A.32 The Sixth Carbon Budget report (2020) [See reference 190] is based on an extensive programme of analysis, consultation and consideration by the Committee and its staff, building on the evidence published last year for our Net Zero advice. Our recommended pathway requires a 78% reduction in UK territorial emissions between 1990 and 2035. In effect, bringing forward the UK's previous 80% target by nearly 15 years.

A.33 Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020) [See reference 191] sets out the strategic priorities for the new Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021. It sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. This document acknowledges that while there have been recently published strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in individual transport modes, transport as a whole sector needs to go further and more quickly, therefore the TDP takes a coordinated, cross-modal approach to deliver the transport sector's contribution to both carbon budgets and net zero.

A.34 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: Policy Statement (2020) [See reference 192] sets out the government's long-term ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk, and in doing so, reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy. The Policy Statement sets out five policy areas which will drive this ambition. These are:

- Upgrading and expanding our national flood defences and infrastructure;
- Managing the flow of water more effectively;
- Harnessing the power of nature to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk and achieve multiple benefits;
- Better preparing our communities; and

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- Enabling more resilient places through a catchment-based approach.

A.35 Net Zero – The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming (Climate Change Committee, 2019) [See reference 193] responds to a request from the Governments of the UK, Wales and Scotland, asking the Committee to reassess the UK’s long-term emissions targets. Our new emissions scenarios draw on ten new research projects, three expert advisory groups, and reviews of the work of the IPCC and others. The report’s key findings are that:

- The Committee on Climate Change recommends a new emissions target for the UK: net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050.
- In Scotland, we recommend a net-zero date of 2045, reflecting Scotland’s greater relative capacity to remove emissions than the UK as a whole.
- In Wales, we recommend a 95% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050.

A.36 The Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewables Sources Regulations 2011 [See reference 194] required the government to ensure that renewable energy comprised 15% of the UK’s total energy mix by 2020. The Renewable Energy Directive has now been superseded by Directive (EU) 2018/2001 (RED II). Although the UK has now been released from the renewable energy targets under RED II following Brexit, the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement includes a commitment to promote energy efficiency and the use of energy from renewable sources and reaffirmation of the EU’s 2030 “targets” and the UK’s 2030 “ambitions” for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

A.37 The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England 2011 [See reference 195] sets out the national framework for managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. It sets out the roles for risk management authorities and communities to help them understand their responsibilities. The strategic aims and objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Manage the risk to people and their property;
- Facilitate decision-making and action at the appropriate level – individual, community or Local Authority, river catchment, coastal cell or national; and

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- Achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

A.38 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 [See reference 196] and The Flood and Water Regulations 2019 [See reference 197] sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

A.39 The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting: Making the country resilient to a changing climate [See reference 198] sets out visions for the following sectors:

- People and the Built Environment – “to promote the development of a healthy, equitable and resilient population, well placed to reduce the harmful health impacts of climate change ... buildings and places (including built heritage) and the people who live and work in them are resilient and organisations in the built environment sector have an increased capacity to address the risks and make the most of the opportunities of a changing climate.”
- Infrastructure – “an infrastructure network that is resilient to today’s natural hazards and prepared for the future changing climate.”
- Natural Environment – “the natural environment, with diverse and healthy ecosystems, is resilient to climate change, able to accommodate change and valued for the adaptation services it provides.”
- Business and Industry – “UK businesses are resilient to extreme weather and prepared for future risks and opportunities from climate change.”
- Local Government – “Local Government plays a central role in leading and supporting local places to become more resilient to a range of future risks and to be prepared for the opportunities from a changing climate.”

A.40 Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England (2018) [See reference 199] aims to increase resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste by 2050. The Strategy sets out key targets which include: a 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020, a 75% recycling rate for packaging by 2030, 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035 and municipal waste to landfill 10% or less by 2035.

A.41 The Clean Growth Strategy (2017) [See reference 200] sets out the approach of the government to secure growth of the national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. The key policies and proposals of the Strategy sit below a number of overarching principles: acceleration of clean growth including through recommendations for private and public investment to meet carbon budgets; providing support to improve business and industry energy efficiency; improving energy efficiency in the housing stock including through low carbon heating; accelerating the shift to low carbon transport; delivering clean, smart, flexible power; enhancing the benefits and value of our natural resources; leading in the public sector to meet emissions targets; and ensure Government leadership to drive clean growth.

A.42 The National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) (2014) [See reference 201] identifies key planning objectives, requiring planning Authorities to:

- Help deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy;
- Ensure waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns;
- Provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste;
- Help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment; and
- Ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management.

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A.43 The Waste Management Plan for England (2013) [\[See reference 202\]](#) sets out the measures for England to work towards a zero waste economy.

A.44 The Energy Efficiency Strategy: The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK 2012 [\[See reference 203\]](#) aims to realise the wider energy efficiency potential that is available in the UK economy by maximising the potential of existing dwellings by implementing 21st century energy management initiatives on 19th century homes.

A.45 The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan: National Strategy for Climate and Energy (2009) [\[See reference 204\]](#) sets out a five-point plan to tackle climate change. The points are as follows: protecting the public from immediate risk, preparing for the future, limiting the severity of future climate change through a new international climate agreement, building a low carbon UK and supporting individuals, communities and businesses to play their part.

A.46 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) [\[See reference 205\]](#) sets out the ways in which we will tackle climate change by reducing our CO₂ emissions through the generation of a renewable electricity, heat and transport technologies.

A.47 The Climate Change Act 2008 [\[See reference 206\]](#) sets targets for UK greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 100% by 2050, against a 1990 baseline (this was previously 80% but was updated to a net zero target in June 2019).

A.48 The Planning and Energy Act (2008) [\[See reference 207\]](#) enables local planning authorities to set requirements for carbon reduction and renewable energy provision. It should be noted that while the Housing Standards Review proposed to repeal some of these provisions, at the time of writing there have been no amendments to the Planning and Energy Act.

A.49 The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations [\[See reference 208\]](#) seek to prevent waste generation and to monitor and assess the implementation of measures included in waste prevention programmes. They

set out requirements to justify not separating waste streams close to source for re-use, recycling or other recovery operations, prohibit incineration and landfilling of waste unless such treatment process represent the best environmental outcome in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The Regulations set out when waste management plans and in waste prevention programmes are required. The Regulations focus on the circular economy as a means for businesses to maximise the value of waste and waste treatment.

Health and Well-being

A.50 The Green Infrastructure Framework (2023) [\[See reference 209\]](#) by Natural England will help increase the amount of green cover to 40% in urban residential areas. The Green Infrastructure Framework provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban environments is needed most. It aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area. From parks to green roofs, and increased tree cover, the Green Infrastructure Framework will make a significant contribution to nature recovery by embedding nature into new developments. Increasing the extent and connectivity of nature-rich habitats will also help increase wildlife populations, build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and ensure our cities are habitable for the future

A.51 The White Paper Levelling Up the United Kingdom (2022) [\[See reference 210\]](#) sets out how the UK Government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It comprises 12 UK-wide missions to achieve by 2030. Missions which relate to population, health and wellbeing state that by 2030:

- The gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.
- Well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

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- Homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.
- Pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
- The number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.
- Renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the Government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

A.52 A fairer private rented sector White Paper (2022) [\[See reference 211\]](#) aims to build upon the vision of the Levelling Up White Paper and reform the Private Rented Sector and improve housing quality. It outlines that everyone deserves a secure and decent home and outlines measures to improve the experience of renters in the Private Rented Sector.

A.53 The State of the Environment: Health, People and the Environment (2021) [\[See reference 212\]](#) focuses on the relationship between human health and people's access to and connection with a clean, high quality natural environment. It presents information on England's environment, and people's exposure to environmental pollutants, flooding and climate change in relation to human health. It highlights environmental inequalities that contribute to differences in health outcomes for people in England.

A.54 The National Design Guide (2021) [\[See reference 213\]](#) sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

A.55 Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care (2021) [See reference 214] sets out the government's new plan for health and social care. It provides an overview of how this plan will tackle the elective backlog in the NHS and put the NHS on a sustainable footing. It sets out details of the plan for adult social care in England, including a cap on social care costs and how financial assistance will work for those without substantial assets. It covers wider support that the government will provide for the social care system, and how the government will improve the integration of health and social care. It explains the government's plan to introduce a new Health and Social Care Levy.

A.56 The COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan (2021) [See reference 215] sets out the Government's plan to prevent, mitigate and respond to the mental health impacts of the pandemic during 2021 and 2022. Its main objectives are to support the general population to take action and look after their own mental wellbeing; to take action to address factors which play a crucial role in shaping mental health and wellbeing outcomes; and, to support services to meet the need for specialist support.

A.57 The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020) [See reference 216] sets out the Government's actions to ensure residents in social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to redress when things go wrong.

A.58 Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments (2020), Addendum (2021) [See reference 217] provides a framework and starting point for local authorities to clearly set out in local planning guidance how best to achieve healthy weight environments based on local evidence and needs, by focusing on environments that enable healthier eating and help promote more physical activity as the default. The Addendum provides updates on the implications for planning for a healthier food environment, specifically on the hot food takeaways retail uses, and sets out recommended actions in light of changes to the Use Class Order (UCO) in England from 1 September 2020.

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A.59 The Public Health England, PHE Strategy 2020-25 (2019) [See reference 218] identifies PHE's priorities upon which to focus over this five-year period to protect people and help people to live longer in good health.

A.60 The Homes England Strategic Plan 2018 to 2023 [See reference 219] sets out a vision to ensure more homes are built in areas of greatest need, to improve affordability, and make a more resilient and diverse housing market.

A.61 The Housing White Paper 2017 (Fixing our broken housing market) [See reference 220] sets out ways to address the shortfall in affordable homes and boost housing supply. The White Paper focuses on the following:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places – Higher densities in appropriate areas, protecting the Green Belt while making more land available for housing by maximising the contribution from brownfield and surplus public land, regenerating estates, releasing more small and medium-sized sites, allowing rural communities to grow and making it easier to build new settlements.
- Building homes faster – Improved speed of planning cases, ensuring infrastructure is provided and supporting developers to build out more quickly.
- Diversifying the Market – Backing small and medium-sized house builders, custom-build, institutional investors, new contractors, housing associations.
- Helping people now – supporting home ownership and providing affordable housing for all types of people, including the most vulnerable.

A.62 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015 [See reference 221] sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites, replacing the older version published in March 2012. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

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A.63 The Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015) [See reference 222] sets out the Government’s new nationally described space standard. The standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy, as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home.

A.64 The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report Ready for Ageing? (2013) [See reference 223] warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report states “longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises”. The report highlights the under provision of specialist housing for older people and the need to plan for the housing needs of the older population as well as younger people.

A.65 Fair Society, Healthy Lives (2011) [See reference 224] investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is “overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities”.

A.66 Laying the foundations: A housing strategy for England [See reference 225] aims to provide support to deliver new homes and improve social mobility.

A.67 Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England 2010 [See reference 226] sets out how the Government’s approach to public health challenges will:

- Protect the population from health threats – led by central Government, with a strong system to the frontline;

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- Empower local leadership and encourage wide responsibility across society to improve everyone's health and wellbeing and tackle the wider factors that influence it;
- Focus on key outcomes, doing what works to deliver them, with transparency of outcomes to enable accountability through a proposed new public health outcomes framework;
- Reflect the Government's core values of freedom, fairness and responsibility by strengthening self-esteem, confidence and personal responsibility; positively promoting healthy behaviours and lifestyles; and adapting the environment to make healthy choices easier; and
- Balance the freedoms of individuals and organisations with the need to avoid harm to others, use a 'ladder' of interventions to determine the least intrusive approach necessary to achieve the desired effect and aim to make voluntary approaches work before resorting to regulation.

A.68 The Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 [See reference 227] apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

Environment (biodiversity/geodiversity, landscape and soils)

A.69 The Environment Improvement Plan 2023 [See reference 228] for England is the first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how we will work with landowners, communities and

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businesses to deliver each of our goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help us restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country. To achieve its vision, the 25YEP set out 10 goals. We have used those 10 goals set out in the 25YEP as the basis for this document: setting out the progress made against all 10, the specific targets and commitments made in relation to each goal, and our plan to continue to deliver these targets and the overarching goals. The environmental goals are:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 2: Clean air
- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water
- Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- Goal 5: Maximise our resources, minimise our waste
- Goal 6: Using resources from nature sustainably
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity
- Goal 10: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment

A.70 Working with nature (2022) [[See reference 229](#)] discusses the importance of nature in providing ecosystem services and presents recent and historical trends in biodiversity. It outlines some of the main pressures affecting England's habitats, wildlife and ecosystems: land use; climate change; pollution; invasive non-native species; and hydrological change.

A.71 Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022) [[See reference 230](#)] sets out a new framework that aims to improve industrial emissions and protect the environment through the introduction of a UK BAT regime. It aims to set up a new structure of governance with a new independent body in the form of Standards Council and the Regulators Group, consisting of

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government officials and expert regulators from all UK nations. It aims to also establish a new UK Air Quality Governance Group to oversee the work of the Standards Council and the delivery of the requirements under this new framework. It is anticipated that the BATC for the first four industry sectors will be published in the second half of 2023.

A.72 The Environment Act 2021 [\[See reference 231\]](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. Biodiversity elements in the Act include:

- Strengthened biodiversity duty. Both onsite and offsite enhancements must be maintained for at least 30 years after completion of a development.
- Biodiversity net gain to ensure developments deliver at least 10% increase in biodiversity
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies to support a Nature Recovery Network.
- Duty upon Local Authorities to consult on street tree felling.
- Strengthen woodland protection enforcement measures.
- Conservation Covenants.
- Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies to support the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature.
- Prohibit larger UK businesses from using commodities associated with wide-scale deforestation.
- Requires regulated businesses to establish a system of due diligence for each regulated commodity used in their supply chain, requires regulated businesses to report on their due diligence, introduces a due diligence enforcement system.

A.73 The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 [\[See reference 232\]](#) protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, including

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birds. The Regulations lay down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species, including how adverse effects on such habitats and species should be avoided, minimised and reported.

A.74 Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2015 [\[See reference 233\]](#) are wide-ranging government regulations that can potentially apply to many businesses. The regulations oblige those who create environmental damage, whether by water pollution, adversely affecting protected species or sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), or by land pollution that causes risks to human health, to not only cease the damage, but also to implement a wide variety of remedial measures to restore affected areas.

A.75 Biodiversity offsetting in England Green Paper (2013) [\[See reference 234\]](#). Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to compensate for residual losses. The Green Paper sets out a framework for offsetting.

A.76 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011) [\[See reference 235\]](#) guides conservation efforts in England up to 2020 by requiring a national halt to biodiversity loss, supporting healthy ecosystems and establishing ecological networks.

A.77 Defra Right of Way Circular (1/09) (2011) [\[See reference 236\]](#) gives advice to local authorities on recording, managing and maintaining, protecting and changing public rights of way.

A.78 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2010 [\[See reference 237\]](#) is an Act of Parliament to make new provision for public access to the countryside.

A.79 Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (2009) [\[See reference 238\]](#) sets out how England's soils will be managed sustainably. It highlights those areas which Defra will prioritise and focus attention on tackling degradation threats, including better protection for agricultural soils; protecting and enhancing stores of soil carbon; building the resilience of soils to a

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changing climate; preventing soil pollution; effective soil protection during construction and dealing with contaminated land.

A.80 England Biodiversity Strategy Climate Change Adaptation Principles (2008) [See reference 239] sets out principles to guide adaptation to climate change. The principles are take: practical action now, maintain and increase ecological resilience, accommodate change, integrate action across all sectors and develop knowledge and plan strategically. The precautionary principle underpin all of these. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

A.81 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 [See reference 240] places a duty on public bodies to conserve biodiversity.

A.82 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) [See reference 241] was enacted primarily to implement the Birds Directive and Bern Convention in Great Britain. The Act received royal assent on 30 October 1981 and was brought into force in incremental steps. It is supplemented by the Wildlife and Countryside (Service of Notices) Act 1985, which relates to notices served under the 1981 Act. The act contains four parts and 17 schedules, which cover:

- Part 1: Wildlife (includes protection of birds, animals and plants; and measures to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife).
- Part 2: Nature conservation, the countryside and National Parks (including the designation of protected areas).
- Part 3: Public rights of way.
- Part 4: Miscellaneous provisions of the act.

A.83 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 [See reference 242] is an Act of Parliament to make provision for National Parks and the establishment of a National Parks Commission; to confer on the Nature Conservancy and local authorities' powers for the establishment and maintenance of nature reserves; to make further provision for the recording,

creation, maintenance and improvement of public paths and for securing access to open country.

Historic Environment

A.84 Historic England, Corporate Plan 2022-23 [\[See reference 243\]](#) contains the action plan which sets out how the aims of the corporate plan will be delivered. The plan includes priorities to demonstrate how Historic England will continue to work towards delivering the heritage sector's priorities for the historic environment.

A.85 The Heritage Statement 2017 [\[See reference 244\]](#) sets out how the Government will support the heritage sector and help it to protect and care for our heritage and historic environment, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.

A.86 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, Historic England Advice Note 8 (2016) [\[See reference 245\]](#) sets out requirements for the consideration and appraisal of effects on the historic environment as part of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

A.87 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010 [\[See reference 246\]](#) sets out the Government's vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. Includes reference to promoting the role of the historic environment within the Government's response to climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda.

A.88 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [\[See reference 247\]](#) is an Act of Parliament that changed the laws for granting of

planning permission for building works, with a particular focus on listed buildings and conservation areas.

A.89 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 [See reference 248] is a law passed by the UK government to protect the archaeological heritage of England and Wales and Scotland. Under this Act, the Secretary of State has a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of ancient monuments of national importance, in order to help preserve them. It also creates criminal offences for unauthorised works to, or damage of, these monuments.

A.90 The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 [See reference 249] is an Act of Parliament that makes provision for the compilation of a register of gardens and other land (parks and gardens, and battlefields).

Water and Air

A.91 Managing Water Abstraction (2021) [See reference 250] is the overarching document for managing water resources in England and Wales and links together the abstraction licensing strategies.

A.92 The Environment Act 2021 [See reference 251] sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers:

- Resource efficiency, producer responsibility, and the management, enforcement and regulation of waste;
- Local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles etc; and
- Plans and proposals for water resources, drainage and sewerage management, storm overflows, water quality and land drainage.

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A.93 National Chalk Streams Strategy (2021) [See reference 252] was built around the “trinity of ecological health”: water quantity, water quality and habitat quality and included 30+ recommendations to Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the water companies, NGOs and stakeholders.

A.94 Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources (2020) [See reference 253] set the strategic direction for long term regional water resources planning. The framework is built on a shared vision to:

- leave the environment in a better state than we found it
- improve the nation’s resilience to drought and minimise interruptions to all water users

A.95 The national framework [See reference 254] marks a step change in water resources planning. The 5 regional water resources groups will produce a set of co-ordinated, cross-sector plans. These plans will:

- address the scale of challenges we face by identifying the options needed in their region to manage demand and increase supply
- realise opportunities from water resources planning by working collaboratively

A.96 The Clean Air Strategy 2019 [See reference 255] sets out the comprehensive action that is required from across all parts of Government and society to meet these goals. This will be underpinned by new England-wide powers to control major sources of air pollution, in line with the risk they pose to public health and the environment, plus new local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem. These will support the creation of Clean Air Zones to lower emissions from all sources of air pollution, backed up with clear enforcement mechanisms. The UK has set stringent targets to cut emissions by 2020 and 2030.

A.97 The Environment Agency's Approach for Groundwater Protection (2018) [See reference 256] contains position statements which provide information about the Environment Agency’s approach to managing and protecting

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groundwater. They detail how the Environment Agency delivers government policy for groundwater and adopts a risk-based approach where legislation allows. Many of the approaches set out in the position statements are not statutory but may be included in, or referenced by, statutory guidance and legislation.

A.98 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 [\[See reference 257\]](#) protect inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater, and outlines the associated river basin management process. These Regulations establish the need to prevent deterioration of waterbodies and to protect, enhance and restore waterbodies with the aim of achieving good ecological and chemical status.

A.99 The UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations 2017 [\[See reference 258\]](#) sets out the Government's ambition and actions for delivering a better environment and cleaner air, including £1 billion investment in ultra-low emission vehicles, a £290 million National Productivity Investment Fund, a £11 million Air Quality Grant Fund and £255 million Implementation Fund to help Local Authorities to prepare Air Quality Action Plans and improve air quality, an £89 million Green Bus Fund, £1.2 billion Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and £100 million to help improve air quality on the National road network.

A.100 Drought response: our framework for England (2017) [\[See reference 259\]](#) tells you how drought affects England and how the Environment Agency works with government, water companies and others to manage the effects on people, business and the environment. It aims to ensure consistency in the way we co-ordinate drought management across England. It sets out:

- how drought affects different parts of England
- who is involved in managing drought and how we work together
- how we and others take action to manage drought
- how we monitor and measure the impacts of drought to advise senior management and government on the prospects and possible action

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- how we report on drought and communicate with others

A.101 The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2016 [\[See reference 260\]](#) provides for the designation of land as nitrate vulnerable zones and imposes annual limits on the amount of nitrogen from organic manure that may be applied or spread in a holding in a nitrate vulnerable zone. The Regulations also specify the amount of nitrogen to be spread on a crop and how, where and when to spread nitrogen fertiliser, and how it should be stored. It also establishes closed periods during which the spreading of nitrogen fertiliser is prohibited.

A.102 The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 [\[See reference 261\]](#) focus on the quality of water for drinking, washing, cooking and food preparation, and for food production. Their purpose is to protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring it is wholesome and clean.

A.103 The Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016 [\[See reference 262\]](#) streamline the legislative system for industrial and waste installations into a single permitting structure for those activities which have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment. They set out how to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment and human health.

A.104 The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2016 [\[See reference 263\]](#) set out limits on concentrations of outdoor air pollutants that impact public health, most notably particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). It also sets out the procedure and requirements for the designation of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

A.105 The Water White Paper (2012) [\[See reference 264\]](#) sets out the Government's vision for the water sector including proposals on protecting water resources and reforming the water supply industry. It states outlines the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing

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ecosystem, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

A.106 The National Policy Statement for Waste Water (2012) [See reference 265] sets out Government policy for the provision of major waste water infrastructure. The policy set out in this NPS is, for the most part, intended to make existing policy and practice in consenting nationally significant waste water infrastructure clearer and more transparent.

A.107 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 [See reference 266] and The Flood and Water Regulations (2019) [See reference 267] sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

A.108 Groundwater (England and Wales) Regulations 2009 [See reference 268] implement in England and Wales Community legislation on pollution of groundwater. They provide rules for the granting by the Environment Agency of a permit under these Regulations, consent under section 91(8) of the Water Resources Act 1991 and (with exceptions) an environmental permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations. In addition, the Regulations create an offence of discharge of a hazardous substance or non-hazardous pollutant without a permit, provide for powers of enforcement of the Environment Agency and prescribe penalties for offences committed under these Regulations.

A.109 Flood Risk Regulations 2009 [See reference 269] regulations were enacted in December 2009. They outline a set of tasks, which the county council is required to follow between now and approximately 2015. The regulations also implement the 2007 EU Floods Directive. In accordance with the regulations the council has a series of new responsibilities, these are:

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- The preparation of a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Report, including the identification of flood risk areas
- The preparation of Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Maps
- The preparation of Flood Risk Management Plans
- Cooperating with the Environment Agency and other Lead Local Flood Authorities.

A.110 Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England (2008) [See reference 270] sets out how the Government wants the water sector to look by 2030, providing an outline of steps which need to be taken to get there. These steps include improving the supply of water; agreeing on important new infrastructure such as reservoirs; proposals to time limit abstraction licences; and reducing leakage. The document also states that pollution to rivers will be tackled, whilst discharge from sewers will be reduced.

A.111 The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2007) [See reference 271] sets out a way forward for work and planning on air quality issues by setting out the air quality standards and objectives to be achieved. It introduces a new policy framework for tackling fine particles and identifies potential new national policy measures which modelling indicates could give further health benefits and move closer towards meeting the Strategy's objectives. The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Further improve air quality in the UK from today and long term; and
- Provide benefits to health quality of life and the environment.

A.112 The Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 [See reference 272] apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own

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Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

A.113 The Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2003) [\[See reference 273\]](#) protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water discharges and certain industrial sectors, notably domestic and industrial waste water. The regulations require the collection of waste water and specifies how different types of waste water should be treated, disposed and reused.

A.114 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 [\[See reference 274\]](#) makes provision for the improved control of pollution to the air, water and land by regulating the management of waste and the control of emissions. Seeks to ensure that decisions pertaining to the environment are made in an integrated manner, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, non-governmental organisations and other persons.

Economic Growth

A.115 The Growth Plan 2022 [\[See reference 275\]](#) makes growth the government's central economic mission, setting a target of reaching a 2.5% trend rate. Sustainable growth will lead to higher wages, greater opportunities and provide sustainable funding for public services. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's "growth plan" contained a raft of significant tax measures, with major changes being announced for both individuals and businesses.

A.116 Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth (2021) [\[See reference 276\]](#) sets out a plan to 'build back better' tackling long-term problems to deliver growth that delivers high-quality jobs across the UK while supporting the transition to net zero. This will build on three core pillars of growth: infrastructure, skills and innovation.

A.117 The Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 [\[See reference 277\]](#) aims to drive competitiveness, increase productivity, reduce carbon emissions, and

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generate fairer returns across the agricultural industry. The Transition Plan introduces several new schemes to improve the environment, animal health and welfare, and farm resilience and productivity (e.g., grants will be available for sustainable farming practices, creating habitats for nature recovery and making landscape-scale changes such as establishing new woodland and other ecosystem services).

A.118 The Agriculture Act 2020 [See reference 278] sets out how farmers and land managers in England will be rewarded in the future with public money for “public goods” – such as better air and water quality, thriving wildlife, soil health, or measures to reduce flooding and tackle the effects of climate change, under the Environmental Land Management Scheme. The Act will help farmers to stay competitive, increase productivity, invest in new technology and seek a fairer return from the marketplace. Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024.

A.119 UK Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2018) [See reference 279] lays down a vision and foundations for a transformed economy. Areas including artificial intelligence and big data; clean growth; the future of mobility; and meeting the needs of an ageing society are identified as the four ‘Grand Challenges’ of the future.

A.120 The National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021 [See reference 280] brings together the Government’s plans for economic infrastructure over this five year period with those to support delivery of housing and social infrastructure.

A.121 The LEP Network Response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper Consultation (2017) [See reference 281] seeks to ensure that all relevant local action and investment is used in a way that maximises the impact it has across the Government’s strategy. Consultation responses set out how the 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships will work with Government using existing and additional resources to develop and implement a long-term Industrial Strategy.

Transport

A.122 The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Report to Parliament (2022) [See reference 282] sets out the objectives and financial resources for cycling and walking infrastructure. It states the Government's long-term ambition is to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys. It aims to double cycling by 2025, increase walking activity, increase the percentage of children that usually walk to school and reduce the number of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads.

A.123 Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021) (Decarbonising Transport Plan (DTP)) [See reference 283] sets out the Government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It follows on from the Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge report published in 2020. The DTP commits the UK to phasing out the sale of new diesel and petrol heavy goods vehicles by 2040, subject to consultation, in addition to phasing out the sale of polluting cars and vans by 2035. The DTP also sets out how the government will improve public transport and increase support for active travel, as well as creating a net zero rail network by 2050, ensuring net zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040, and a transition to green shipping.

A.124 Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020) [See reference 284] sets out the strategic priorities for the new Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021. It sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. This document acknowledges that while there have been recently published strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in individual transport modes, transport as a whole sector needs to go further and more quickly, therefore the TDP takes a coordinated, cross-modal approach to deliver the transport sector's contribution to both carbon budgets and net zero.

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A.125 The Road to Zero (2018) [See reference 285] sets out new measures towards cleaner road transport, aiming to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles. It explains how cleaner air, a better environment, zero emission vehicles and a strong, clean economy will be achieved. One of the main aims of the document is for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040.

A.126 The Transport Investment Strategy 2017 [See reference 286] sets out four objectives that the strategy aims to achieve:

- Create a more reliable, less congested, and better connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it;
- Build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities;
- Enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

A.127 The Highways England Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan (2017) [See reference 287] is designed to communicate the company's approach and priorities for sustainable development to its key stakeholders. Highways England aims to ensure its action in the future will further reduce the impact of its activities seeking a long-term and sustainable benefit to the environment and the communities it serves. The action plan describes how Highways England will progress the aspirations of their Sustainable Development and Environment Strategies. It describes actions that will enable the company to deliver sustainable development and to help protect and improve the environment.

A.128 Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration (2013) [See reference 288] focuses on four core areas which need to be addressed so that people can be confident in choosing greener modes of transport. There are as follows:

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- Accurate, accessible and reliable information about different transport options;
- Convenient and affordable tickets;
- Regular and straightforward connections at all stages of the journey and between different modes of transport; and
- Safe and comfortable transport facilities.

A.129 The strategy also includes details on how the Government is using behavioural change methods to reduce or remove barriers to the use of sustainable transport and working closely with stakeholders to deliver a better-connected transport system.

Appendix B

Site assessment criteria

B.1 The site assessment criteria to be used for the assessment of residential and employment site options against each SA objective are set out below. For each objective, a table is included to set out the individual criteria and how they will be applied. A description of how the significance of effect (i.e. minor and significant positive/negative effects) will be identified for the overarching SA objective is also provided. This sets out how the scores relating to each individual criteria for the SA objective in question (i.e. major and minor positive/negative) will be considered cumulatively to assign an overall significance rating.

Residential site assessment criteria

SA Objective 1: Create safe environments which help to address deprivation, improve quality of life and community cohesion

Significance scoring for SA Objective 1 criteria

Scoring of significance will match the major, minor and negligible effects:

- Minor positive +
- Major positive ++
- All other 0

Table B.1: SA site assessment criteria for objective 1

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
1a Levels of deprivation	>=25% of site located within one of the 10% most deprived areas nationally	>=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally	All other sites	N/A	N/A	Index of Multiple Deprivation

SA Objective 2: Provide decent, affordable and safe homes for all

Significance scoring for SA Objective 2 criteria

Scoring of significance will match the major, minor and negligible effects:

- Minor positive +
- Major positive ++
- All other 0

Table B.2: SA site assessment criteria for objective 2

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
2a Housing provision	Significantly contributes to the delivery of housing: ≥ 100 dwellings	Contributes to the delivery of housing: < 100 dwellings	N/A	N/A	N/A	Based on data provided by Council on expected site capacity.

SA Objective 3: Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities

Significance scoring for SA Objective 3 criteria

Criteria 3a to 3f are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 6). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.3: SA site assessment criteria for objective 3

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
3a Open space, sport and recreation	<=300m from open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	301-800m from open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	N/A	801-1,200m from open space, sport and recreation facility	>1,200m from open space, sport and recreation facility	Braintree District Council open space, sport and recreation facility data; National Trust Open Country data; Natural England Registered Common Land data
3b Loss of open space	N/A	N/A	All other sites	1-24.9% of site is open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	>=25% of site is open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	Braintree District Council open space, sport and recreation facility data; National Trust Open Country data; Natural England Registered Common Land data

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Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
3c Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	<=200m from PRoW	201-400m from PRoW	N/A	401-800m from PRoW	>800m from PRoW	Braintree District Council PRoW data
3d GP surgeries	<=400m from nearest NHS GP surgery	401-800m from nearest NHS GP surgery	N/A	801-1,200m from nearest NHS GP surgery	>1,200m from nearest NHS GP surgery	Braintree Council GP surgery data
3e Noise pollution from roads and railways	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	>=25% site within: Lnight 50.0-54.9 dB, or Laeq,16 55.0-59.9 dB	>=25% site within: Lnight >=55.0 dB, or Laeq,16 >= 60.0 dB	Defra road and rail noise data
3f Odour	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	N/A	Site is <=400m from a wastewater treatment works, <=500m from an anaerobic digestion facility OR <= 250m from a Site Safeguard Area of a waste management facility or a waste management facility	Environment Agency wastewater treatment plant data; Environment Agency anaerobic digestion facilities data; Braintree District Council waste management facilities; Braintree District Council Site Safeguard

Appendix B Site assessment criteria

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
						Area of a waste management facility

SA Objective 4: Promote the vitality and viability of services and facilities and centres throughout the district

Significance scoring for SA Objective 3 criteria

Scoring of significance will match the major, minor and negligible effects:

- Minor positive +
- Major positive ++
- Minor negative –
- Major negative --

Table B.4: SA site assessment criteria for objective 4

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
4a Town centres	<=400m from town centre OR <=200m from district centre	401-800m from town centre OR 201-400m from district centre	N/A	801-1,200m from town centre OR 401-800m from district centre OR <=400m from local centre	>1,200m from town centre AND >800m from district centre AND >400m from local centre	Braintree District Council centre data

SA Objective 5: Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth

Significance scoring for SA Objective 5 criteria

Criteria 5a, 5c, 5d and 5e are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 4). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.5: SA site assessment criteria for objective 5

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
5a Loss of employment land	N/A	N/A	All other sites	1.0-24.9% of site is an existing employment area	>=25% of site is an existing employment area or the site is identified as containing an existing employment generating use	Braintree District Council employment area data
5b Provision of employment sites	N/A for residential site options	N/A for residential site options	N/A for residential site options	N/A for residential site options	N/A for residential site options	N/A
5c Employment deprivation	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site located within one of the 20-40% most deprived areas nationally ('Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation).	>=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally ('Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation).	'Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

Appendix B Site assessment criteria

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
5d Access to jobs, N.B. Jobs density = number of employees / population	Site located in LSOA that is in top 20% of LSOAs in district for jobs density	Site located in LSOA that is in 20-40 percentile of LSOAs in district for jobs density	Site located in LSOA that is in 40-60 percentile of LSOAs in district for jobs density	Site located in LSOA that is in 60-80 percentile of LSOAs in district for jobs density	Site located in LSOA that is in 80-100 percentile of LSOAs in district for jobs density	Nomis Business Register and Employment Survey; Office for National Statistics Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates
5e Town centres	<=400m from town centre OR <=200m from district centre	401-800m from town centre OR 201-400m from district centre	N/A	801-1,200m from town centre OR 401-800m from district centre OR <=400m from local centre	>1,200m from town centre AND >800m from district centre AND >400m from local centre	Braintree District Council town centre boundaries

SA Objective 6: Increase participation in and improve access to education, training and opportunities for lifelong learning

Significance scoring for SA Objective 6 criteria

Each criterion 6a to 6b is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 2). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.6: SA site assessment criteria for objective 6

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
6a Primary schools	<=400m from primary school	401-800m from primary school	N/A	801-1,200m from primary school	>1,200m from primary school	Braintree District Council primary school data
6b Secondary schools	<=500m from secondary school	501-1,000m from secondary school	N/A	1,001-2,000m from secondary school	>2,000m from secondary school	Braintree District Council secondary school data

SA Objective 7: Conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment

Significance scoring for SA Objective 7 criteria

If either of the criteria receive a major negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.

Table B.7: SA site assessment criteria for objective 7

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
7a International and national biodiversity and geodiversity assets	N/A	N/A	All other sites	<=1km from an internationally or nationally designated site	<=250m from an internationally or nationally designated site	Natural England SSSI, Ramsar, SAC, SPA, NNR
7b Locally designated wildlife sites, Priority Habitat Inventory and Ancient Woodland	N/A	N/A	All other sites	<=250m from a LWS, LNR, Priority Habitat or Ancient Woodland	>=1% of site intersects with a LWS, LNR, Priority Habitat or Ancient Woodland	Local Wildlife Sites (LWS); Local Nature Reserves (LNR); Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory; Natural England Ancient Woodland

SA Objective 8: Reduce the need to travel and promote active travel and more sustainable transport choices

Significance scoring for SA Objective 8 criteria

Criteria 8a to 8c are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.8: SA site assessment criteria for objective 8

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
8a Rail	<= 500m from a railway station	501-1,000m from a railway station	N/A	1,001-2,000m from a railway station	>2,000m from a railway station	Ordnance Survey railway station data
8b Bus	<= 300m from a bus stop	301-600m from a bus stop or within an area served by Digigo shared public transport service	N/A	601-1,000m from a bus stop	>1,000m from a bus stop	National Public Transport Access Nodes bus stop data Where information about the frequency of nearby bus services is available and indicates that services are very infrequent, this will be taken into account in the SA which may result in the scores included in this table being reduced.

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Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
8c Cycling	<= 200m from a cycle route	201-400m from a cycle route	N/A	401-800m from a cycle route	>800m from a cycle route	Local cycle routes; National and Regional Cycle Routes

SA Objective 9: Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings

Significance scoring for SA Objective 9 criteria

If either of the criteria receive a major negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If both criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If only one of criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible.

However, all effects for site options considered will acknowledge uncertainty in the absence of a heritage impact assessment. It is expected that heritage impact assessment work will be undertaken for sites proposed for allocation and where this is the case this work will be used to inform the appraisal of these sites. The use of this two stage approach for the appraisal of site options and sites proposed for allocation will allow for a consistent approach to the appraisal work.

Table B.9: SA site assessment criteria for objective 9

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
9a Proximity to historic assets: sites within existing settlements, or	N/A	N/A	All other sites	101-250m	<=100m	Braintree District Council settlement boundaries; Braintree District Council /Historic England Conservation Areas; Historic England Listed Buildings; Historic England Scheduled Monuments; Historic England Registered Parks and Gardens
9b Proximity to historic assets: sites outside of existing settlements	N/A	N/A	All other sites	501-1,000m	<=500m	Braintree District Council settlement boundaries; Braintree District Council /Historic England Conservation Areas; Historic

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Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
						England Listed Buildings; Historic England Scheduled Monuments; Historic England Registered Parks and Gardens

SA Objective 10: Reduce contributions to climate change

The extent to which the location of site options would facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport in place of cars is considered separately under SA objective 8. The location of development will not otherwise affect the achievement of this objective as effects will depend largely on the detailed proposals for sites and their design. This SA objective is therefore scoped out for the appraisal of site options.

SA Objective 11: Support adaptation to the effects of climate change

The extent to which the location of site options would be affected by flood risk is considered separately under SA objective 13. The location of development will not otherwise affect the achievement of this objective as effects will depend largely on the detailed proposals for sites and their design, which would be influenced by policies in the new Local Plan and details submitted at the planning application stage for development sites which includes essential infrastructure such as foul drainage. This SA objective is therefore scoped out for the appraisal of site options.

SA Objective 12: Improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage capacity

Significance scoring for SA Objective 12 criteria

Each criterion 12a and 12b is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 2). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative <0 to >-2

Table B.10: SA site assessment criteria for objective 12

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
12a Source Protection Zones	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 2 or 3.	>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 1.	Environment Agency Source Protection Zones
12b Water quality	N/A	N/A	All other sites	Site is within 100m of a watercourse or water body	Site contains a watercourse or water body	Ordnance Survey Open Rivers watercourses data; Ordnance Survey water bodies

SA Objective 13: Reduce and manage the risk of flooding

Significance scoring for SA Objective 13 criteria

If either criterion 13a or 13b receives a major negative, the SA objective automatically receives a significant negative effect.

If both of these criteria are minor negative, then a significant negative is given.

If only one criterion of these two scores minor negative and the other scores negligible, then a minor negative is given.

Table B.11: SA site assessment criteria for objective 13

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
13a Flood zones	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% site within Flood Zone 2	>=25% site within Flood Zone 3	Environment Agency Flood Zone 3; Environment Agency Flood Zone 2
13b Surface water flood risk	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% on land with a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding	>=25% on land with a 1 in 30 year risk of surface water flooding	Environment Agency 1:30 surface water flooding data; Environment Agency 1:100 surface water flooding data

SA Objective 14: Improve air quality

The site assessment criteria focus on the potential to the potential for development to contribute to traffic within AQMAs, to contribute to air pollution in areas where there are already issues of poor air quality, or to result in new residents being exposed to air pollution.

The assessment of site options does not take into account planned measures that will improve future air quality (such as the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK from 2035), or site-specific mitigation. The effect of the Plan as a whole on air quality will be assessed elsewhere, within the cumulative effects section of the SA.

In 2021, the WHO updated its recommended guidelines for air pollutants (“WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide” - <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240034228>). The new air quality guidelines reflect the best available health evidence and WHO’s recommendations continue to be recognised globally as the targets that should be met to protect public health. Minor negative effects are assumed to occur when residential development would occur in a location where the current baseline annual mean concentration of a pollutant exceeds these 2021 WHO guidelines. Major negative effects are assumed to occur in locations where current annual mean pollution exceeds both the 2021 WHO air quality guidelines and the higher pollution levels allowed under the UK’s national air quality objectives (see [Air Quality Objectives Update](#))

Significance scoring for SA Objective 14 criteria

Each criterion 14a to 14d is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 4). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.12: SA site assessment criteria for objective 14

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
14a Air quality	N/A	N/A	All other sites	N/A	Site located within or connected to an AQMA	Defra AQMA mapping
14b NO ₂ pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m ³	Defra NO ₂ pollution data
14c PM ₁₀ pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 15-40 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m ³	Defra PM ₁₀ pollution data
14d PM _{2.5} pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 5-20 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >20 µg/m ³	Defra PM _{2.5} pollution data

SA Objective 15: Maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes

Significance scoring for SA Objective 15 criteria

Scoring of significance will match the major, minor and negligible effects:

- Minor negative -?
- Major negative --?
- All other 0?

Table B.13: SA site assessment criteria for objective 15

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
15a Landscape sensitivity	N/A	N/A	Site identified as having no/limited sensitivity to development	Site identified as having low sensitivity to development	Site identified as having medium or high sensitivity to development	Braintree District Council landscape settlement fringe study

SA Objective 16: Minimise waste and increase resource efficiency

The location of residential sites is not likely to influence sustainable design and construction techniques. This includes the production of waste from the consumption of materials or resources, volumes of waste produced including the generation of hazardous waste, or the construction/demolition waste going to landfill. The location of sites is also not likely to have an effect on the recovery, re-use or recycling of waste materials, or the demand for recycled material. The potential for the re-use of brownfield land has been considered separately under SA objective 17.

These details will be promoted and secured through the detailed design proposals for each site at the planning application stage and strategic policies. This SA objective has therefore been scoped out for the appraisal of site options.

SA Objective 17: Safeguard and enhance the quality of soil

Significance scoring for SA Objective 17 criteria

If criterion 17a is a major positive then site scores significant positive, irrespective of criterion 17b.

If criterion 2a is not major positive, then criteria 17a to 17b are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 2). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.14: SA site assessment criteria for objective 17

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
17a Brownfield/ greenfield land	Majority of site is brownfield land (i.e. >50%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Majority of site is greenfield land (i.e. >50%)	Contained within the shapefile for each site
17b Agricultural Land Classification	N/A	N/A	All other sites	Greenfield site with >=25% area classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (but not with >=25% area classed as Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land)	Greenfield site with >=25% area classed as Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land	Natural England Agricultural Land Classification

Employment site assessment criteria

SA Objective 1: Create safe environments which help to address deprivation, improve quality of life and community cohesion

Significance scoring for SA Objective 1 criteria

Scoring of significance will match the major, minor and negligible effects:

- Minor positive +
- Major positive ++
- All other 0

Table B.15: SA site assessment criteria for objective 1

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
1a Levels of deprivation	>=25% of site located within one of the 10% most deprived areas nationally	>=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally	All other sites	N/A	N/A	Index of Multiple Deprivation

SA Objective 2: Provide decent, affordable and safe homes for all

The delivery, specific location and size of employment sites will not influence the ability of the district to provide a sufficient level and suitable mix of housing to meet its assessed need over the plan period. This SA objective has therefore been scoped out for the appraisal of employment site options.

SA Objective 3: Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities

Significance scoring for SA Objective 3 criteria

Criteria 3a to 3c are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.16: SA site assessment criteria for objective 3

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
3a Open space, sport and recreation	<=300m from open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	301-800m from open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	N/A	801-1,200m from open space, sport and recreation facility	>1,200m from open space, sport and recreation facility	Braintree District Council open space, sport and recreation facility data; National Trust Open Country data; Natural England Registered Common Land data; Braintree District Council PRow data
3b Loss of open space	N/A	N/A	All other sites	1-24.9% of site is open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	>=25% of site is open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	Braintree District Council open space, sport and recreation facility data; National Trust Open Country data; Natural England Registered Common Land data; Braintree

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Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
						District Council PRow data
3c Public Rights of Way (PRow)	<=200m from PRow	201-400m from PRow	N/A	401-800m from PRow	>800m from PRow	Braintree District Council open space, sport and recreation facility data; National Trust Open Country data; Natural England Registered Common Land data; Braintree District Council PRow data
3d GP surgeries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3e Noise pollution from roads and railways	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3f Odour	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

SA Objective 4: Promote the vitality and viability of services and facilities and centres throughout the district

Significance scoring for SA Objective 4 criteria

Scoring of significance will match the major, minor and negligible effects:

- Minor positive +
- Major positive ++
- Minor negative –
- Major negative –

Table B.17: SA site assessment criteria for objective 4

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
4a Town centres	<=400m from town centre OR <=200m from district centre	401-800m from town centre OR 201-400m from district centre	N/A	801-1,200m from town centre OR 401-800m from district centre OR <=400m from local centre	>1,200m from town centre AND >800m from district centre AND >400m from local centre	Braintree District Council centre data

SA Objective 5: Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth

Significance scoring for SA Objective 5 criteria

Criteria 5a and 5d not relevant to employment sites.

Each criterion 5b, 5c and 5e is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.18: SA site assessment criteria for objective 5

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
5a Loss of employment land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Braintree District Council employment area data
5b Provision of employment sites	Sites that are ≥ 3 ha	Sites that are < 3 ha	N/A	N/A	N/A	Within the shapefile for the site
5c Employment deprivation	$\geq 25\%$ of site is located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally ('Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation).	$\geq 25\%$ of site located within one of the 20-40% most deprived areas nationally ('Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation).	All other sites	N/A	N/A	'Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019
5d Access to jobs, N.B. Jobs density = number of employees / population	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
5e Town centres	<=400m from town centre OR <=200m from district centre	401-800m from town centre OR 201-400m from district centre	N/A	801-1,200m from town centre OR 401-800m from district centre OR <=400m from local centre	>1,200m from town centre AND >800m from district centre AND >400m from local centre	Braintree District Council town centre boundaries

SA Objective 6: Increase participation in and improve access to education, training and opportunities for lifelong learning

The ability of employment site options to support opportunities for training and learning will be most influenced by the specific uses to be delivered at the site. For example, where a site is to be developed to incorporate uses that support the green economy and is likely to provide opportunities for training local people in high value, long term areas of employment. Given that this level of detail not available for all employment site options, a negligible effect is recorded for all sites.

SA Objective 7: Conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment

Significance scoring for SA Objective 7 criteria

If either of the criteria receive a major negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If both criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If only one of criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible.

Table B.19: SA site assessment criteria for objective 7

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
7a International and national biodiversity and geodiversity assets	N/A	N/A	All other sites	<=1km from an internationally or nationally designated site	<=250m from an internationally or nationally designated site	Natural England SSSI, Ramsar, SAC, SPA, NNR
7b Locally designated wildlife sites, Priority Habitat Inventory and Ancient Woodland	N/A	N/A	All other sites	<=250m from a LWS, LNR, Priority Habitat or Ancient Woodland	>=1% of site intersects with a LWS, LNR, Priority Habitat or Ancient Woodland	Local Wildlife Sites (LWS); Local Nature Reserves (LNR); Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory; Natural England Ancient Woodland

SA Objective 8: Reduce the need to travel and promote active travel and more sustainable transport choices

Significance scoring for SA Objective 8 criteria

Criteria 8a to 8c are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.20: SA site assessment criteria for objective 8

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
8a Rail	<= 500m from a railway station	501-1,000m from a railway station	N/A	1,001-2,000m from a railway station	>2,000m from a railway station	Ordnance Survey railway station data
8b Bus	<= 300m from a bus stop	301-600m from a bus stop or within an area served by Digigo shared public transport service	N/A	601-1,000m from a bus stop	>1,000m from a bus stop	National Public Transport Access Nodes bus stop data Where information about the frequency of nearby bus services is available and indicates that services are very infrequent, this will be taken into account in the SA which may result in the scores included in this table being reduced.

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Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
8c Cycling	<= 200m from a cycle route	201-400m from a cycle route	N/A	401-800m from a cycle route	>800m from a cycle route	Local cycle routes; National and Regional Cycle Routes

SA Objective 9: Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings

Significance scoring for SA Objective 9 criteria

If either of the criteria receive a major negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If both criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If only one of criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible.

However, all effects for site options considered will acknowledge uncertainty in the absence of a heritage impact assessment. It is expected that heritage impact assessment work will be undertaken for sites proposed for allocation and where this is the case this work will be used to inform the appraisal of these sites. The use of this two stage approach for the appraisal of site options and sites proposed for allocation will allow for a consistent approach to the appraisal work.

Table B.21: SA site assessment criteria for objective 9

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
9a Proximity to historic assets: sites within existing settlements, or	N/A	N/A	All other sites	101-250m	<=100m	Braintree District Council settlement boundaries; Braintree District Council /Historic England Conservation Areas; Historic England Listed Buildings; Historic England Scheduled Monuments; Historic England Registered Parks and Gardens
9b Proximity to historic assets: sites outside of existing settlements	N/A	N/A	All other sites	501-1,000m	<=500m	Braintree District Council settlement boundaries; Braintree District Council /Historic England Conservation Areas; Historic

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Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
						England Listed Buildings; Historic England Scheduled Monuments; Historic England Registered Parks and Gardens

SA Objective 10: Reduce contributions to climate change

The extent to which the location of site options would facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport in place of cars is considered separately under SA objective 8. The location of development will not otherwise affect the achievement of this objective as effects will depend largely on the detailed proposals for sites and their design. This SA objective is therefore scoped out for the appraisal of site options.

SA Objective 11: Support adaptation to the effects of climate change

The extent to which the location of site options would be affected by flood risk is considered separately under SA objective 13. The location of development will not otherwise affect the achievement of this objective as effects will depend largely on the detailed proposals for sites and their design, which would be influenced by policies in the new Local Plan and details submitted at the planning application stage for development sites which includes essential infrastructure such as foul drainage. This SA objective is therefore scoped out for the appraisal of site options.

SA Objective 12: Improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage capacity

Significance scoring for SA Objective 12 criteria

Each criterion 12a and 12b is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 2). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative <0 to >-2

Table B.22: SA site assessment criteria for objective 12

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
12a Source Protection Zones	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 2 or 3.	>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 1.	Environment Agency Source Protection Zones
12b Water quality	N/A	N/A	All other sites	Site is within 100m of a watercourse or water body	Site contains a watercourse or water body	Ordnance Survey Open Rivers watercourses data; Ordnance Survey water bodies

SA Objective 13: Reduce and manage the risk of flooding

Significance scoring for SA Objective 13 criteria

If either criterion 13a or 13b receives a major negative, the SA objective automatically receives a significant negative effect.

If both of these criteria are minor negative, then a significant negative is given.

If only one criterion of these two scores minor negative and the other scores negligible, then a minor negative is given.

Table B.23: SA site assessment criteria for objective 13

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
13a Flood zones	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% site within Flood Zone 2	>=25% site within Flood Zone 3	Environment Agency Flood Zone 3; Environment Agency Flood Zone 2
13b Surface water flood risk	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% on land with a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding	>=25% on land with a 1 in 30 year risk of surface water flooding	Environment Agency 1:30 surface water flooding data; Environment Agency 1:100 surface water flooding data

SA Objective 14: Improve air quality

The site assessment criteria focus on the potential to the potential for development to contribute to traffic within AQMAs, to contribute to air pollution in areas where there are already issues of poor air quality, or to result in new residents being exposed to air pollution.

The assessment of site options does not take into account planned measures that will improve future air quality (such as the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK from 2035), or site-specific mitigation. The effect of the Plan as a whole on air quality will be assessed elsewhere, within the cumulative effects section of the SA.

In 2021, the WHO updated its recommended guidelines for air pollutants (“WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide” - <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240034228>). The new air quality guidelines reflect the best available health evidence and WHO’s recommendations continue to be recognised globally as the targets that should be met to protect public health. Minor negative effects are assumed to occur when residential development would occur in a location where the current baseline annual mean concentration of a pollutant exceeds these 2021 WHO guidelines. Major negative effects are assumed to occur in locations where current annual mean pollution exceeds both the 2021 WHO air quality guidelines and the higher pollution levels allowed under the UK’s national air quality objectives (see [Air Quality Objectives Update](#))

Significance scoring for SA Objective 14 criteria

Each criterion 14a to 14d is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 4). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.24: SA site assessment criteria for SA Objective 14

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
14a Air quality	N/A	N/A	All other sites	N/A	Site located within or connected to an AQMA	Defra AQMA mapping
14b NO ₂ pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m ³	Defra NO ₂ pollution data
14c PM ₁₀ pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 15-40 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m ³	Defra PM ₁₀ pollution data
14d PM _{2.5} pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 5-20 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >20 µg/m ³	Defra PM _{2.5} pollution data

SA Objective 15: Maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes

Significance scoring for SA Objective 15 criteria

Scoring of significance will match the major, minor and negligible effects:

- Minor negative -?
- Major negative --?
- All other 0?

Table B.25: SA site assessment criteria for objective 15

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
15a Landscape sensitivity	N/A	N/A	Site identified as having no/limited sensitivity to development	Site identified as having low sensitivity to development	Site identified as having medium or high sensitivity to development	Braintree District Council landscape settlement fringe study

SA Objective 16: Minimise waste and increase resource efficiency

The location of sites is not likely to influence sustainable design and construction techniques. This includes the production of waste from the consumption of materials or resources, volumes of waste produced including the generation of hazardous waste, or the construction/demolition waste going to landfill. The location of sites is also not likely to have an effect on the recovery, re-use or recycling of waste materials, or the demand for recycled material. The potential for the re-use of brownfield land has been considered separately under SA objective 17.

These details will be promoted and secured through the detailed design proposals for each site at the planning application stage and strategic policies. Therefore, this SA objective has been scoped out for the appraisal of site options.

SA Objective 17: Safeguard and enhance the quality of soil

Significance scoring for SA Objective 17 criteria

If criterion 17a is a major positive then site scores significant positive, irrespective of criterion 17b.

If criterion 2a is not major positive, then criteria 17a to 17b are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 2). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table B.26: SA site assessment criteria for objective 17

Criterion	Major positive	Minor positive	Negligible	Minor negative	Major negative	Data
17a Brownfield/ greenfield land	Majority of site is brownfield land (i.e. >50%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Majority of site is greenfield land (i.e. >50%)	Contained within the shapefile for each site
17b Agricultural Land Classification	N/A	N/A	All other sites	Greenfield site with >=25% area classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (but not with >=25% area classed as Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land)	Greenfield site with >=25% area classed as Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land	Natural England Agricultural Land Classification

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- 4 Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27th June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment
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- 28** The updated PPG clarifies that this requirement of the NPPF is to be applied “where most of the development arising from larger scale developments proposed in the plan will be delivered well beyond the plan

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period, and where delivery of those developments extends 30 years or longer from the start of the plan period”. Furthermore, where this requirement applies “the authority will need to ensure that their vision reflects the long-term nature of their strategy for the plan or those larger scale developments. It is not anticipated that such visions would require evidence in addition to that already produced to support the plan”.

- 29** AONBs in the UK have been retitled as National Landscapes.
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